

Colleges and Universities Supporting the Public Good in the City of Boston

Private Institutions Working Together with the
Public Sector for Common Benefit

Date: December 16, 2025



Executive Summary

The Boston-based member institutions of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts (AICUM) are one of the most crucial economic engines for the region – contributing \$64 billion a year to the Eastern Massachusetts economy in jobs, taxes, direct payments, vendor purchases, restaurant and retail sales, etc.

But Boston's colleges and universities also play a foundational role in the social and civic life of the City, providing almost \$1 billion in direct community benefits from FY2018 to FY2023. These contributions align with the institutions' nonprofit missions and include vital public services such as educational initiatives (\$377 million), built environment improvements (\$262 million), good neighbor activities (\$227 million), and community health programs (\$70 million). In addition, institutions have invested in workforce development, cultural enrichment, and other critical areas, filling service gaps that would otherwise require substantial municipal funding.

At a time when colleges and universities are under unyielding attacks from Washington, DC, state and local calls for higher Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) contributions risk undermining the extensive and sustained services these institutions provide. Many institutions are already facing significant financial pressures, making it imperative to focus on collaborative solutions. A shift toward higher PILOT payments would divert resources away from vital programs, reducing institutional capacity to support Boston's most pressing needs, particularly in the social and civic arena.

These institutions are not just educators, employers, and economic drivers—they are civic anchors deeply integrated into Boston's public service ecosystem. They provide college access programs, healthcare services, workforce training, public safety initiatives, and infrastructure investments that benefit thousands of residents. Their voluntary PILOT payments of nearly \$263 million over the study period further demonstrate their unequivocal commitment to the City, even as they navigate challenging times.

To demonstrate impact, this study conducted replacement value analyses for selected programs, revealing that the true cost to the City of Boston to replicate even a small subset of member institutions' contributions would be substantially higher than the reported values. From Berklee's cultural initiatives and Emerson's specialized speech services to Harvard's Clinical and Pro Bono programs and Northeastern's infrastructure investments – to name but a few examples – the analysis shows that these institutions deliver services more efficiently and at higher quality than would be possible through municipal provision alone. This efficiency multiplier—where institutions provide services at a fraction of what it would cost the City—translates to an estimated annual replacement value exceeding \$200 million across all programs, representing funds that Boston can direct toward other essential needs while still ensuring these vital services reach its residents.

Through continued collaboration and partnership, Boston can ensure that its world-class higher education institutions continue to serve as drivers of economic opportunity, social progress, and urban resilience. Strengthening these partnerships will amplify existing resources, foster innovation, and deliver greater benefits to all Boston residents, reinforcing the City's position as a leader in education, healthcare, and civic engagement.

\$1 Billion of Support to the City of Boston, FY2018 – FY2023

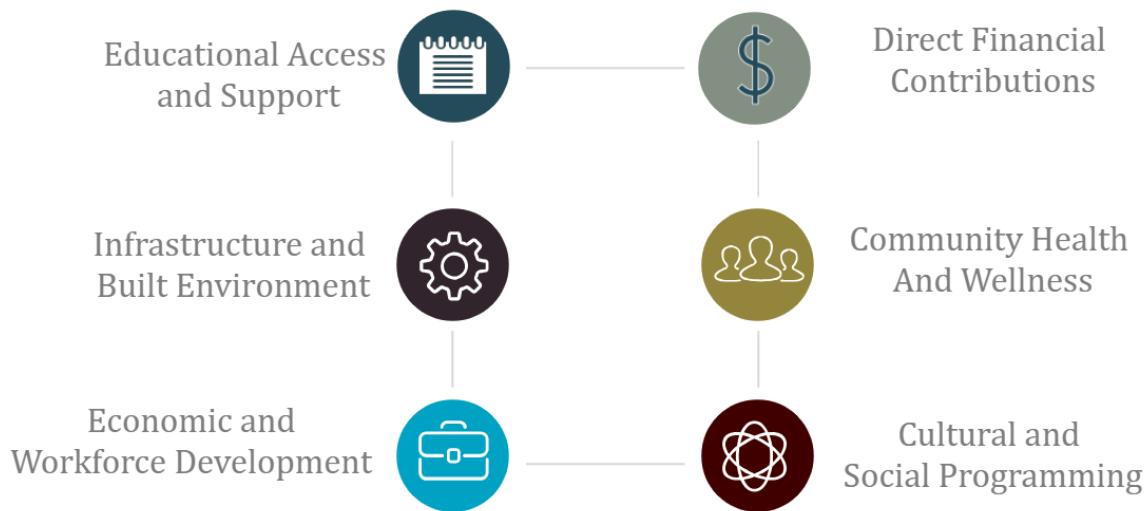




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1. Introduction

1.1. Study Background and Objectives

Overall Report Purpose

This study serves as a companion to the 2023 [Economic Impact Study](#) published by the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts (AICUM). While the previous study quantified the economic contributions of member institutions, this report looks at the aggregate *social* impact that Boston-based AICUM member institutions have on the City. It emphasizes the value of the relationship between higher education and the City of Boston through the many community-driven programs and initiatives that arise organically on campuses.

Report Context

Despite the substantial economic contributions highlighted in the 2023 Economic Impact Study, the higher education sector faces criticism both nationally and within Boston. There is a broader perception among some in the public sector and advocacy groups in the City of Boston that universities and colleges consume public services without paying taxes and should therefore "pay their fair share."

This perception fundamentally mischaracterizes both the fiscal and social contributions of Boston's member institutions. The 2023 Economic Impact Study demonstrates that these institutions generate substantial tax revenues for the City of Boston through their economic activity, contributing millions annually to the City's tax base. Beyond these economic impacts, member institutions serve as vital partners in delivering essential public services throughout Boston's communities.

A Better Way

At both a legal and philosophical level, large nonprofit institutions have a compact with the public sector. Because they exist not for private gain but for the public good, they are tax-exempt and as such connect learning and research to addressing real-world issues.

AICUM member institutions serve as vital pillars of Boston's social infrastructure, providing an extensive network of community engagement and support services that enhance the quality of life for City residents. These contributions encompass essential services that would otherwise require direct governmental provision or remain unmet community needs. From providing healthcare access, legal clinics, and workforce development programs to maintaining public spaces and supporting cultural initiatives, member institutions have evolved into comprehensive community partners. Their work often bridges critical gaps in public services, bringing specialized expertise and innovative approaches that complement municipal capabilities.

Member institutions are eager to work collaboratively with the City of Boston to increase or even scale current initiatives and programs. Rather than operating in isolation, these institutions have become

deeply woven into the fabric of Boston's ecosystem, creating expert and sustainable solutions to complex urban challenges while fulfilling their broader educational and non-profit missions.

Study Goals

This study aims to:



Quantify and analyze the comprehensive community benefits provided by AICUM member institutions



Document the broad spectrum of social impacts these institutions generate beyond traditional economic measures



Demonstrate how these institutions actively partner with public sector entities to address pressing social challenges



Aid in efforts to strengthen and expand current partnership models between educational institutions and local government



1.2. Overview of AICUM and Boston-Based Member Institutions

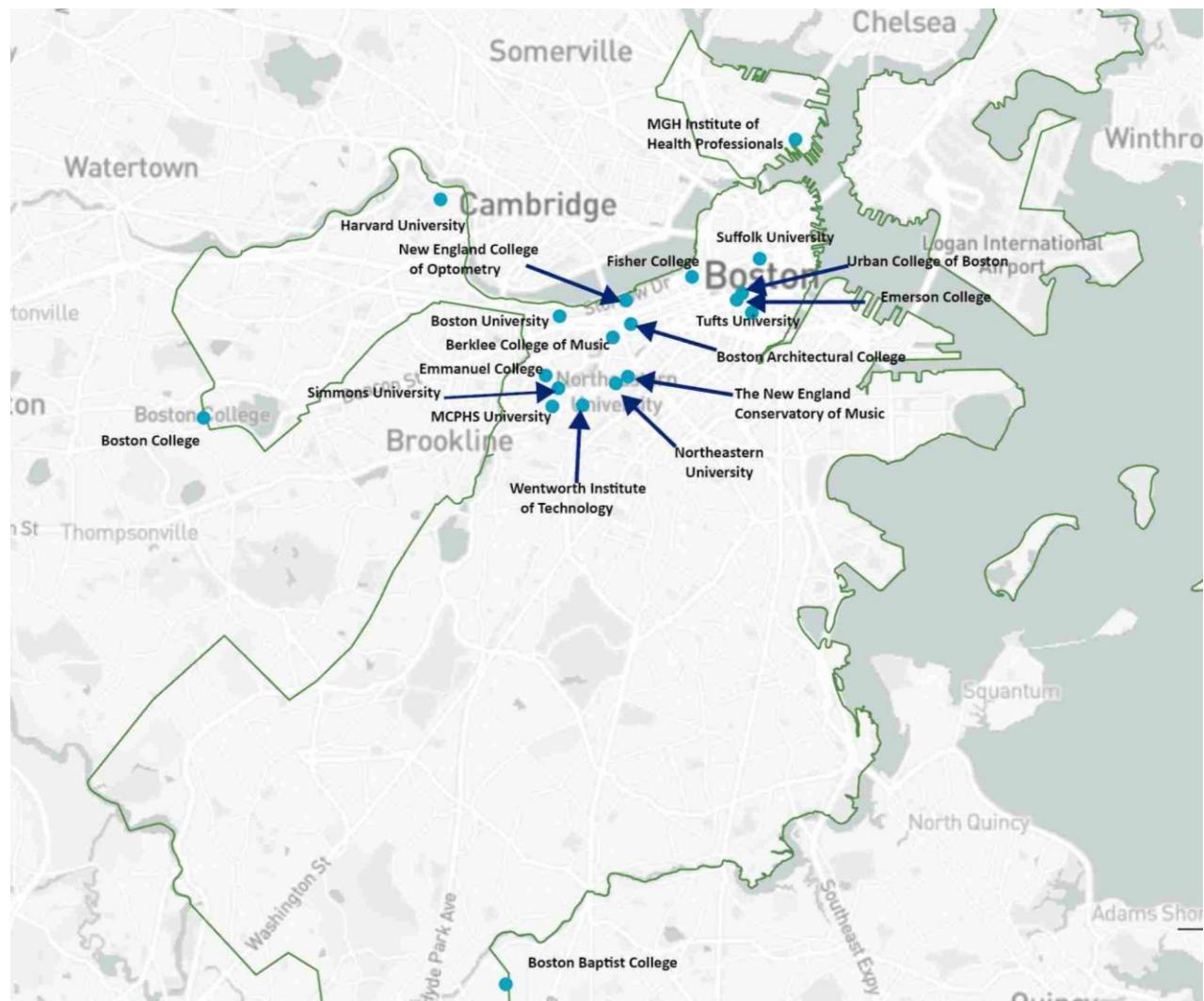
AICUM represents 57 private, non-profit degree-granting, and accredited colleges and universities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. AICUM works with these institutions, giving voice to issues such as financial aid, research funding, and the talent pipeline for the state's knowledge-based economy.

For purposes of this study, ESI focused on those 19 member institutions (MIs) located in Boston, which include:

Berklee College of Music
Boston Architectural College
Boston Baptist College
Boston College
Boston University
Emerson College
Emmanuel College
Fisher College
Harvard University
Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
MGH Institute of Health Professions
New England College of Optometry
New England Conservatory of Music
Northeastern University
Simmons University
Suffolk University
Tufts University
Urban College of Boston
Wentworth Institute of Technology



Figure 1.1: Map of AICUM Boston Member Institutions



Source: Econsult Solutions (2025)

While these institutions vary greatly in terms of educational focus and size, their collective contributions are made stronger by this diversity—bringing together large research universities and small colleges, STEM-focused schools and liberal arts institutions, and those serving primarily local students alongside those with a global reach. However, it is important to recognize that this diversity also includes organizations that, while crucial, are financially vulnerable. Many institutions, despite their vital contributions, face significant challenges in sustaining their work, especially in an environment of shifting requirements. For some, even minor adjustments can stretch already limited resources, placing their ability to continue their critical work at risk. The uniting factor remains their shared commitment to meeting the needs of their students and Boston's residents, leveraging their unique strengths to provide essential services and create lasting social impact throughout the City.

1.3. Methodology

Data Collection Approach

This study employed mixed methods to capture both quantitative and qualitative aspects of member institutions' community impact. First, we captured all publicly available data for each institution via Boston's PILOT Community Benefits Reports for FY2018 - FY2023—a six-year timeframe. While analyzing the reports for each institution, AICUM made direct outreach to each member institution, requesting further engagement with a designated representative. ESI then followed up, requesting further direct data collection, in cases where the impacts were not captured in the Community Benefits Reports. In many cases, ESI and AICUM were able to interview representatives from member institutions to find out more about the innovative and meaningful ways they contribute to the overall well-being of Boston residents. Case studies, highlighting key themes, were then developed.

Analysis Framework

The study evaluates community benefits through six primary dimensions, each capturing distinct aspects of institutional impact:



1. **Direct Financial Contributions** encompasses all monetary investments made by member institutions to support community initiatives. This includes formal PILOT program payments, direct financial support to local organizations, and institutional grants for community projects. These contributions represent tangible financial commitments that directly support community development.
2. **Educational Access and Support** examines how institutions extend their educational resources beyond their campus boundaries. This dimension includes comprehensive scholarship programs for local public school students, partnerships with K-12 schools, professional development opportunities for educators, programming to conduct violence prevention efforts, and various forms of educational resource sharing that strengthen the broader educational ecosystem in Boston.
3. **Community Health and Wellness** evaluates institutions' contributions to public health and well-being. This encompasses the provision of free or subsidized healthcare services, public health education initiatives, mental health support programs, and various wellness activities that improve community health outcomes. These services often fill crucial gaps in the community's healthcare safety net.
4. **Infrastructure and Built Environment** assesses how institutions shape and maintain the physical landscape of their communities. This includes the development and upkeep of public spaces, investments in transportation infrastructure, environmental sustainability projects, and shared community facilities. These contributions directly enhance the quality of life in surrounding neighborhoods.
5. **Economic and Workforce Development** focuses on how institutions foster economic opportunity and professional growth within their communities. This dimension examines job training initiatives, career development services, support for local businesses, and employment programs that strengthen the local economy and create pathways to professional success for community members.
6. **Cultural and Social Programming** evaluates institutions' contributions to the cultural and social fabric of Boston. This encompasses free public events and performances, cultural preservation efforts, community engagement initiatives, and youth development programs that enrich community life and foster social connections.

The analysis employs both quantitative and qualitative metrics to evaluate these dimensions. Quantitative measures include financial valuations, service hours, participation rates, and resource allocation data. Qualitative assessments examine community impact narratives and innovative approaches to service delivery. This dual approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of both the scale and depth of institutional impact.

2. Quantitative Analysis of Community Benefits

AICUM member institutions (MIs) provide substantial benefits to the City of Boston through a wide range of programs, services, and initiatives. For the period from FY2018 to FY2023, these institutions provided \$993 million worth of total community social and civic benefits across various categories. Measured in dollar amounts and representing services rendered, Boston and its residents benefit most substantially in ten key categories, measured in aggregate for the six-year period between FY2018 and FY2023:

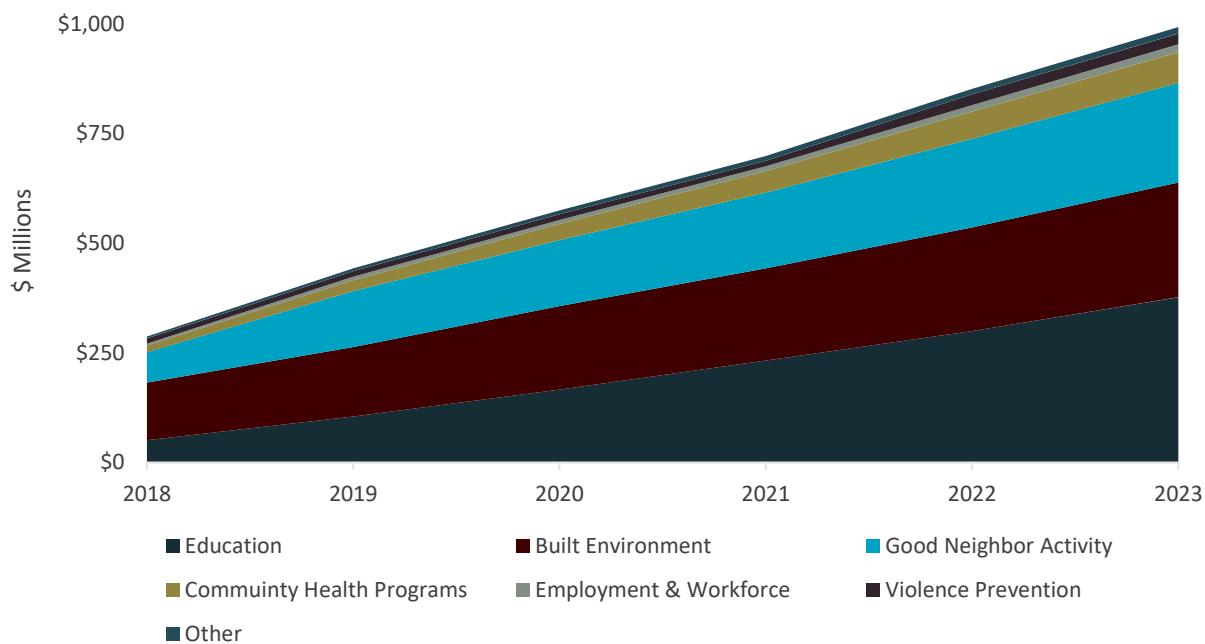
1. **Educational services** provided by MIs are valued at almost \$397 million.
2. The 18 MIs have invested more than \$262 million in capital projects designed to enhance the City's **built environment**.
3. AICUM members have provided over \$227 million of value in programming and donations classified as **good neighbor activity**.
4. **Community health** services performed by MIs aggregate to over \$70 million in value for services provided.
5. **Violence prevention** and public safety programming provided are summed up to almost \$25 million in value.
6. **Employment and workforce development** initiatives provided are valued at over \$17 million.
7. **Cost savings to City of Boston government**, estimated at almost \$8 million, by offsetting expenses for public services and programming.
8. Access to **cultural** spaces, activities and programs, valued at almost \$6 million.
9. **Social environment** perks valued at more than \$1 million, providing social networks, participation, cohesion, capital, support, inclusion, and integration.
10. **Combined technology transfer and innovation and City fellowships and co-ops**—utilizing the MIs' expertise in R&D and providing workforce solutions to the City of Boston—have a conservative value of more than \$59 thousand and \$166 thousand, respectively.

Figure 2.1: AICUM Member Institution Community Benefit Contributions, in Aggregated Dollar Value (FY2018-FY2023)

Service Categories	Value (\$M)
Education Initiatives	\$376.6
Built Environment Contributions	\$261.7
Good Neighbor Activity	\$226.9
Community Health Programs	\$70.4
Violence Prevention and Public Safety Programs	\$24.8
Employment and Workforce Development	\$17.3
Cost Savings to Boston City Government	\$7.7
Cultural Enrichment	\$5.8
Social Environment Contributions	\$1.2
City Fellowships and Co-ops	\$0.2
Technology Transfer and Innovation Support	\$0.1
Aggregate Total	\$992.7

Source: AICUM MIs (2024); Econsult Solutions (2025)

Figure 2.2: AICUM Member Institution Community Benefit Contributions, Aggregated Cumulative Dollar Amounts by Year (FY2018 - FY2023)



Source: City of Boston (2024); AICUM Member Institutions (2024); Econsult Solutions, Inc. (2025)

2.1. Education Initiatives

Education initiatives constitute the largest category of community benefits provided by AICUM member institutions, with approximately \$377 million contributed over the six-year study period from FY2018 to FY2023 toward a wide range of programs and services aimed at enhancing educational access and outcomes in Boston. These initiatives include post-secondary education access programs; need-based and merit-based scholarships for both general student populations and local residents; substantial investments in educational infrastructure and environments; direct funding support to local schools; and various educational resources and support services.

This makes sense because doing so aligns directly with the core mission of these institutions: to educate and empower individuals through accessible, high-quality learning opportunities. These contributions are large and sustained rather than small or inconsistent because they are deeply embedded in the institutions' nonprofit mission to serve the community and foster educational advancement.

These are the very needs that are being pushed for by City elected officials—educational equity, access, and the enhancement of local school systems—and the MIs' contributions directly address these goals. **Through these combined efforts, AICUM member institutions have created a robust educational support system that serves Boston residents across all K-12 educational levels. There is a specific emphasis on creating pathways to college for Boston Public School students and providing ongoing support for current college students from the local community.**

BOSTON
ARCHITECTURAL
COLLEGE

SINCE 1889

The Boston Architectural College Summer Academy Pre-College Program helps to launch high school students' futures in studying design with leading professionals and peers from around the globe, helping to launch their futures in studying design with leading professionals and peers from around the globe.



Urban College of Boston serves a diverse community by offering courses in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, and Mandarin, to accommodate students from various linguistic backgrounds. The multilingual education approach allows students who are currently learning English to enroll in courses taught in their native language while simultaneously progressing through a structured sequence of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses. This dual-track system enables non-native English speakers to pursue their academic goals without being held back by language barriers, while gradually building their English proficiency that prepares them for full English-language coursework and career opportunities. With its commitment to accessible pricing, Urban College enables most students to earn their degrees debt-free.

2.2. Community Health Programs

AICUM member institutions play a vital role in Boston's healthcare ecosystem, providing essential community health services while training the next generation of medical professionals, fueling the workforce pipeline. This is especially critical as the Commonwealth's healthcare workforce is facing shortages. **These programs extend far beyond traditional academic medicine, offering direct healthcare services, preventive care, health education, and specialized medical support to Boston residents who might otherwise lack access to quality care. The value of these services is conservatively valued at over \$70 million over the study period.**

As home to some of the world's premier medical education institutions, Boston's AICUM members are uniquely positioned to deliver high-quality healthcare services to underserved populations. For example, Smart Smiles was established in 2004 and operated by Boston University's Goldman School of Dental Health for students in Boston's public schools. **Each year, BU dental students provide dental screenings, dental sealants, fluoride treatments and restorations to more than 13,000 BPS students across 30 schools.** Another example is The Family Van, a mobile clinic affiliated with Harvard Medical School, dedicated to increasing access to healthcare, health resources, and various social services. Designed in collaboration with community partners nearly 35 years ago, The Van provides free preventative health screenings and education, serving people who often encounter cultural and language barriers to the traditional healthcare system.

The value of these programs extends beyond direct service provision. By integrating community health initiatives into their educational mission, these institutions create opportunities for the City to tap into the knowledge and expertise generated on campus. This approach not only enhances medical education but also helps develop healthcare professionals who understand the social determinants of health and the importance of community-based care.

Many programs focus on preventive care and health education, helping to reduce the burden on Boston's emergency medical services and hospital systems. These initiatives include health screenings, vaccination clinics, nutrition education, and mental health services. With current policies in Washington, D.C. pursuing cuts to these vital human services, the need to maintain basic healthcare is more acute



The MGH Institute's Dr. Charles and Ann Sanders IMPACT Practice Center integrates students supervised by clinical faculty across health professions to learn in interprofessional teams while providing essential free care to the Greater Boston community. Through six specialized centers (Aphasia, Speech/Language/Literacy, Physical Therapy, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, and Stroke Recovery), the center delivers approximately 10,000 hours of care annually (valued at \$1.25M) primarily to uninsured and underinsured patients.



New England College of Optometry partners with Boston public schools and 17 community health centers to provide affordable eye care for the local communities. The partnerships form a critically important component of the College's education, training doctors to care for those in need, but are unable to afford the care.



MCPHS
UNIVERSITY

The MCPHS Pharmacy Outreach Program is a community service initiative staffed by case managers, licensed pharmacists, and students that helps Massachusetts residents manage their medication regimens through comprehensive medication reviews and prescription drug coverage assistance. The program offers a toll-free helpline, providing support to help reduce medication costs through various assistance programs. Their services include Medication Therapy Management (MTM) for both patients and healthcare professionals, helping people understand their Medicare prescription drug plan benefits, and connecting uninsured or underinsured residents with affordable prescription drug programs.

than ever. While we are unable to calculate the value of prevention, this is a large monetary value and ultimately cost savings to the local community.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the essential role these institutions play in public health emergency response. AICUM member institutions rapidly mobilized their resources to provide testing, vaccination services, and public health education to Boston communities. Their ability to quickly adapt and deploy healthcare resources demonstrated the vital importance of having strong academic medical institutions embedded within the community.

Through these comprehensive community health programs, AICUM institutions help ensure that Boston residents have access to quality healthcare services while training future healthcare professionals who understand the importance of community

engagement and public health. The programs represent a significant contribution to the City's healthcare infrastructure, particularly for underserved populations who might otherwise struggle to access medical care.



2.3. Built Environment Contributions

AICUM member institutions serve as vital stewards of Boston's built environment, making substantial investments in public infrastructure that benefit both their campus communities and the broader public. These contributions, valued at more than \$262 million over the study period, encompass a wide range of improvements from public transportation infrastructure to parks and recreational facilities, creating lasting positive impacts on Boston's urban landscape. The scale and scope of these investments often exceed what would be possible through public funding alone.

Beyond major capital projects, AICUM member institutions contribute significantly to the daily maintenance and operation of public spaces. Additionally, these institutions make strategic investments in transportation infrastructure and accessibility. Many AICUM members provide subsidized public transit passes for their communities, helping to reduce traffic congestion and support Boston's sustainability goals. They maintain shuttle services that are often available to local residents, enhancing mobility in their neighborhoods and providing crucial last-mile connections to public transit.

The cumulative impact of these built environment contributions extends beyond the immediate physical improvements. **These investments help create more vibrant, walkable neighborhoods, enhance public safety through improved lighting and maintenance, and support Boston's climate resilience goals through sustainable design practices. By maintaining and improving public spaces, AICUM institutions help ensure that Boston's physical infrastructure serves the needs of both their academic communities and the City's residents.**

Through these substantial investments in Boston's built environment, AICUM institutions demonstrate their commitment to being responsible urban citizens while creating lasting positive impacts on the City's physical infrastructure. These contributions represent a significant private investment in public goods that enhances quality of life for all Boston residents.

Northeastern University

Northeastern University's transformation of the William E. Carter Playground represents a \$108 million commitment to construction and ongoing maintenance. This project exemplifies how institutional investments can revitalize public spaces, creating modern recreational facilities that serve both university students and local residents.



HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1872 as a public-private partnership between the City of Boston and Harvard University, the Arnold Arboretum is a living museum containing 16,000 trees, shrubs, and vines collected over the past century from Asia, Europe, and North America. As one of Boston's largest green spaces, the Arboretum welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors each year and serves as both a research institution and publicly accessible open space. Through its unique relationship with the City, the Arboretum is committed to providing public programming for families, students, and educators, reaching more than 2,000 BPS students annually. Harvard's FY23 operating budget for the Arboretum included \$12.1 million to support maintenance, free public education programming, park operations, the library and living collection, and the visitor's center.

2.4. Good Neighbor Activity

AICUM member institutions have demonstrated extraordinary commitment to their local communities through good neighbor activities. These activities encompass a broad spectrum of community engagement, including facility donations, direct monetary support, volunteer programs, and material assistance that strengthen the fabric of Boston's neighborhoods. These activities account for a large portion of the AICUM MI contributions to Boston, summing to more than \$227 million over the six-year study period. The scope of good neighbor activities reflects the institutions' deep integration into Boston's communities. For example, Northeastern University's 45th annual Food Drive exemplifies the longstanding nature of these commitments over generations of students and administration, providing crucial support to local food banks like the Grant Manor Tenants Association Food Bank in Roxbury. Such programs not only address immediate community needs but also build lasting relationships between institutions and their neighbors.

Facility sharing represents a significant component of good neighbor activities. Many AICUM members make their spaces available to community organizations at no cost, providing access to meeting rooms, athletic facilities, and event spaces that would otherwise be prohibitively expensive. These facility sharing arrangements effectively extend institutional resources to benefit the broader community.

Educational institutions also leverage their academic resources for community benefit. Through community service initiatives, AICUM members create meaningful connections between their student bodies and local organizations. Emmanuel College's Service Summer Fellowships exemplify this approach, enabling students to conduct community service projects while providing valuable support to local organizations.

Monetary support forms another crucial aspect of good neighbor activities. Institutions provide direct funding to community associations, neighborhood improvement initiatives, and local nonprofits. Harvard University's emergency funding grant program, established during COVID-19, demonstrates how institutions can rapidly mobilize resources to support community needs during crisis periods. The Harvard University Allston-Brighton Emergency Response Grant enabled local organizations to deliver essential services to vulnerable populations when they were most needed. Each year, Harvard provides direct financial support to several nonprofits serving Boston residents, including those focused on economic and community development, youth programs, health and well-being, and services for the



Emmanuel College's Community Service Summer Fellowships renders it possible for seven Emmanuel students to spend ten weeks carrying out community service projects in Boston. Fellows receive a stipend, housing, and monthly transportation card are provided by Emmanuel College. Community partners have included OLPH Mission Grammar School, Sociedad Latina, St. Ambrose Family Shelter, Fenway Health, and The Food Project, to name a few examples.



Boston Baptist College empowers underserved communities in Boston, primarily immigrants and refugees. They offer ESL, job training, legal and social support, a healthy food pantry, advocacy, and senior support.

elderly. This support is in addition to two key initiatives in Allston-Brighton: the Harvard Allston Partnership Fund, which has awarded \$2M in grants to local nonprofits, and the Harvard Public Realm Flexible Fund, which has provided \$5.35M in projects that enhance the neighborhood's physical and cultural landscape. Harvard also operates the Harvard Ed Portal, a vibrant community hub offering hundreds of free public programs annually, spanning the arts, workforce and economic development, health and wellness, and youth mentoring.

The impact of these good neighbor activities extends beyond their monetary value. By fostering strong relationships between institutions and their communities, these programs create channels for ongoing dialogue and collaboration. They enable institutions to respond effectively to evolving community needs while providing sustainable support for local initiatives. This approach helps build more resilient neighborhoods and strengthens the social bonds between academic institutions and their surrounding communities.

2.5. Cultural Enrichment

AICUM member institutions serve as vital cultural anchors in Boston, providing residents with access to world-class artistic performances, exhibitions, and cultural programming that enrich the City's creative landscape. Through their museums, theaters, galleries, performances, and performance spaces, these institutions make significant contributions to Boston's cultural vitality while ensuring that high-quality arts experiences remain accessible to all community members. Conservatively, the value of the cultural enrichment is valued at almost \$6 million from FY2018 – FY2023.

The breadth of cultural programming reflects the diverse strengths of AICUM member institutions. These programs not only showcase emerging and established artists but also create opportunities for meaningful dialogue between artists, students, and community members. Music institutions play a particularly important role in Boston's cultural ecosystem. Harvard University's David E. and Stacey L. Goel Center for Creativity & Performance—new home to the American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.)—demonstrates how institutional resources can be leveraged to support broader cultural access. By providing free or subsidized admission to Boston residents annually, the A.R.T. helps ensure that professional theater remains accessible to the community. This approach to cultural programming



New England Conservatory of Music hosts numerous concerts and recitals that are open to the public, contributing significantly to Boston's vibrant cultural scene.

At NEC Prep and in their early childhood community partnerships with the City of Boston, the youngest musicians become engaged with music.



Berklee College of Music Summer in the City concert series presents free performances throughout Greater Boston from May through September. Berklee engages with local communities through music workshops and performances and offer merit-based scholarships for their sought-after summer programs via their Berklee Institute for Accessible Arts Education.

combines artistic excellence with community engagement, fostering a more inclusive cultural environment.

The Wheelock Family Theatre, a BU program since 2018, has remained steadfast in its mission to make live theater accessible to all families. To achieve this, BU offers reduced or free tickets for families facing financial barriers and need-based tuition assistance for the Theatre's educational programming. In 2025, the theatre joined the expansion of the Boston Family Days program, further increasing access for the families of Boston to the performing arts.

Many institutions also provide crucial support for youth arts education and engagement. **Free theater camps, music education programs, and youth-focused cultural activities help develop the next generation of artists and cultural participants while providing valuable enrichment opportunities for Boston's young people. These programs often fill gaps in arts education funding, particularly in underserved communities.**

The cumulative impact of these cultural support initiatives extends beyond individual programs or performances. By maintaining and operating cultural facilities, supporting artists and artistic programming, and ensuring broad public access to cultural experiences, AICUM institutions help sustain Boston's reputation as a major cultural center. Their investments in cultural infrastructure and programming contribute to the City's creative economy while enhancing quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

2.6. Employment and Workforce Development

AICUM member institutions serve as crucial engines of workforce development in Boston, offering comprehensive programs that bridge educational opportunities with career advancement. Through a combination of job training initiatives, internship programs, and direct employment opportunities, institutions play a vital role in preparing Boston residents for success in an increasingly competitive job market. The value of these programs and services is conservatively estimated at more than \$17 million over the study timeframe.

Partnerships such as that between Harvard and Year Up exemplify the transformative potential of institutional workforce development efforts. Year Up is a nonprofit that provides young adults from low-income backgrounds with intensive skills training, college-level coursework, and professional internship opportunities. By combining practical skills development with real-world work experience, Year Up creates career pathways for participants who might otherwise face significant barriers to employment advancement. Additionally, reimbursements are offered to Simmons University students who perform service and/or clinical hours in the Boston area community as part of their academic curriculum. These vouchers are provided to Simmons students enrolled in nursing, social work, and library and information science programs.

The institutions' workforce development initiatives often focus on addressing specific skills gaps in the local economy. Training programs span various sectors, from healthcare and technology to business and creative industries, reflecting the diverse needs of Boston's economy. These programs are particularly

valuable because they leverage the institutions' deep connections with industry partners to ensure that training aligns with actual workforce needs.

Summer employment programs represent another significant component of workforce development efforts. These initiatives provide crucial first job experiences for young people while helping them develop professional skills and workplace competencies. Paid internships and co-op programs enable students to gain practical experience while earning income, making career development opportunities more accessible to students from all economic backgrounds.

Job readiness training programs offered by AICUM members help prepare participants for successful employment transitions. These programs often include resume writing workshops, interview preparation, professional networking opportunities, and career counseling services. Such comprehensive support helps ensure that participants are fully prepared to succeed in their chosen career paths.

The impact of these workforce development initiatives extends beyond individual participants. By creating a more skilled and prepared workforce, these programs strengthen Boston's overall economic competitiveness. They help create a talent pipeline that attracts and retains employers while enabling local residents to access higher-paying jobs and career advancement opportunities.

Through their employment and workforce development programs, AICUM institutions demonstrate their commitment to fostering economic opportunity and mobility in Boston. These initiatives represent a crucial investment in human capital that benefits both individual participants and the broader community by creating pathways to sustainable employment and career advancement.

Furthermore, as major employers themselves, these institutions provide significant direct employment opportunities for Boston residents. While the value of these typically high-paying employment opportunities are not included in this study (and instead, can be found in the economic impact study), one would be remiss to exclude.

2.7. Violence Prevention and Public Safety Programs

AICUM member institutions play an essential role in fostering safer communities through comprehensive violence prevention and public safety programs. These initiatives combine proactive prevention strategies with direct safety services, creating multiple layers of support that enhance community well-being and security throughout Boston's neighborhoods.

The member institutions' approach to violence prevention encompasses both youth-focused programs and broader community safety initiatives. These programs recognize that effective violence prevention requires a multi-faceted strategy that addresses root causes while providing immediate safety resources. Through partnerships with community organizations and local law enforcement, these institutions help create comprehensive safety networks that benefit both campus communities and surrounding neighborhoods.

Institutional police and security services often extend their reach beyond campus boundaries, providing additional safety resources to local communities. For example, Fisher College's Campus Police contributes significant support to the Back Bay neighborhood, providing supplementary safety and security services valued at \$70,000 annually. Similarly, Suffolk University's Neighborhood Ride-Along Program fosters collaboration with the Boston Police Department, strengthening relationships between campus security, local law enforcement, and community members.

Many institutions take an educational approach to violence prevention, developing programs that engage young people in positive activities and provide alternatives to high-risk behaviors. These programs often combine mentorship, skill development, and community engagement opportunities, helping young people build strong connections and positive relationships within their communities.

Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences demonstrates how institutions can respond to specific community safety needs through their enhanced police presence during high-activity periods from Thursday through Saturday nights. This targeted approach to public safety helps prevent incidents while providing additional security resources when they are most needed.

Public safety resources provided by AICUM institutions often fill crucial gaps in community safety infrastructure. By maintaining well-lit pathways, providing security escorts, and monitoring public spaces, these institutions help create safer environments for all community members. These services are particularly valuable in areas where public safety resources may be stretched thin.

The collaborative nature of these safety initiatives helps build trust between institutions and their surrounding communities. Through regular communication, joint programming, and shared resources, AICUM members work to ensure that their safety and violence prevention efforts align with community needs and priorities. These comprehensive violence prevention and public safety programs—with an estimated conservative value of almost \$25 million over the study timeframe—represent a significant investment in community well-being. By combining preventive measures with direct safety services, AICUM institutions help create safer, more secure neighborhoods while fostering positive relationships between campus communities and their neighbors.

2.8. Cost Savings to Boston City Government

AICUM member institutions generate substantial cost savings for Boston's municipal government by providing services and programming that would otherwise require public funding. These savings include professional services such as fellowship placements for students and faculty research projects that advance City priorities, offsetting costs that might otherwise fall to City agencies.

These savings allow Boston to redirect limited public resources to other critical needs while maintaining high levels of service delivery through institutional partnerships. The cost-effective nature of these institutional contributions—often leveraging existing resources and expertise—multiplies their value beyond what could be achieved through direct public spending alone.

2.9. Pro Bono Legal Services and Subsidized Municipal Education

Suffolk University provides legal advocacy services via clinics, such as the Juvenile Defenders Clinic. Students advise and directly represent children charged with delinquency offenses in the Boston Juvenile Court and handle all aspects of delinquency cases from arraignment through trial. Suffolk University also provides legal advice via their Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples Clinic, Immigrant Justice Clinic, and Family Advocacy Clinic. Suffolk University's various legal clinics provide essential services to residents who might otherwise require public legal aid. Similarly, Boston University runs the Criminal Law Clinics Program. For over 45 years, second and third-year law students at the BU School of Law have served the Boston community through the Criminal Law Clinics program. In the Defense track, students assist with defense responsibilities in approximately 200 criminal cases yearly in the Boston Municipal Court and the Boston Juvenile Court.

Rooted in Boston's Jamaica Plain neighborhood, Harvard's Legal Services Center has served the community for over 40 years, offering free legal assistance in areas such as housing, family law, consumer protection, tax, government benefits, and more. Harvard University also provides municipal education services via the Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston fellowships, representing both a direct saving in professional development costs and a long-term investment in public sector capacity.

Through these comprehensive good neighbor activities, AICUM institutions demonstrate their commitment to being active and supportive community partners. Their contributions help sustain vital community services, enhance local quality of life, and build stronger, more connected neighborhoods throughout Boston. **The pro bono legal services provided by AICUM institutions deliver immeasurable value to the Boston community, providing legal assistance to thousands of Boston residents who would otherwise face navigating complex legal challenges without representation. These services address systemic barriers that disproportionately affect low-income populations, creating lasting social benefits that ripple throughout Boston's neighborhoods.**

2.10. Social Environment Contributions

AICUM member institutions make vital contributions to Boston's social environment through programs and initiatives that foster social networks, promote inclusion, and strengthen community bonds. These efforts create spaces and opportunities for diverse communities to connect, support one another, and build the social capital that makes neighborhoods resilient and vibrant. From a conservative perspective, the value of these services and support systems is more than \$1.2 million over the study period.

Wentworth INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Wentworth Institute of Technology offers facilities usage free of charge to community organizations. Additionally, they make annual cash contributions to community organizations and projects.

The member institutions' social environment contributions often focus on addressing specific community needs while promoting broader social inclusion. For example, Emerson College's speech pathology services conducts free hearing screenings for students in the Boston public schools and carries out preschool speech-language screening of young children (ages 3 to 5), demonstrating how institutional resources can be deployed to support communities.

Many institutions create programming that specifically aims to build bridges between different community groups. Through community forums, cultural celebrations, and shared spaces, these programs help foster understanding and connection across social, cultural, and economic boundaries. These initiatives are particularly valuable in a city as diverse as Boston, where bringing different communities together in meaningful ways can strengthen the overall social fabric.

Technology access represents another crucial aspect of social environment contributions. Institutions like Emmanuel College and Wentworth Institute of Technology provide community access to essential digital resources, including computers, internet access, and software platforms. Wentworth's provision of free internet access to residents of the Alice Taylor Housing Development exemplifies how institutions can help bridge the digital divide while fostering social connectivity.

Support for community organizations forms a significant component of these social contributions. **Many institutions provide meeting spaces, resources, and other forms of support to local community groups, enabling them to better serve their constituencies. This infrastructure support helps sustain the network of community organizations that are essential to neighborhood vitality.** Educational institutions also leverage their academic resources to address social challenges. Through research partnerships, service-learning programs, and community-engaged scholarship, they help identify and address social issues while building stronger connections between campus and community. These collaborative approaches ensure that institutional resources are deployed in ways that respond to genuine community needs and priorities.

The impact of these social environment contributions extends beyond individual programs or initiatives. By creating spaces and opportunities for meaningful social interaction, supporting community organizations, and addressing barriers to inclusion, AICUM institutions help build more cohesive and

resilient communities. Their investments in social infrastructure and programming contribute to the development of social capital that benefits all Boston residents.

2.11. Additional Social Impact Categories

While the larger social impact categories are mentioned in previous sections, a few smaller—but no less important—categories remain.

City Fellowships and Co-Ops: Students Working Toward Advancing Boston Priorities

City Fellowships and Co-ops represent a significant way that AICUM institutions directly support Boston's municipal operations while providing valuable professional experience for students and recent graduates. Through programs like the Harvard Presidential City of Boston Fellowship, which funds Harvard College graduates to work as public service fellows in the Mayor's Office, institutions create pathways for talented individuals to contribute to City governance while developing civic-oriented careers. These programs provide City departments with skilled support staff at no cost to taxpayers, while participating fellows gain invaluable public sector experience.

Emmanuel College Service Summer Fellowships enable ten Emmanuel College students to spend ten weeks conducting community service projects in Boston, as they collaborate with a community partner for 25 hours a week, spending \$160,000 total in-kind. Boston University's City Hall Summer Fellows, funded by Boston University's Office of Government & Community Affairs, provides a unique opportunity for BPS high school graduates attending BU to gain experience in communications, social media, and policy development, while working closely with leaders at Boston City Hall. Fellows receive competitive pay over the course of the ten-week program.

These initiatives also prepare students for a civic-oriented career and add an estimated value of almost \$166,000 over the study time period.

Technology Transfer and Innovation Support

AICUM institutions serve as vital catalysts for technological innovation and knowledge transfer in Boston's innovation ecosystem. Through a combination of direct support services, technology infrastructure, and entrepreneurial programming, these institutions help bridge the gap between academic research and practical application in the community. While the aggregate sum of in-kind services is smaller as compared to other categories of impacts—almost \$60,000 total over the study time period—the incredible impact can have an extreme multiplier effect.

By making their entrepreneurial resources and expertise accessible to the broader community, AICUM institutions help ensure that Boston's innovative economy benefits all residents while supporting the growth of new businesses and social enterprises. The innovation multiplier effect generated by AICUM institutions extends far beyond social and economic impacts, creating cascading benefits that transform Boston's economy and healthcare landscape. When these premier institutions develop breakthrough

technologies or medical advances, they spark the creation of entirely new industries and market segments.

The density of world-class medical institutions within the AICUM network creates a unique innovation ecosystem that accelerates the development and deployment of new medical technologies and treatments. When breakthroughs occur, they don't just benefit individual institutions, they catalyze waves of follow-on innovation as other researchers build upon these advances. This virtuous cycle attracts additional talent and investment to Boston, strengthening its position as a global leader in medical innovation.

The technology transfer process from these institutions generates multiple layers of economic activity. Initial research funding supports jobs for scientists and staff, while successful innovations lead to patents, licensing revenues, and new company formation. These spinoff companies then create additional high-paying jobs, attract venture capital, and often grow into major employers themselves. The presence of successful biotech and health tech companies attract suppliers, specialized service providers, and complementary businesses, creating entire innovation districts that generate sustained economic growth.



3. Case Studies

Having analyzed the broad categories of contributions made by AICUM member institutions in Section 2, this section presents detailed case studies that illustrate how these institutions address Boston's most critical challenges. In each area—educational support, healthcare access, cultural enrichment, and infrastructure development—AICUM member institutions stand on the frontlines, providing essential resources and services that directly respond to community needs.

These case studies not only highlight the diversity of programs and approaches across different institutions but also demonstrate their collective impact. Additionally, we examine the "replacement value" of these services, which would cost the City of Boston to replicate these programs if member institutions could no longer provide them. This analysis underscores the substantial financial benefit these institutions provide beyond their direct contributions, effectively subsidizing vital services that would otherwise require significant municipal investment.

Member institutions contribute to Boston's thriving environment by lifting City services and offerings in different ways. In member institutions' reporting of services offered, all services and initiatives were communicated in terms of dollar value, by:

- Financial contribution
- In-kind contribution of resources (e.g., educational opportunities, healthcare supplies)
- Providing a service that has a market value (e.g., pro bono professional services valued at \$75 per hour)¹

3.1. K-12 Educational Support

AICUM member institutions demonstrate substantial commitment to K-12 education through diverse programming and financial support. These initiatives span direct educational services, scholarship programs, and specialized learning opportunities that enhance Boston's educational landscape. Boston University's Upward Bound Program provides academic support to low-income and first-generation college bound students. Serving approximately 90 Boston public school students annually, the program is based on BU's campus and features after school tutoring, weekday afternoon classes, college visits, field trips, and a rigorous six-week summer residential program. Northeastern University has significantly increased its Boston scholarship funding from \$16 million to \$30 million for Boston



Boston University's Menino Scholars Program and Community Service Awards exemplify institutional investment in local education. The two programs combined have provided over \$300 million in scholarships to Boston Public Schools graduates since 1973.

¹ Notably, two of the MIs—Harvard and Boston College—reported an additional metric of people served throughout the study period. Harvard has served more than 7,000 community members over the study time period; and Boston University reports serving almost 53,000 community members over the same time period.

residents, while Simmons University provides \$2.6 million in unique financial aid for Boston Public School graduates, including full tuition coverage for 39 BPS graduates.

Several institutions offer specialized programming targeting STEM education. Wentworth Institute of Technology conducts STEM outreach through workshops and summer camps, while Boston College's adoption of local grammar schools has led to five-fold enrollment increases, with comprehensive teacher development and substantial financial subsidies of about \$1 million annually. In the arts and specialized education, Berklee College of Music operates extensive youth programs including the Berklee City Music initiative for underserved 4th to 12th graders. The New England College of Optometry conducts vision screenings in Boston Public Schools, while Suffolk University provides college readiness workshops and mentoring programs. Urban College of Boston offers specialized programs for parents and caregivers to better support K-12 students at home, and MGH Institute of Health Professions partners with local schools for health education and career exploration.

Collectively, these efforts underscore the vital role that Boston's higher education institutions play in strengthening the City's social fabric. By fostering educational equity, providing financial support, and offering specialized learning opportunities, these institutions contribute to a more inclusive and accessible academic environment. Their collaborative commitment not only enhances individual student success but also enriches the broader Boston community, ensuring that resources, knowledge, and opportunities are widely available. Through sustained engagement and strategic partnerships, these colleges and universities create a cohesive support system that empowers residents and nurtures the City's future leaders.



FISHER COLLEGE

Fisher College offers College 101, which gives high school students the opportunity to earn college credits cost-free before they start their junior or senior years of high school. This program gives prospective students the chance to get ahead academically and financially.

Replacement Value Analysis: Harvard's Clinical and Pro Bono Programs

Harvard Law School's Clinical and Pro Bono Programs provide vital legal services to Boston residents who otherwise couldn't afford legal representation. In FY23 alone, these programs delivered more than 42,000 hours of free legal services across 49 clinics and organizations, with an operating budget of approximately \$5 million allocated to Boston cases.

- Total annual program cost: \$5 million
- Cost to Harvard per volunteer hour: \$119

If Boston Had to Replace This Program:

If the City of Boston needed to establish comparable legal services for its residents, costs would be significantly higher.

Personnel Costs:

- Market rate for public interest attorneys in Boston: \$90-150/hour
 - Using a conservative average rate of \$120/hour: $42,000 \text{ hours} \times \$120 = \$5,040,000$ for attorney time alone
- Administrative support and paralegals: Approximately \$1,200,000
- Management and supervision: Approximately \$750,000

Operational Requirements:

- Office space and facilities: \$800,000 annually
- Case management systems and technology: \$300,000
- Legal research resources and subscriptions: \$250,000
- Training and professional development: \$200,000
- Outreach and client intake systems: \$300,000

Expertise and Quality Factors:

- Access to high-quality, specialized legal expertise across multiple practice areas
- Established relationships with courts and community organizations

Total Estimated Replacement Cost: \$8.84 million annually

The replacement value exceeds Harvard's operating budget by approximately 77%, highlighting the remarkable efficiency and value proposition of the university's program. Beyond these direct replacement costs, the program delivers substantial societal benefits through preventative legal services that create downstream savings for the City—including avoided homelessness costs from eviction prevention, reduced domestic violence incidents through protective orders, improved tax compliance, and educational benefits from special education advocacy.

3.2. Medical Services

AICUM member institutions provide crucial medical services that expand healthcare access across Boston, particularly for underserved populations. These services range from specialized clinics to community health initiatives that fill critical gaps in the City's healthcare infrastructure. Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences operates community health programs providing oral health screenings and education throughout Boston, while Tufts University's School of Dental Medicine offers services to Boston area residents at significantly reduced costs. The dental services Tufts provides represents over \$6.6 million in in-kind contributions, with \$390,000 represented at their year-round pediatric dental clinic on-site at Josiah Quincy Elementary School (JQES).

Boston Medical Center, the primary teaching affiliate for Boston University's Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine, is the largest safety-net hospital in New England, while Suffolk University's various legal clinics provide essential healthcare advocacy services. The New England College of Optometry maintains partnerships with nine community health centers and academic medical centers in Boston, subsidizing crucial vision care services. Urban College of Boston facilitates health education workshops focusing on preventive care in urban communities.

Specialized medical services are also prominent. Simmons University's School of Nursing and Health Sciences Clinics offer health screenings and services to community members, while Boston College's Connell School of Nursing provides health screenings to underserved populations. Berklee College of Music and Wentworth Institute of Technology both contribute to community health through wellness programs and health education initiatives.

Simmons UNIVERSITY

Simmons University School of Nursing students have opportunities to volunteer in more than 850 clinical training sites, including world-class institutions like Massachusetts General Hospital, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston Children's Hospital, VA Boston Healthcare System, and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

Tufts UNIVERSITY

Tufts University's School of Dental Medicine operates a year-round pediatric dental clinic on-site at Josiah Quincy Elementary School (JQES), the largest public elementary school in the City of Boston. The clinic provides affordable dental care to students, with the goal of preventing oral diseases, treating common dental issues, and promoting overall oral health in a setting that is both accessible and comfortable for children. The clinic also serves pediatric patients with special health care needs, helping to ease the burden on families who might otherwise struggle to access comprehensive, high-quality dental care.

Replacement Value Analysis: Emerson's Robbins Speech, Language and Hearing Center

Emerson University's Robbins Speech, Language and Hearing Center provides a supportive environment where they support clients and their families with a variety of communication disorders and differences. Since opening in 1953, the Robbins Center has provided evaluation and treatment for children and adults with communication challenges as well as educational programs for family members and caregivers. To accurately assess replacement value, we must consider the full operational costs:

Personnel Costs:

- 12 full-time speech-language pathologists at market rate of \$99,991 annually each: \$1,199,892
- Administrative support at \$47,547 annually

Total personnel costs: \$1,247,439

Facility Requirements:

- Specialized clinical spaces with soundproofing, waiting areas, and administrative space
- Assessment and therapy equipment
- Electronic health records systems
- Insurance and Operational Expenses

If Boston Had to Replace This Program:

A comparable specialized speech and language center would cost approximately \$2 million, not including initial capital expenses for facility setup.

Together, these medical services illustrate the profound impact that Boston's AICUM higher education institutions have on community health and well-being. By expanding healthcare access, addressing critical gaps, and prioritizing underserved populations, these institutions ensure that quality care reaches those who need it most. Their collaborative efforts not only provide direct medical services but also foster long-term health education and advocacy, strengthening Boston's healthcare infrastructure. Through continued innovation and commitment, these colleges and universities play a vital role in promoting a healthier, more equitable future for all residents.

3.3. Cultural Enrichment

AICUM institutions significantly enhance Boston's cultural landscape through diverse programming and accessible venues that serve both academic and broader communities. These contributions represent substantial investments in the City's cultural vitality.

Berklee College of Music's engagement exemplifies this impact through their summer concerts in Boston's public parks and provision of free tickets to Boston agencies, valued at over \$17,000 annually.

Emerson College's Office of the Arts offers free online and in-person programming valued at approximately \$210,000, alongside free reading, publishing, and scholar series events worth an additional \$23,655.

Boston College's McMullen Museum of Art is free to the public, hosting two exhibits a year, companion lectures and events, as well as a permanent art collection. Harvard University also provides free access admissions to its museums, including the Harvard Art Museums and the Harvard Museums of Science and Culture. Emmanuel College hosts art exhibitions, theater performances, and lectures that engage the public, while the New England Conservatory of Music contributes through numerous public concerts and recitals. Suffolk University's theater productions and art exhibitions enhance downtown Boston's cultural vitality.

Urban College of Boston provides community workshops celebrating diverse cultures, while Boston College's Robsham Theater Arts Center hosts public performances. Northeastern University's Center for the Arts presents cultural events and exhibitions, and Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences organizes health fairs that incorporate cultural exchange. Tufts University and MGH Institute of Health Professions both contribute through public seminars and cultural events, while Wentworth Institute of Technology hosts community design exhibitions.



Suffolk University Hosts theater productions, art exhibitions, and public lectures that contribute to the cultural vitality of Boston. Additionally, Suffolk offers a Personal Enrichment Program (PEP) for individuals aged 65 and above to attend college-level courses on a tuition-free basis.

Replacement Value Analysis: Berklee's Community Cultural Programming

Berklee College of Music contributes to Boston's cultural landscape through summer concerts in public parks and free ticket programs, with a reported annual value of approximately \$17,000:

Program Components:

- Free summer concert series: \$16,000 annually
- Donated tickets to Boston agencies: \$1,255 annually (average ticket price of \$17)

Hidden Value Elements:

- Professional-quality performances by emerging artists, delivering spontaneous joy to attendees and passers-by
- World-class musical instruction and direction with professional sound equipment and technical expertise
- Administrative coordination and marketing
- Enhances the City of Boston's standing as a cultural destination

If Boston Had to Replace This Program:

If the City of Boston needed to create a comparable summer concert series and ticket program, the replacement costs would be substantially higher:

- Professional musicians at union rates: \$35,000
- Sound equipment rental and technicians: \$12,000
- Event management and permitting: \$8,000
- Marketing and outreach: \$5,000
- Insurance and contingencies: \$4,000

The total replacement cost for the City would be approximately \$64,000 annually—nearly four times the reported value. Additionally, the City would not have access to the same pool of emerging musical talent that Berklee can provide through its student body, potentially resulting in lower-quality performances or higher artist fees to attract comparable talent.

Collectively, these cultural initiatives highlight the integral role that Boston's higher education institutions play in enriching the City's artistic and intellectual life. By offering accessible performances, exhibitions, and community programs, these institutions foster a vibrant cultural ecosystem that benefits both residents and visitors. Their commitment to the arts, public dialogue, and cross-cultural exchange strengthens community engagement and ensures that diverse voices and creative expressions are celebrated. Through sustained investment in cultural programming, these colleges and universities contribute to a more dynamic, inclusive, and interconnected Boston.

3.4. Built Environment

AICUM institutions make substantial investments in Boston's physical infrastructure, enhancing public spaces and community facilities. These investments often include long-term commitments to maintenance and accessibility.

Northeastern University's transformation of the William E. Carter Playground represents a \$108 million commitment to construction and ongoing maintenance. Harvard University's Harvard-Allston Public Realm Flexible Fund supports critical public infrastructure projects, including parks, neighborhood beautification, and public safety initiatives. To date, the Flexible Fund has contributed \$5.35 M in neighborhood improvement projects. Boston College partnered with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) and invested \$2 million to transform Pine Tree Preserve, a previously overgrown and inaccessible 4-acre state-owned parcel in Brighton. The transformation converted this underutilized space into a welcoming natural preserve featuring new trees and native plantings, accessible walking trails, lighting, informational signage, and seating areas for community enjoyment.

Emerson College has played a pivotal role in neighborhood revitalization, particularly in Chinatown, where their development initiatives transformed underutilized buildings while preserving cultural heritage. Several institutions maintain public spaces beyond their immediate campus needs: Fisher College maintains Back Street, Emmanuel College manages Roberto Clemente field.

Simmons University maintains Daly Field through a public-private partnership, while Suffolk University contributes to downtown Boston's infrastructure through urban development projects. Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences supports the Kevin W. Fitzgerald Park through their annual Mission Hill road race, and Boston College manages a \$6.5 million neighborhood improvement fund. Tufts University, Urban College of Boston, and the New England Conservatory of Music all contribute to neighborhood enhancement through various infrastructure initiatives and community space maintenance programs.



Emerson College maintains the Rotch Playground, providing staffing, utilities, and maintenance support that enhances public access to recreational facilities. Emerson also invests in the development of downtown Boston through the restoration and adaptive reuse of historic buildings and providing zoning advocacy efforts.

Replacement Value Analysis: Northeastern's Carter Playground Project

Northeastern University's transformation of the William E. Carter Playground represents one of the most significant investments in Boston's public recreational infrastructure by an educational institution:

Investment Components:

- Initial construction: \$26 million
- Long-term maintenance commitment: \$82 million (over 30 years)
- Total commitment: \$108 million

Project Scope:

- Comprehensive renovation of public recreation space
- State-of-the-art athletic facilities
- Accessibility improvements and sustainable design elements
- Community programming support

If Boston Had to Replace This Project:

- If the City of Boston needed to fund this project entirely through municipal resources:
- The \$26 million initial construction cost would represent approximately 1.3% of Boston's annual capital budget
- The long-term maintenance commitment of \$2.73 million annually would require ongoing allocation from the Parks Department budget, potentially displacing other neighborhood park improvements
- The city would need to mobilize engineering and project management resources currently dedicated to other critical infrastructure projects
- Financing costs through municipal bonds would add approximately 15-20% to the total project cost

Beyond direct replacement costs, the city would lose the expertise and innovation that Northeastern brought to the project design and implementation. The university's approach incorporated advanced sustainable design elements and programming that might not be readily available through standard municipal procurement processes.

The true replacement value when considering all factors likely exceeds \$125 million over the 30-year commitment period.

Together, these investments in Boston's built environment demonstrate the profound impact that AICUM institutions have on the City's physical and social landscape. By revitalizing public spaces, supporting infrastructure projects, and maintaining community facilities, these colleges and universities contribute to a more accessible, sustainable, and inclusive urban environment. Their long-term commitments to neighborhood enhancement not only improve quality of life for residents but also foster stronger connections between campuses and surrounding communities. Through these efforts, they play a crucial role in shaping a more vibrant and resilient Boston.

3.5. Conclusion: Savings to Boston Via Member Institution Efficiencies

The social programs and services provided by AICUM's Boston higher education institutions deliver substantial cost savings to the City of Boston by effectively subsidizing essential social and civic services that would otherwise require municipal funding. Through their collective efforts, these institutions shoulder significant portions of the City's educational, healthcare, cultural, and social service needs, allowing Boston to redirect its limited resources to other critical priorities.

These institutional contributions represent a highly efficient model of service delivery, as the colleges and universities can leverage their existing infrastructure, expertise, and resources to provide services at a fraction of what it would cost the City to deliver them directly. Rather than building new facilities, hiring specialized staff, or developing programs from scratch, Boston benefits from established institutional capabilities that have been refined over decades of community service. This arrangement not only saves the City hundreds of millions of dollars annually but also ensures that services are delivered by organizations with deep expertise in their respective fields, resulting in higher quality outcomes for Boston residents.



Boston College awards grants for physical public realm improvement projects to deserving organizations under its \$6.5M Neighborhood Improvement Fund (NIF). The \$6.5M fund has distributed \$6.3M since its inception in 2015. BC also collaborates with local schools to provide tutoring, mentoring, and educational resources, as well as scholarships to BPS students.

4. Conclusion and Future Directions

The AICUM Boston-based institutions—conservatively aggregated over a six-year period from FY2018 to FY2023—saved the City of Boston almost \$1 billion in services and programs that benefited the citizens of Boston. Beyond the cost to these member institutions, the value to the citizens of Boston is much greater than the programmatic costs, displaying a multiplier of value vs. cost up to 4 times the costs. These benefits continue to be offered on an annual basis and continue to lift the entire City of Boston community.

The potential consequences of shifting from service-based contributions to increased PILOT payments suggest that such a change would significantly reduce the overall value provided to Boston residents, particularly affecting those who rely most heavily on these institutional resources and services. **Instead of pursuing increased PILOT payments, a strategy that strengthens and expands successful service-based partnerships would likely serve Boston's communities better and maintain the vital role these institutions play in supporting the City's social infrastructure.**

4.1. Strategic Implications

The transformation from service-based contributions to monetary PILOT payments would fundamentally alter the relationship between educational institutions and the City of Boston in a negative way:

1. **Resource Efficiency:** Educational institutions can often provide services more efficiently than the City due to existing infrastructure and expertise. Converting these contributions to monetary payments would likely result in reduced overall benefit to the community and inefficient expenditures to pay more for programs and services that are sub-par to those currently being offered.
2. **Community Integration:** The current model encourages active engagement between institutions and their communities. A shift to purely monetary contributions could lead to increased isolation of institutions from their neighborhoods.
3. **Innovation and Adaptation:** The current system allows institutions to respond dynamically to community needs, developing innovative programs and services. A standardized PILOT payment system would be less responsive to evolving community requirements.
4. **Sustainable Impact:** Many current programs create lasting positive change through education, healthcare, and workforce development. Monetary payments alone might not achieve the same long-term community benefits.

4.2. Closing Perspective

As Boston and its higher education institutions navigate an increasingly challenging landscape marked by disruptive federal policies, enrollment declines, financial constraints, and evolving public expectations, it is crucial to recognize the enduring commitment these institutions maintain to the City they call home. Despite these headwinds, AICUM member institutions continue to demonstrate their dedication to Boston's wellbeing through contributions that span education, healthcare, cultural enrichment, and physical infrastructure—reflecting the remarkable diversity of their institutional missions and strengths. The true opportunity before Boston lies not in viewing these institutions primarily as sources of untapped tax revenue, but rather in harnessing their distinct expertise, resources, and enthusiastic commitment to service. By acknowledging both the challenges these institutions face and the significant value they create, Boston leadership can forge a collaborative path forward that addresses the City's most pressing needs while respecting the vital role these institutions play in the City's social fabric. This approach recognizes that the greatest public benefit comes not from transactional financial arrangements, but from strategic partnerships that leverage the unique capabilities and shared commitment of Boston's educational anchors to create lasting positive change for all residents.



5. Appendix

About Econsult Solutions, Inc.

This report was produced by Econsult Solutions, Inc. (ESI). ESI provides businesses and public policy makers with consulting and thought leadership services in urban economics, real estate, transportation, public infrastructure, economic development, public policy and finance, strategic planning, as well as expert witness services for litigation support.

ESI combines robust quantitative analysis with trusted expert insights to create sustainable solutions. The firm collaborates with its clients, and draws in expertise, when necessary, from our network of experts and partners across industries, regions, and management practices. Based in Philadelphia, the firm supports clients nationwide.

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