Boston Builds Credit is helping Bostonians build credit to achieve financial wellbeing. Since its launch in 2017, BBC has engaged over 12,000 Boston residents in financial coaching, workshops and financial check-ups, with more than 2,000 achieving a prime credit score or 30-point credit score increase. More importantly, BBC provides people with the information and skills to achieve their financial goals.

At age 18, Jose took on student loans with little understanding of how they worked and how they could affect his credit down the road. After some stops and starts on his educational journey and facing personal hardship, Jose felt overwhelmed by interest-laden loan payments and stopped making them altogether.

In his late 20s, with loans in default, no savings, and a low credit score, yet determined to improve his situation, Jose enrolled at Bunker Hill Community College, where he enrolled in free financial coaching through the Community College Credit Building Initiative, a Boston Builds Credit program led by United Way, JVS-Boston and Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion with funding from the City of Boston. Together Jose and his coach strategized to raise his credit score and build savings. They sorted out his loans, identified errors in his credit report, and created a budget. With his coach’s guidance, Jose opened a secured credit card—a safe credit-building tool—and began paying into his employer’s 401k.

In just four months, Jose raised his credit score by nearly 30 points, took control of his student loan payments, and began saving for the present and future. Most importantly, he gained the knowledge and confidence to take control of his finances and reach his goals.

“Words cannot express how much my coach has done for me, getting my life on track for true financial stability,” Jose said. “This program helped me overcome my overwhelming anxiety about my financial future.”