



2022

# ANNUAL REPORT

ACE - The Association of Community  
Employment Programs for the Homeless





## *The Change*

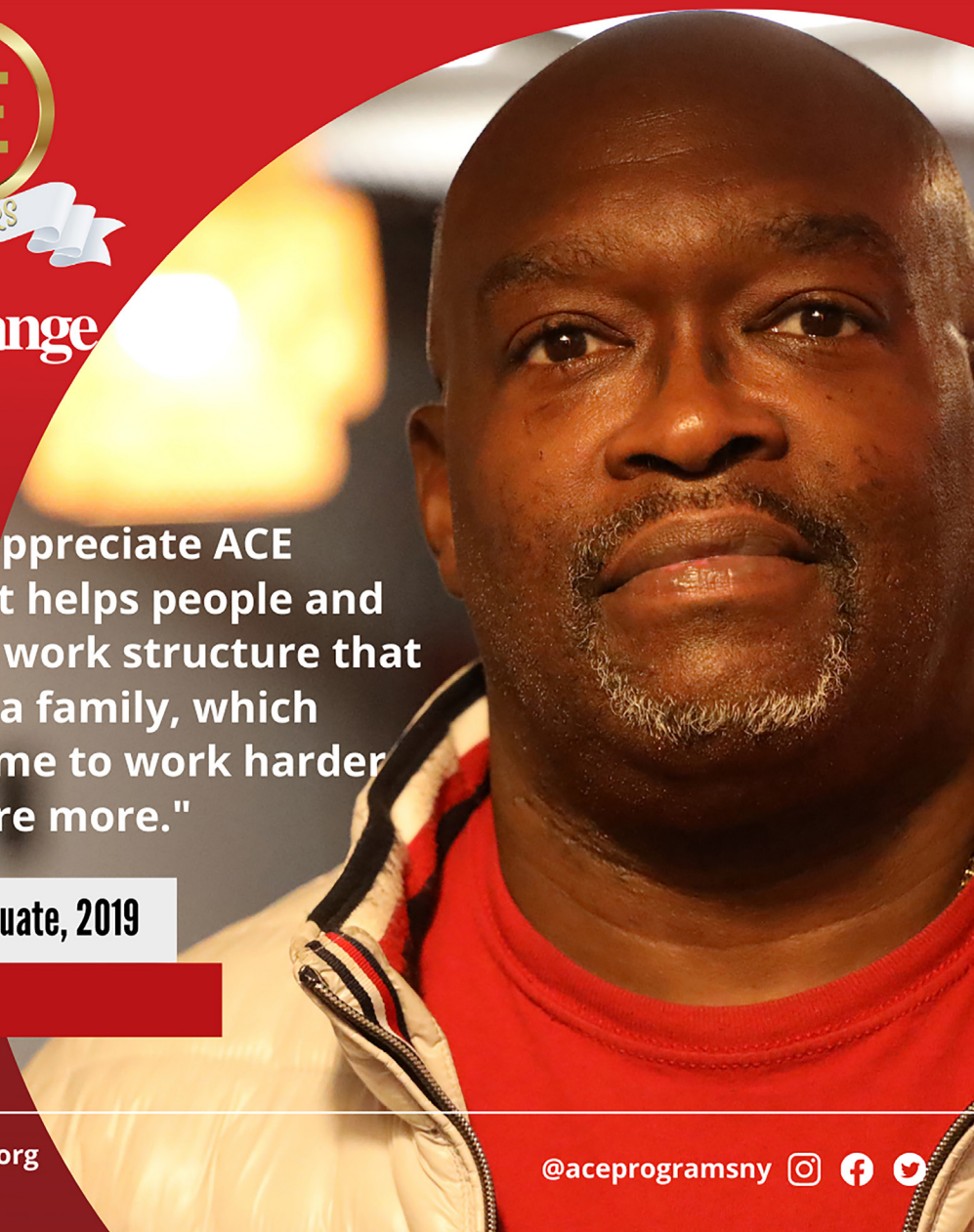
"I really appreciate ACE because it helps people and creates a work structure that feels like a family, which prompts me to work harder and inspire more."

**ACE Graduate, 2019**

**Mark**

[acenewyork.org](http://acenewyork.org)

@aceprogramsny





# Friends, Partners, and Contributors

Far too often, the world can feel like an overwhelming and uncaring place. Political and economic turmoil, racism, misogyny, pandemics, and mental health challenges can leave all of us, no matter our circumstances, feeling alone and unsure. But few groups feel these uncertainties as profoundly as the homeless, where uncertainties often mean the difference between having a roof over their head, food to eat — or even facing the possibility of an early death.

Our mission at ACE is to address these realities and find ways to help those most in need and most forgotten. It’s a day-in and day-out struggle, and sometimes, the challenges we face can feel like a losing battle. That is, until we take a step back and look at the bigger picture and remember what we’ve accomplished.

ACE has experienced eleven consecutive years of growth. Since 2011 — with a total income of \$1.8m — to 2022 — with a gross income of \$9.2m — the organization has experienced a 37% annual increase. That’s an astonishing feat and something to be truly proud of. It is the work of all our employees, volunteers, program participants, and you who support our efforts. It is also the hard work and leadership of ACE’s four senior executives.

Jim Martin, Executive Director for the past twenty years, has expanded ACE’s contract services team to include 136 graduates employed by our supported employment program.

Elizabeth McNierney, Program Director of ACE’s educational division, has raised the number of Project Comeback participants to pre-pandemic levels.

Luis Pinto, Finance Director, has done an exemplary job with the organization’s finances — arguably better than any prior ACE Finance Director before him.

And last but certainly not least, Sandra Sanches, Director of Major Gifts, who continues to work nonstop in raising money for ACE, including bringing in over \$1m net at last year’s gala.

I’d also like to thank ACE’s Board of Directors, for without their support, dedication, and expertise, none of our continued successes and expansion would be possible.

With my sincerest gratitude,



Chairman and Founder

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Back Left, Jim Martin, with Founder Henry Buhl, and Elizabeth McNierney. Front Left, Sandra Sanches and Luis Pinto

## Our Story

ACE - The Association of Community Employment Programs for the Homeless was founded in 1992 and has since grown into a city-wide leader in workforce development, counseling, and job placement for New Yorkers living in poverty. For the past 30 years, ACE has fought to guarantee social and economic justice for the most vulnerable. Through ACE's holistic and comprehensive programs, over 3,500 New Yorkers have overcome extreme barriers to reach their goals.

ACE employs 136 individuals full-time who have overcome histories of homelessness, incarceration, and addiction. Our teams proudly improve the quality of life for millions of New York City residents, businesses, and visitors by providing beautification and supplemental sanitation services on over 1,900 city blocks each day.

## Our Mission

ACE works alongside New Yorkers who have histories of homelessness, incarceration, and addiction, to help them reach their goals of full-time employment, economic independence, and family reunification.

# Alan's Story

## FROM ADDICTION AND PRISON TO GRADUATE SCHOOL

I learned the struggle of addiction early on. It felt like it was my family's curse. My father was an IV drug user and eventually, it killed him around age 31. One of my brothers started using heroin at age 11. Another brother died from addiction and the lifestyle. My mother did the best she could to raise four children on her own, but she was an alcoholic. I was always scared growing up because of all the uncertainty.

School was my only place of safety – I had perfect attendance for all four years of high school. But I never felt confident socially, so I started using cocaine because it made me feel like I could talk to anyone. That led to addiction and it cost me a lot, including five years of my life. I was incarcerated for selling drugs to an undercover officer. My mom passed away while I was in prison. She used to always say, "My son is gonna do well and make the family proud." She never got to see that.

School has always been an important part of my journey. After prison, I got my college degree in social services and worked as a case manager. Being able to assist others made me feel like I had a purpose. For 17 years I was abstinent, and then I relapsed. Within two years I lost everything. I decided to go to inpatient treatment for the first time. I needed to talk about my childhood trauma. The treatment program referred me to ACE.

When I first entered ACE and saw the classroom, I immediately felt that same security that I had in school many years before. I found support instantly. Working with the maintenance crew cleaning plazas and streets taught me a sense of community. And I was able to use one of my stipend checks to take one of my sons out to lunch and reconnect. That felt great. It takes a village to help someone who's gone through as much historical trauma and pain as I have, and it's a miracle I'm even here to share my story. ACE brought me back to life.

The ACE staff embraced me in such a way that I started



Alan, ACE graduate, 2019

to believe that I could get back to my purpose of helping others. They gave me the opportunity to be a front desk intern – assisting people with paperwork and explaining the program. I felt needed and important. ACE gave me a character reference for my current position. They knew I could get back into social services. The people that see something in you and don't give up on you are what counts. That's ACE.

I graduated ACE in 2019. Today I work at the Bronx Prevention Center, owned and run by Columbia University. I'm a clinical research coordinator, peer navigator supervisor, and community educator. My job title sounds fancy and looks good on a business card, but really it's just someone who has lived experience talking to someone who is actively using and helping them to find treatment. I'm working on a project researching how to provide better healthcare services to individuals who are actively using and injecting opioids. In January of 2023, I started back to school, back to my place of safety. Columbia University is paying for me to get my Master's in Public Health while I work. My coworkers and supervisor are all supportive of me and where I'd like to go.

If I could talk to my mom now, I'd tell her that she was right. I am somebody. And I know what she'd say back: Take your hat off in the house, wash your hands before touching anything in the kitchen, and I'm proud of you.





ACE's Program Participants at Custodial Maintenance Training

# Programs

## PROJECT COMEBACK

Project Comeback is ACE's workforce development and vocational rehabilitation program. In Project Comeback, men and women who are experiencing homelessness obtain the educational, interpersonal, and technical skills they need to secure and retain full-time, permanent employment. Participants are welcomed to Project Comeback from homeless shelters, substance use treatment centers, and transitional facilities located throughout New York City.

Project Comeback participants maintain a busy schedule that balances two days per week of paid work experience with two days of education and skills training. Our staff provides one-on-one support to meet each participant's needs. Participants graduate Project Comeback upon securing full-time, permanent employment.

## PROJECT COMEBACK OFFERS:

### INDUSTRY SPECIFIC CERTIFICATIONS

in OSHA 30-Hour Construction Safety, 10 and 40-Hour Site Safety Training, OSHA 10-Hour General Industry, Flagger, Supported Scaffold User, Janitorial Maintenance, Forklift, and Food Protection Certification.

### SOFT-SKILLS TRAINING

that develops interpersonal skills, enhances job-seeking skills, and prepares participants for the transition to self-sufficiency. Our courses and workshops cover topics such as interviewing techniques, how to maintain employment, transitioning off of public benefits, researching healthcare options, and creating a housing plan.

**ADULT EDUCATION**

in literacy, math, and computer training. ACE offers a contextualized learning experience focused on vocational themes and crucial daily living skills.

**FINANCIAL LITERACY CURRICULUM**

focused on savings and spending, banking, and credit that cumulatively prepares ACE participants to efficiently and effectively manage their finances. Participants also receive one-on-one financial coaching and work with staff to open bank accounts, build their credit, and work toward each individual's financial goals.

**PAID WORK EXPERIENCE**

that allows participants to enhance their resumes while learning the rules and expectations of the workplace. Work experience opportunities include sanitation, horticultural services, and internships at local businesses.

**JOB PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE**

to participants as they work toward securing full-time employment. Participants meet twice weekly with ACE's job developers to review job leads, set up interviews, and share feedback.

**INDIVIDUALIZED COUNSELING**

to explore challenges, improve coping skills, strengthen self-esteem, promote healthy decision-making, and receive general support.

**WRAP-AROUND SUPPORT**

including on-site legal assistance, on-site financial coaches, substance use recovery resources, a wellness curriculum, and more.

**PROJECT STAY**

Project Stay is ACE's life-long aftercare program that helps Project Comeback graduates retain employment, increase their earning power, and complete their transition to self-sufficiency.

**PROJECT STAY OFFERS:****MONTHLY MEETINGS**

where newly employed graduates reflect on their workplace experiences, address challenges and build skills.

**WORKSHOPS**

on financial literacy, networking, leadership, business etiquette, conflict resolution, stress management, and work/life balance.

**RECREATIONAL OUTINGS**

that bring graduates together in a positive social setting and reward them for their hard work.

**SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS**

For many ACE participants, barriers like extended gaps in employment, histories of homelessness, lack of work experience and training, and substance use disorders stand in the way of full-time employment.

Addressing these issues head-on, ACE developed a supported employment program that provides full-time employment through the ACE Contract Services Team.

While most ACE participants secure employment with outside employers, this program offers those who face the greatest obstacles with opportunities to build work experience while continuing to engage closely with ACE staff.

With the partnership of the New York City Council and several Business Improvement Districts, the ACE Supported Employment Program offers full-time employment and benefits to 136 men and women who have overcome homelessness. These graduates of Project Comeback provided vital neighborhood beautification services to over 1,900 New York City blocks daily in 2022.

The goal of this program, however, goes beyond keeping New York City's neighborhoods clean. ACE invests in the long-term success of our Contract Services Team, offering:

- 401K matching plan
- Access to subsidized health insurance
- Project Stay programming
- Access to industry-specific certifications
- Employment retention support
- Growth opportunities
- Holiday pay



# Our Team

Henry Buhl, Chairman & Founder  
 Jim Martin, Executive Director  
 Elizabeth McNierney, Director of Programs  
 Sandra Sanches, Director of Major Gifts  
 Luis Pinto, Director of Finance  
 Thomas Lee, Director of Contract Services  
 Rachel Cohen, Assistant Program Director  
 Leo Gil, Government Contract Manager  
 Greta Lin, Development Specialist  
 Emmanuel Fernandez, Job Developer  
 Nadine Gorelik, Curriculum Developer  
 Rosemary Yelton, Therapeutic Support Counselor  
 Nadra Hussein-Sagaff, Case Manager  
 Lovely André, Aftercare Coordinator  
 Bridget Sarabia, Case Manager  
 Lance Marsh, Senior Crew Supervisor  
 Jackie Amhi, Crew Supervisor  
 Noah Sheroff, Crew Supervisor  
 James Bair, Assistant Field Supervisor  
 David Green, Assistant Field Supervisor  
 Daniel Lawrence, Assistant Field Supervisor  
 Jamil Martin, Assistant Field Supervisor  
 Cory Weimar, Assistant Field Supervisor

Elbert Copeland, Quality Control Officer  
 Herbert Hodge, Quality Control Officer  
 Kenneth Reed, Quality Control Officer  
 Latricia Mercer, Quality Control Officer  
 Julio Nieves, Quality Control Officer  
 Thane West, Quality Control Officer  
 Paul Manzi, Special Projects Coordinator  
 Kremlin Gil, Mobile Services Coordinator  
 Lorna Laidlaw, Front Office Associate

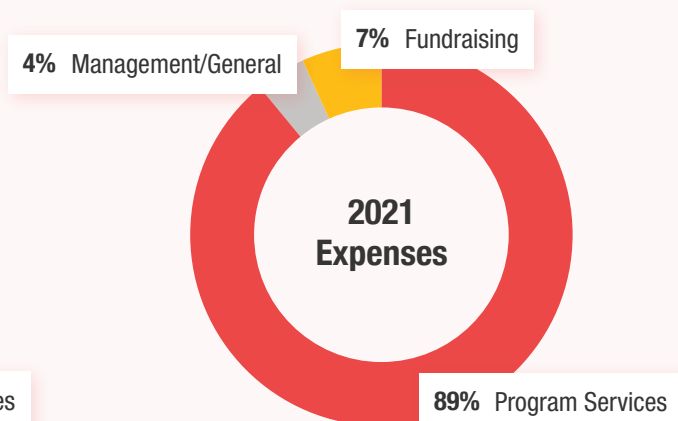
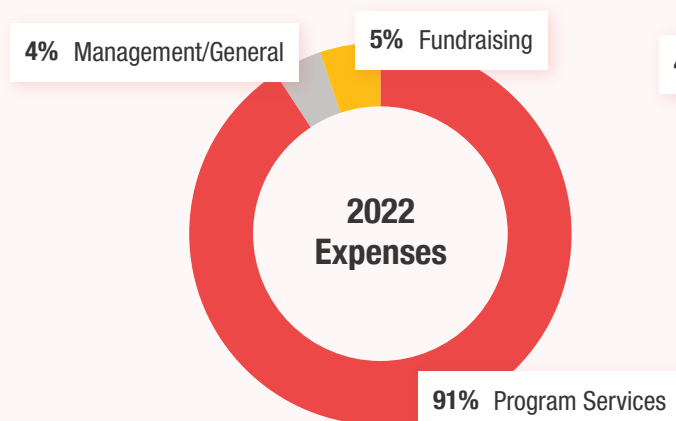
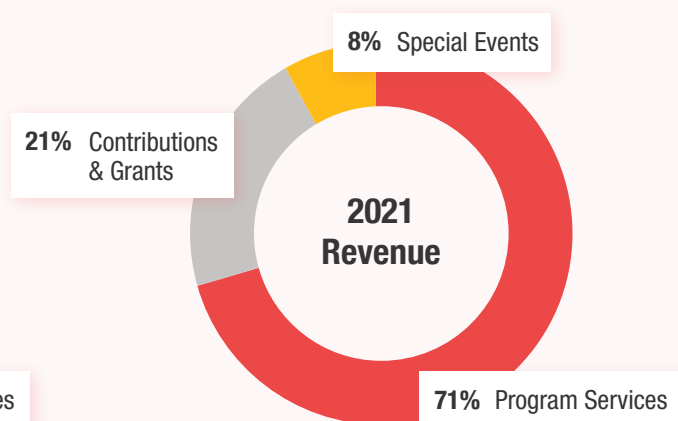
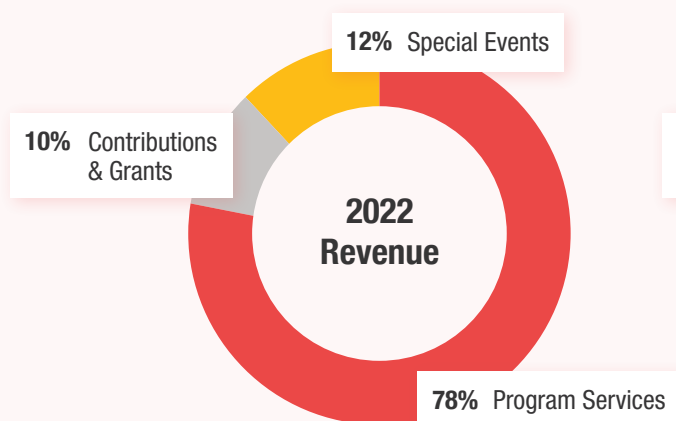
## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Henry Buhl, Chairman & Founder  
 Catherine Rice, Independent Consultant  
 Steven Rand, Executive Director, Apex Art  
 Jorge Irigorri, Managing Director, Morgan Stanley  
 Stephanie Rader, Managing Director, Goldman Sachs  
 Peter Melhado, Partner, Polaris Partners LP  
 Kenneth Totilo, CEO, CPA Group NYC  
 Kim Jackson, Founder and President, Evotion Media  
 Dale Schlather, Executive Vice Chairman, Cushman & Wakefield



ACE Team with Council Member Lincoln Restler





REVENUE	2022	2021	EXPENSES	2022	2021
Program Services	\$ 7,252,172	\$ 5,285,280	Program Services	\$ 7,615,874	\$ 5,338,678
Contributions & Grants	\$ 942,919	\$ 1,604,948	Management/General	\$ 304,172	\$ 237,652
Special Events (Net Income)	\$ 1,080,205	\$ 561,864	Fundraising	\$ 454,812	\$ 431,287
Investment Income/Loss	\$ - \$8,829	\$ 11,802	Total Expenses	\$ 8,374,858	\$ 6,007,617
Total Revenue	\$ 9,266,467	\$ 7,463,894	Net Income	\$ 891,609	\$ 1,456,277

# 2022 BY THE NUMBERS

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES



**782 Individuals**

served via direct service programs



**153 Individuals**

placed into full-time employment



**\$418,000 Earned**

by participants through paid work  
experience training



**86% of Graduates**

received employer sponsored benefits



**82% of Graduates**

received a wage increase in year  
one of employment, with an average  
increase of \$1.66 / hour



**75% of Participants**

secured full-time employment, with an  
average starting wage of \$16.26



**78% of 2021 Graduates**

remained employed for at least 1 year



**103 Participated**

in financial literacy training or took action  
toward financial independence



**6,000 Instances**

of illegal postings and graffiti removed



**173 Industry Specific**

training certifications earned



# 2022 BY THE NUMBERS

## PROGRAM OUTCOMES



**\$1,146 Saved**

on average by Project Comeback participants



**51% of 2021 Graduates**

secured independent housing, to date



**9,250,000 lbs**

of trash removed



**20 Plazas & 10 Parks**

cleaned and maintained daily



**600,000+ Bags**

of trash and debris collected



**250,000+ Hours**

of ACE team members keeping the city clean



**1,900+ Block Faces**

cleaned daily



**136 Individuals**

who have overcome homelessness, incarceration, or addiction employed full-time by ACE



**100% of Graduates**

transitioned off public assistance



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