

LEAP for Education



LEARN EXPLORE ASPIRE PURSUE

FOUNDED: 2002 under the name “Salem CyberSpace”; 2014 as LEAP for Education

CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET: \$1,543,000

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Leadership & Governance

Linda Saris, Executive Director, founded LEAP in 2002. Ms. Saris graduated from the University of Chicago MBA program and received an honorary doctorate in humane letters from Salem State University. Ms. Saris draws on her experience in various leadership roles in the corporate world and in the community.

The 10-member Board of Directors is chaired by Jody Goldman, Principal, JKG Associates. LEAP’s diverse board is proactive and brings a wide range of expertise in law, finance, education, marketing, technology, and government.

LEAP for Education (LEAP: Learn – Explore – Aspire – Pursue) addresses the skills and wage gaps in eastern Essex County, Massachusetts through after-school programs designed to help underserved students identify careers that match their interests and pursue post-secondary pathways that will qualify them for jobs that offer professional and wage growth. The need for these programs is paramount because:

- Only 38.2% of Massachusetts students graduate from a four-year school in four years.
- In 2020, 70% of Massachusetts jobs require a post-secondary degree.
- Two out of three employers cannot find employees with the necessary skills to fill job openings.
- Non-degreed youth are at higher risk for unemployment and significantly lower lifetime earnings.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted economically-disadvantaged youth, especially youth of color.

LEAP’s mission is to empower underserved youth to achieve social and economic mobility by cultivating personal, educational, and career growth.

Three-Year Goals

- Increase the number of students served from 400 to 500 by adding a flagship program in an existing city we serve.
- Build LEAP’s role as an advocate on matters of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).
- Leverage technology to serve students better.
- Communicate, integrate, and enhance career readiness services within all existing LEAP programs.

Ways to Invest

FINANCIAL

- \$100,000 funds the first year start-up of a new flagship program.
- \$50,000 funds a full-time program Career Services Manager.
- \$25,000 funds technology improvements for hybrid and virtual learning and evaluation systems.
- \$10,000 funds a DEI consultant.

IN-KIND

- Volunteer tutors and mentors.
- Professionals offering work-based learning experiences.
- School supplies and snacks.
- Consulting (DEI, HR, marketing, Salesforce).
- Laptops.



“With LEAP for Education’s reputation in providing quality after-school programming, a partnership with them was an easy decision.

DR. PATRICK TUTWILER
Superintendent of Schools, Lynn, MA



“We can see the growth of the kids who enter LEAP in middle school or high school. There’s no way we would have those kids on track to graduate and go on to college and successful careers without the programs at LEAP.

KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
Mayor of Salem

LEAP for Education’s Model



LEAP’s Approach to Career Success

LEAP’s student success model includes academic enrichment, social-emotional learning, college and career readiness, and access to social capital.

Academic Enrichment: LEAP uses a project-based learning model in order to create real-world learning opportunities for its students in grades 6-12. These programs are designed to allow each student to explore in their own way a wide variety of subjects in STEM and humanities. Each program provides students with opportunities to see linkages between learning and careers.

Social-Emotional Learning: Students go through a process of self-exploration in order to identify their own strengths and interests and to develop a belief in themselves and a vision for their future. LEAP provides mentoring programs and workshops for students to build interpersonal skills such as communication and teamwork and intrapersonal skills such as self-regulation and self-advocacy.

Post-Secondary and Career Readiness: LEAP has developed a curriculum called Career Connections that uses a whole-student approach to ensure post-secondary and career success. This curriculum includes life-skills building and myriad career-learning opportunities such as internships, career speaker series, and field trips. Starting in middle school, students create an Education and Career Plan annually, which reflects each student’s unique interests and outlines the education and career pathway necessary to reach those future goals. LEAP staff work with students and parents during the entire college application process, including financial aid and scholarships, and prepare them for college life. Each student is assigned a LEAP adviser through post-secondary graduation.

Social Capital: LEAP provides students with multiple opportunities to network with community leaders and business professionals in both formal and informal settings, such as networking nights and job shadowing.

“When I arrived from the Dominican Republic as a scared 8th grader with no English skills, I found a safe haven at LEAP. I learned English, received academic support, went to college, and found a career I am passionate about.

JOHANNA RODRIGUEZ
 Northeastern University 2016,
 Enrolled in MSW program at
 Salem State University

Key investors

- Amelia Peabody Foundation
- Cummings Foundation
- James C. Melvin Trust
- Norman H. Read Charitable Trust
- The Philanthropic Initiative
- Wellington Management

Partners

- Local Business Community
- MassHire North Shore Workforce Board
- Salem, Lynn, Peabody, and Gloucester Public Schools
- Salem State University
- United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley

Impacting Society

Increasing Career Awareness and Work-Based Learning Experiences: Students come to LEAP with little knowledge of their career options and a minimal, if any, network of professional connections. LEAP provides opportunities to explore different careers and meet professionals in various fields. Students can choose a post-secondary pathway with a purpose, an aspiration, and a set of achievable goals, and find mentors to guide them. This focus keeps students on track to graduate and enhances their qualifications and connections when they enter the workforce.

Improving College Enrollment and Graduation: By breaking down the barriers that students and their families face – be they financial, academic, or cultural – LEAP staff help students and their families navigate the entire school experience from grade six through post-secondary education.

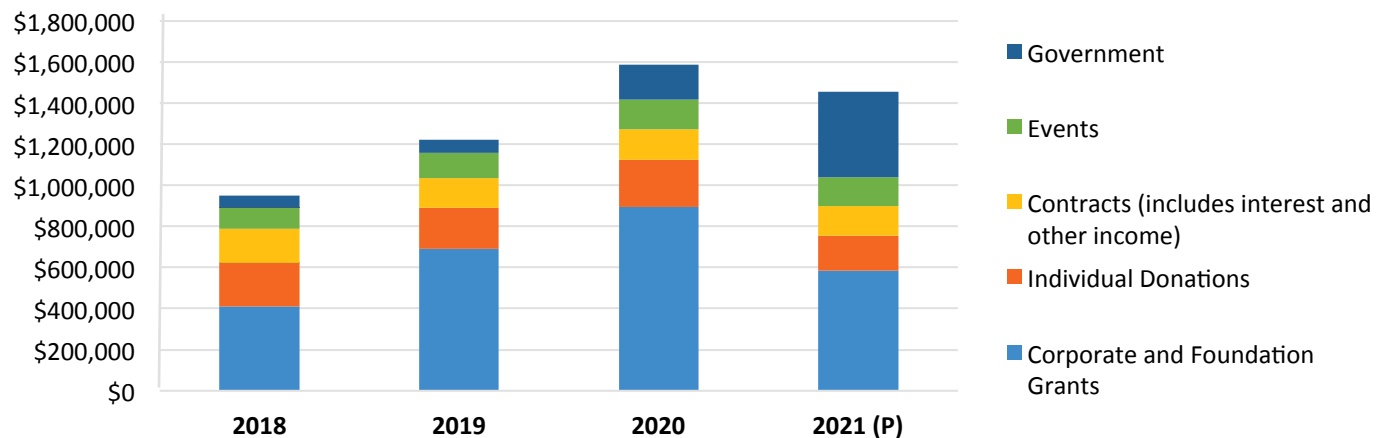
Closing the Opportunity and Skills Gap: Low-income students are provided with opportunities to build connections within their communities, take on leadership roles, and find employment with career and wage growth potential. LEAP students enter the workforce with a post-secondary degree and are prepared to fill the jobs of the future. The benefits of LEAP’s activities for its students cascade down to other family members and the community as a whole.

Building Community: Students come out of our programs with the skills to advocate for themselves and play an active role in their communities.

Financial Sustainability

LEAP currently depends on philanthropy for 70% of its revenue, with the remaining 30% derived from contracts with local schools, universities, and local government. LEAP closed the FY20 year in a strong cash position was able to secure federal COVID-related funding to maintain staffing levels. LEAP anticipates an \$87,000 loss in FY21 in part due to the projected impact of COVID-19 on fundraising and the mismatch of restricted revenues booked in FY20 with associated expenses to be spent in FY21. Because of the continued generosity of our donors, LEAP is confident it will reach its FY21 goals.

Revenue by Source



Success Story: Manny Cruz

Manny started coming to LEAP when he was in middle school. Manny came from a low-income, single parent household where English is not spoken. Due to his challenging family situation, Manny had issues dealing with his emotions and became a disengaged student, earning below average grades when he came to LEAP. LEAP staff never gave up on Manny and worked closely with him throughout his middle and high school years. With LEAP’s guidance, Manny enrolled at Salem State University to pursue a degree in political science. At the end of his second year, LEAP staff helped Manny transfer to Northeastern University, with a full-tuition scholarship. During his time at Northeastern, Manny completed three co-op experiences and graduated with a bachelor's in political science. After graduation, Manny was hired as a legislative aide to a state representative and won his first election to Salem’s School Committee. Manny joined the LEAP Board in 2018. In 2020, Manny became the Advocacy Director for Latinos for Education.



Program Performance and Organizational Health

Below is a summary of the key measures that LEAP tracks to demonstrate progress, create internal accountability, incorporate lessons learned, and adjust strategy as necessary. LEAP’s fiscal year ends June 30.

	FY 2020	FY 2021 (P)	FY 2022 (P)
PROGRAM PERFORMANCE*			
Students served	400	425	500
Students completing Education and Career Plans	40%	50%	60%
Average attendance hours/student/year	191	298	308
Programs	55	55	65
ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH/CAPACITY-BUILDING			
Full-time equivalent staff	16.5	18.5	20
Board reflective of population served	40%	45%	50%
Number of volunteers	150	180	220
Business and College Network	Planning	8 members	15 members
Upgrade technology	Phase 1 Implementation, and training of Salesforce Student information System	Phase 2 Implement education technology; upgrade website	Phase 3 Family and student portal
Total revenue	\$1,584,000	\$1,456,000	\$1,500,000

*LEAP anticipates impact on program performance due to the COVID pandemic

Social Impact

LEAP for Education works to make a positive and lasting difference that significantly alters the trajectory of the lives of students who are underserved and first in their families to complete a post-secondary education. LEAP is the catalyst that creates lasting value for the students, their families, and their communities. Below are five indicators that LEAP tracks to ensure that it meets students’ need to learn, explore, aspire, and pursue.

INDICATOR	2020	2021(P)
Annual improvement in social-emotional learning based on PEAR Institute’s validated surveys	New tool chosen	Metric and baseline
On-time high school graduation (4 years)	95%	95%
Students who enroll in post-secondary education within 6 months of high school graduation	90%	95%
Post-secondary students who receive a 2- or 4-year college degree within 6 years/any post secondary credential (e.g. degree, trade or certificate)	75%/77%	77%/80%
Post-secondary graduates in a job that requires a post-secondary degree or credential within 6 months of graduation	71%	75%