



# Bridges 2023 Impact Report

A System of Care

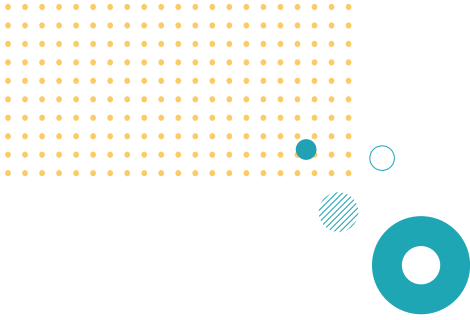


Individually,  
we are  
one drop.  
**Together,**  
we are an  
ocean. 

RYUNOSUKE SATORO







## Empowering Ohio's young people



Since 2018, the Bridges program empowers Ohio's former foster youth to achieve success in adulthood. Leveraging community partnerships has proved to be a critical strategy for Bridges participants to achieve meaningful connections with peers, mentors, and other caring people in the lives. Under the leadership of the Child and Family Health Collaborative of Ohio, the Bridges program has produced measurable and beneficial improvements for young people and the entire State of Ohio, as measured through the domains of employment, education, housing, and youth well-being.

**We are proud of the success of Bridges participants, particularly their ability to be resilient, set and achieve life goals, and their confidence in their future.**

“Adulting is hard, and  
Bridges makes it easier.”





## Education & Employment

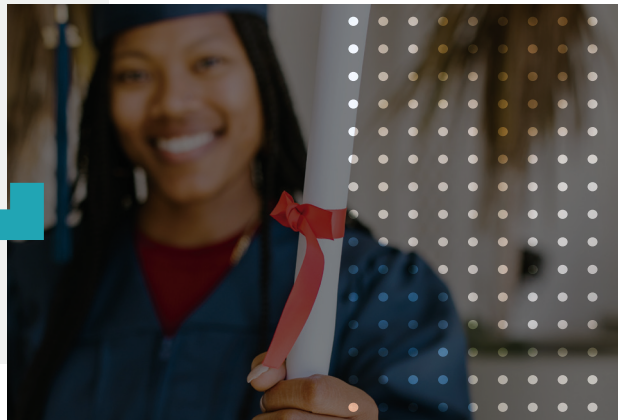
Students obtaining their educational goals have a [higher chance](#) of achieving financial stability and contributing to Ohio's economy. Bridges provides support and mentoring to empower young people to achieve their educational and career goals. During the past year, our Bridges program team were inspired by the goals, dreams, and accomplishments made by participants.



### One young adult enrolled in Bridges powerfully stated,

"No one in my family made it past high-school. My dad didn't even make it past junior high. I am breaking the cycle and becoming a role model for my siblings."

"My Bridges Liaison supported me and attended my graduation."



# Going **beyond** employment

Our team mentored hundreds of Bridges participants to secure meaningful employment opportunities. This includes participating in job training and apprenticeship programs, higher education, and full and part-time work.



Bridges plays a key role in empowering young adults to further their education.

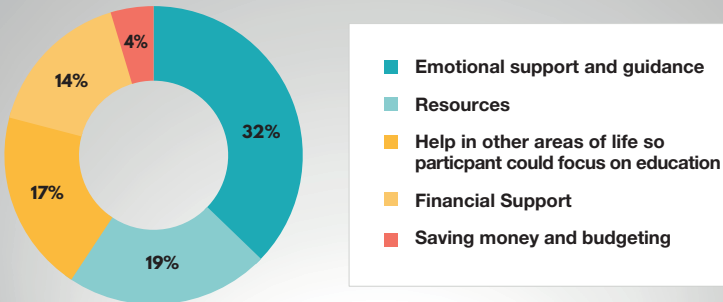


Young adults routinely express that the Bridges team provides emotional support, encouragement, and guidance, which keeps them motivated and on track.



Young adults enrolled in Bridges also credit the program with providing enough informational resources, housing, and financial support necessary for them to be stable enough to focus on pursuing higher education.

**How Bridges has Supported Educational Goals**





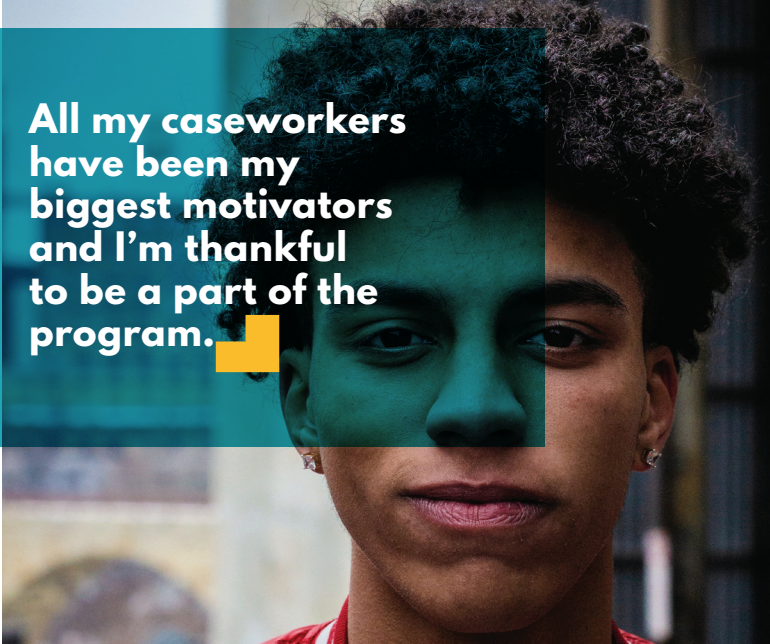
## Pursuing **educational** goals

FROM JULY OF 2022- JUNE OF 2023

73% of Bridges participants were pursuing an educational goal.

15% of participants were already past high school and pursuing higher education (spanning from vocational training, associate's, and bachelor's degree programs).

Importantly, approximately 75% of Bridges participants considered themselves on track to meet their education goal.



**All my caseworkers  
have been my  
biggest motivators  
and I'm thankful  
to be a part of the  
program.**



“Bridges allowed me to take time and focus on my mental health. I was able to stabilize myself enough to pursue college and work.”

**Possessing a strong sense of support and encouragement is essential for any young adult to be motivated to set and achieve big goals.**

“My Bridges worker advocated for me to stay in school.”



“My worker explained my options for education, and she helped me get a job and even promoted.”



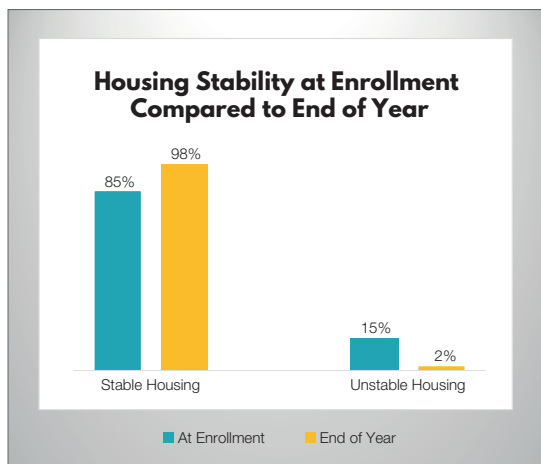
**Bridges is helping me set goals so I can get my own house with a big fenced in yard for my dog one day.**



## Housing Stability

**Securing safe and stable housing is a primary goal of Bridges**, as all young adults, including those at risk of homelessness, deserve a dependable place to call home. Much of the case management work provided by Bridges liaisons in state fiscal year (SFY) 23 was at the community-level and focused on housing. Our team empowered Bridges participants to identify their housing goals, find apartments to lease, prepare young adults for their first place, and to also engage with landlords when appropriate.

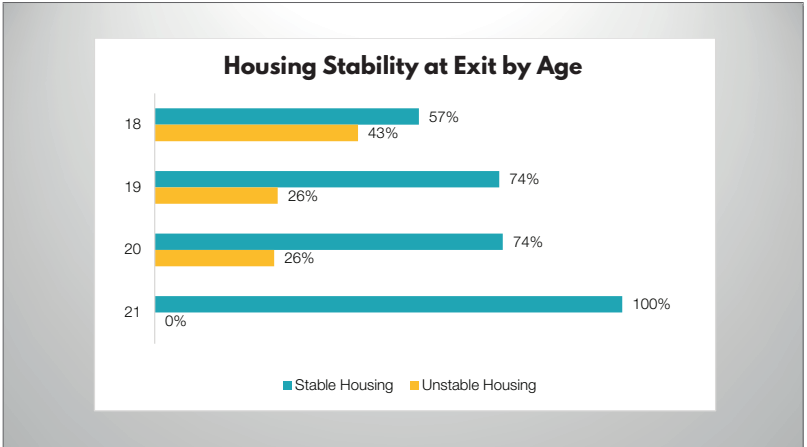
Due to inflation, increased rent prices and limited housing availability, it was more challenging than ever to support the young adults to achieve their housing goals. During the year, our team was able to rise above these new challenges and support Bridges participants to secure housing. In fact, of participants who found themselves in unstable housing situations, our team facilitated the successful transition of 9 out of 10 participants into new, stable housing situations. We remain dedicated to supporting the other 1 out of 10 participants to set and achieve housing goals and make the necessary moves and transitions from one living situation to another.



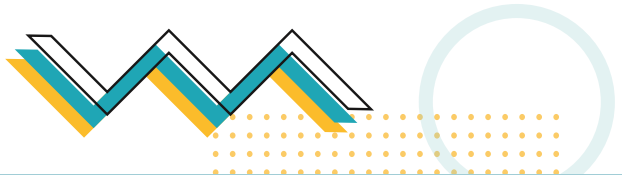
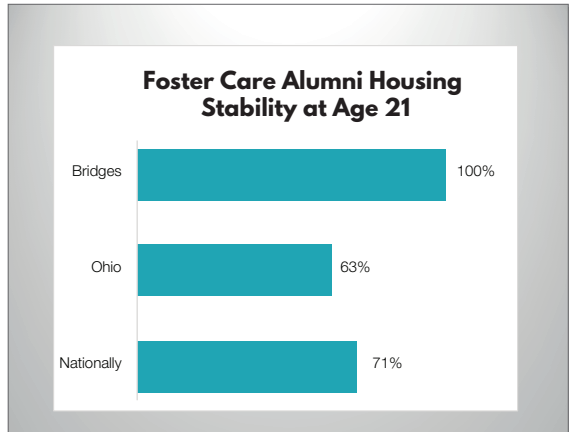




As stable housing is an important pillar to success it is important to note that **100% of Bridges participants who exited the program when reaching the age of 21 transitioned to independence with stable housing in SFY 23.** This is a statistic that we are all collectively proud of achieving. In addition, the majority of Bridges participants who exited the program early, including on their own accord or due to not meeting eligibility, also exited with stable housing. As the chart shows below, the longer a young adult is enrolled in Bridges, the more likely they are to secure stable housing.



Further, according to National Youth Transition Database (NYTD) service and outcome reports, Bridges participants who reach the age of 21 are 37% more likely to secure stable housing than foster care alumni in Ohio and 29% more likely than foster care alumni nationally.

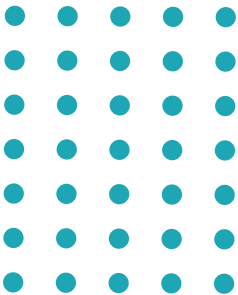




## Well-Being & Promoting Success

Promoting well-being is one of Bridges' chief strategies to promoting success for Ohio's former foster youth. With the rise in young adult mental health awareness, it is important to ensure Bridges participants are equipped with the resources needed to navigate these challenges.

On the national level, a recent **Harvard-led study** on well-being among Americans found that young adults in the U.S. have very low rates of well-being. Our team applied this study's methodology on Ohio young adults enrolled in Bridges to identify any potential comparative differences. Our survey of Bridges participants asked them to rate their happiness, health, purpose, character, relationships, and financial stability.



Harvard Study: <https://hfh.fas.harvard.edu/measuring-flourishing>

**Our team applied the same methodology with our Bridges participants to identify any comparative differences.**

**This shows that the Bridges program is making a powerful and meaningful impact on young adults' well-being.**

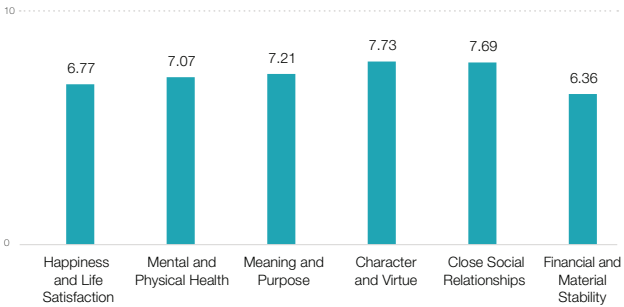
“My Bridges Liaison has always been there when I needed advice or help. When I need resources or information, I call her.”



“My Bridges liaison goes out of his way to check on me. He’s the greatest of all time.”

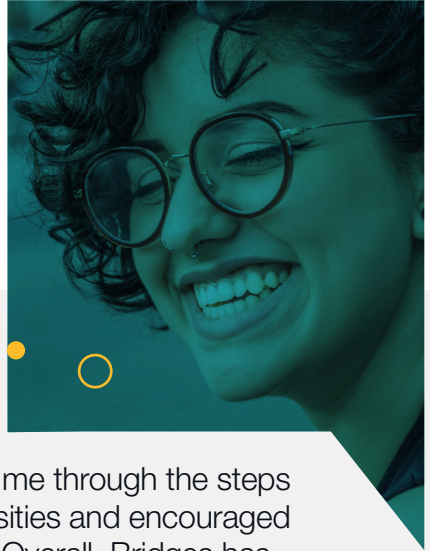


### Well-being Among Bridges Survey Respondents





"I appreciate the support and opportunities the program has given me."



"Bridges has helped me through the steps of applying to universities and encouraged me to stay on track. Overall, Bridges has guided me into adulthood."

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services administers Bridges through a contract with the Child and Family Health Collaborative of Ohio, (The Collaborative) which works in partnership with experienced provider agencies throughout the state. Through regular meetings with Bridges representatives, participants develop goals, learn skills, and access services related to employment, education, health care, and household maintenance.

The Bridges program supports eligible young adults who emancipated from foster care after the age of 18 to request housing and other supportive services until their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. To be eligible for Bridges a participant must meet one of the following criteria: are in school, working, participating in an employment program, or have a medical condition that prevents them from going to school or working.

The Collaborative is a nonprofit provider network, affiliated with the Ohio Children's Alliance, that is advancing a System of Care for children and families across Ohio.

Learn more here:

