



A Year in Review

Defy Ventures 2023 Annual Report

DEFY
VENTURES



Dear Defy Community,

As we entered 2023, the Defy team knew it was going to be a busy year. Our plans included the launch of a new chapter in Pennsylvania, the creation of a post-release well-being program pilot, completion of a fully revised 4th edition of our CEO of Your New Life (CEO YNL) prison curriculum, and the continued growth of our existing programs and partnerships. We were able to do all that and more.

In 2023, Defy served nearly 1,000 incarcerated individuals across 31 cohorts in more than 20 partner facilities across the country. In these prisons, youth centers, and transitional facilities, Defy's CEO YNL program helped people transform and prepare for success in reentry. With waitlists exceeding available spots, it was clear that there is no shortage of people behind prison walls eager to dive into our programs, engage with volunteers, and transform their futures.

As our prison programs have picked up, so has the number of Defy Entrepreneurs in Training (EITs) returning home. In response to a clear and observed need to provide more specialized well-being support for EITs after release, I'm excited to share that we have designed and launched a well-being support group, "Real Talk Defy." Designed by one of our justice-impacted leaders on our program team, Real Talk offers program graduates a space to share their reentry challenges with Defy peers. The feedback was that it was a space they couldn't find anywhere else, so we are now working to scale Real Talk to every Defy chapter.

Adding to our program success, our post-release entrepreneurship programs have continued apace, and we were pleased to have had the opportunity to fund a graduate of our Accelerator Program with a \$10,000 grant in support of his coaching business.

While 2023 was a positive one for our programs, concerning policy trends emerged within the racial and criminal justice spaces. While the recently reported data is especially murky, the longer trends show violent crime falling over the past 2 years ([see this excellent reporting from the Marshall Project](#)). However, a perception exists that crime is getting worse, accompanied by a return to the "tough on crime" talking points; the ghosts of demonstrably failed policies of the past are unfortunately reappearing. I cannot say strongly enough that we have plenty of evidence to show that those policies filled our prisons, but they did not make us safer, healthier, or wealthier as a society.

As members of this Defy community, I hope your experiences with Defy Entrepreneurs in Training and the transformations that have taken place in so many of their lives serve as a heavy counterweight to some of the rhetoric we are hearing today. Please carry that with you into your spheres of influence—we've come too far to go back now. Bring your friends and colleagues into this community, too. We welcome them to challenge their perceptions and to be part of our efforts to change mindsets to give people with criminal histories their best shot at a second chance. I intend to meet this moment with the humanity and truth that Defy offers. I hope you will join me.

With Gratitude,

Andrew Glazier, *President and CEO, Defy Ventures Inc.*

2023 Annual Report

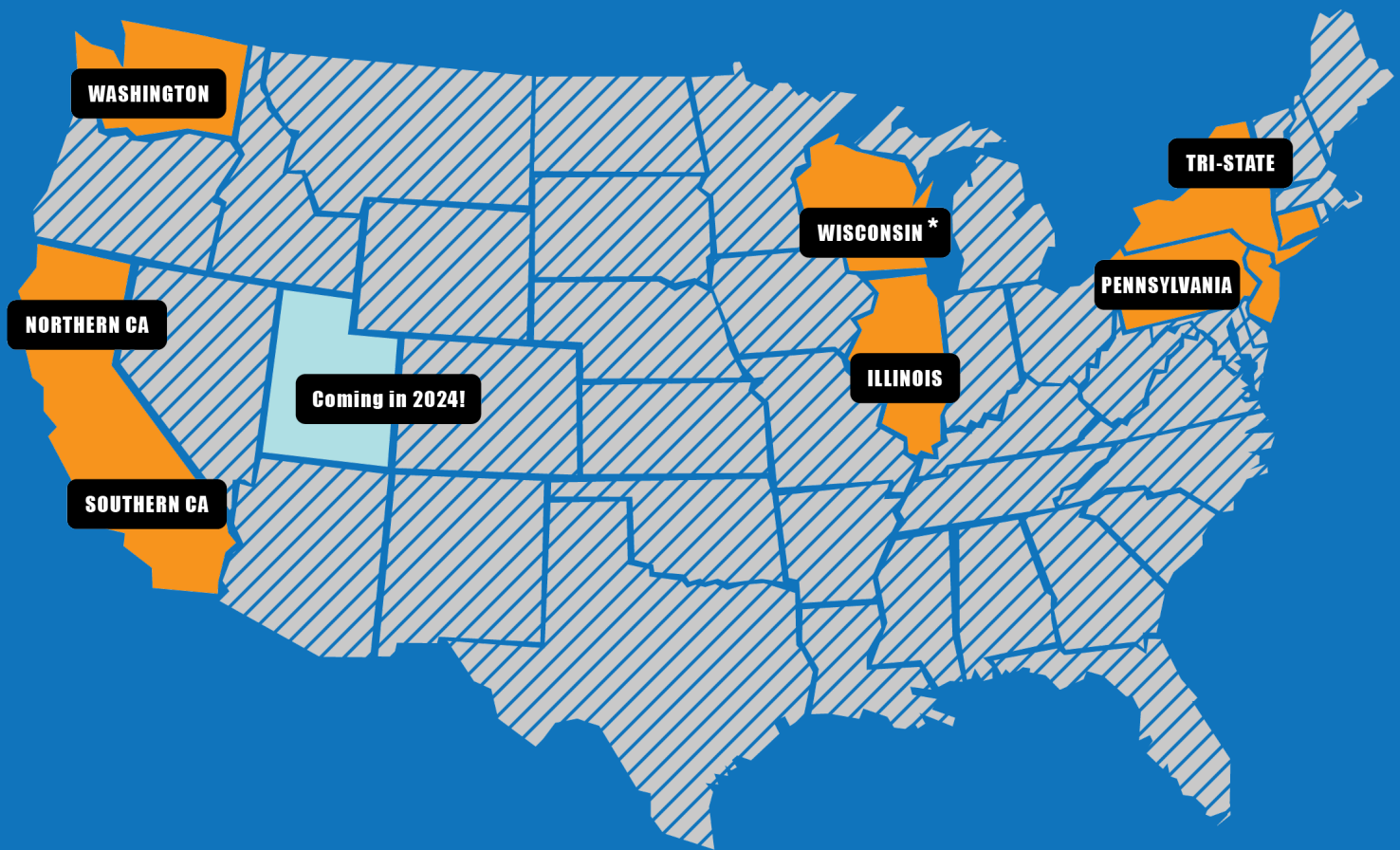
Table of Contents

Defy Ventures Community	1
Entrepreneurs in Training	2
Defy Partners	3
Defy Volunteers	4
How Defy's Programs Create Impact	5
All-Time Impact	6
2023 Financial Position	7
Community of Supporters	8
In Their Own Words	9-10
How to Get Involved and Support Defy's Work	11
The Defy Volunteer Experience	12

Where We Serve

Defy Ventures Community

Defy's Mission is to shift mindsets to give people with criminal histories their best shot at a second chance. **Our Vision** is to cut the recidivism rate in half by leveraging entrepreneurship to increase economic opportunity and transform lives.



Defy operated programs in *8 states*, and we were in over *20 facilities* by the end of 2023, nearly doubled from the previous year.

Defy served *1,274 Entrepreneurs in Training (EITs)* in 2023, and engaged *872 volunteers*.

**Defy Ventures Affiliates are independently governed non-profit organizations that operate in a collaborative relationship with Defy Ventures and deliver our program under license.*

Defy Community Spotlight

Entrepreneurs in Training

As always, Defy's Entrepreneurs in Training (EITs) bring a wealth of experience, drive, and talent to the Defy community. We're proud that many of the 1,200+ EITs we served in 2023 experienced meaningful milestones and progress in their journeys.



Cordelia participated in Defy's Entrepreneurship Bootcamp and Accelerator programs in Illinois and successfully launched her self-care kit business as a result. She shared that the time management and digital literacy skills in Defy's program in particular helped her in her business, her day job, and her personal life. Applying aspects of what she learned through Defy's program, Cordelia also secured a job with higher pay while enrolled in Defy's program.



“Defy has helped me understand that I can still work my 9 to 5 while building my business, and they've provided me with the tools and skills to make it possible. I'm happy about the growth within myself through Defy's program and I'm excited to share that my self-care kit business is growing! Thank you so much for this opportunity.”

—Cordelia, Defy EIT

Defy Community Spotlight

Defy Partners

Defy's work is possible thanks to the many funding, program, and employer partners we have in our community. One of our new funding and program partners in 2023 was the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission, which allowed us to run our first in-prison programs in New Jersey, serving young adults ages 18–24.



Business coaching day event in July 2023

“In New Jersey, we believe in second chances and we recognize that all young people should have access to educational and career programs that help them achieve success in life.”

—Matthew J. Platkin, Attorney General of New Jersey

Defy Community Spotlight

Defy Volunteers

Defy is grateful to have many incredible volunteers in our community who help make second chances possible! One of these volunteers is Michael, who is part of the Defy SoCal advisory board and was instrumental in harnessing his extensive network at Google to support SoCal volunteer events in 2023. He facilitated tours at Google for EITs, hosted the Defy Investment Committee event during which an EIT pitched his business and was awarded \$10,000 from Defy, and he was the driving force behind the GoogleServe volunteer event.



Michael at the June 2023 GoogleServe event

“Partnering with Defy has truly changed my life. Seeing how entrepreneurship can positively impact the human spirit is incredible and I witness that every time I get to volunteer. I feel truly blessed to be part of this amazing community.”

—Michael, *Venture Capital and Private Equity Partner Manager, Google*

What We Do

How Defy's Programs Create Impact

Defy's programs work toward accomplishing our mission and vision by supporting Defy Entrepreneurs in Training (EITs) along the reentry journey both before and after release from prison. The diagram illustrates Defy's programs along our two program pathways: the Career and Reentry Pathway and the Entrepreneurship Pathway.

Our Programs Before Release:

CEO of Your New Life (CEO YNL) is a holistic, six-to-nine-month program that provides personal development, career readiness, and entrepreneurship training during incarceration or within transitional facilities.

In 2023, Defy launched 19 CEO YNL cohorts, serving over 960 and graduating 475 incarcerated people.

After Release:

Defy provides ongoing post-release programs along two main pathways: the **Career and Reentry Pathway**, and the **Entrepreneurship Pathway**. The Career and Reentry Pathway supports EITs who have completed CEO YNL and helps them transition home through a supportive community, workshops for skill development, referrals to service providers, and connections to employers.

In 2023, Defy welcomed 95 EITs home!

Defy's Entrepreneurship Pathway: The **Entrepreneurship Bootcamp** is a 17-week program for formerly incarcerated people with stable housing and employment, who are interested in exploring entrepreneurship. The **Business Accelerator** supports EITs through the process of incorporating, launching, and growing new businesses, and includes advanced coursework in entrepreneurship and business management.

In 2023, Defy served 141 EITs in our Entrepreneurship Pathway, and EITs launched 16 new small businesses!

The **Defy Entrepreneur Network (DEN)** keeps EITs who have completed the Entrepreneurship Pathway and launched their businesses connected to a community of support through workshops and events.

Program Pathways

- Reentry and Career Pathway
- Entrepreneurship Pathway

Before Release:

CEO of Your New Life
(CEO YNL)

After Release:

Career and
Reentry Pathway

Entrepreneurship
Bootcamp

Employment
*Goal after
program completion

Business
Accelerator

Business Launch
*Goal after
program completion

Defy Entrepreneur
Network (DEN)

All-Time Impact

7,900+

Defy Entrepreneurs in
Training (EITs) served

7,600+

Volunteers engaged
in Defy's mission

200+

Businesses launched
by Defy EITs

<10% 1-Year Recidivism*

vs. the national average of 20%

<15% 3-Year Recidivism*

vs. the national average of 39%

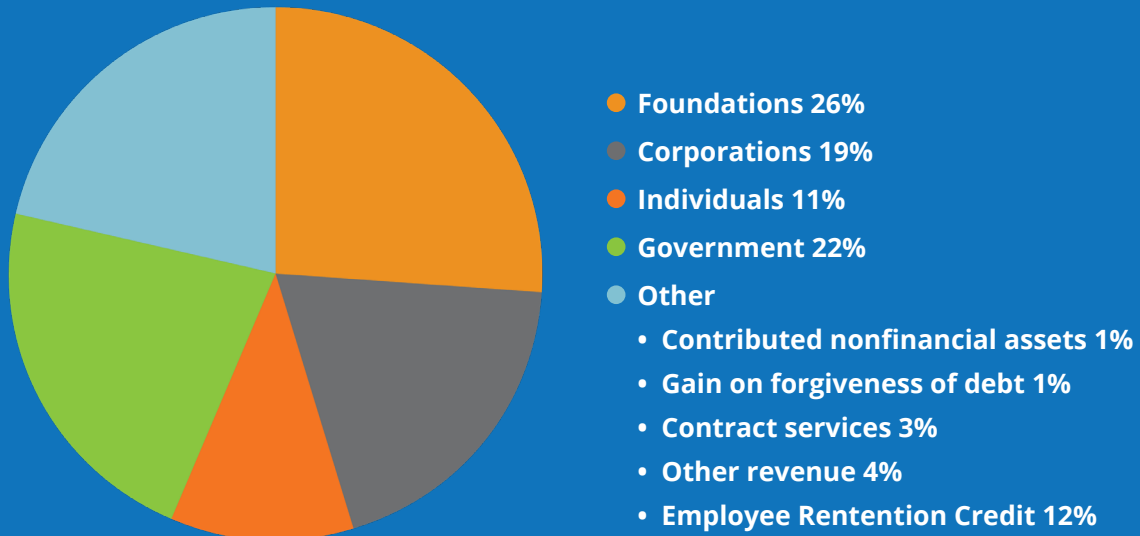
**Sample size for 1-year recidivism rate is 337, and for 3-year rate is 218.
According to an updated report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the
national 1-year rate is now 20%, and the 3-year rate is 39%.*

2023 Financial Position

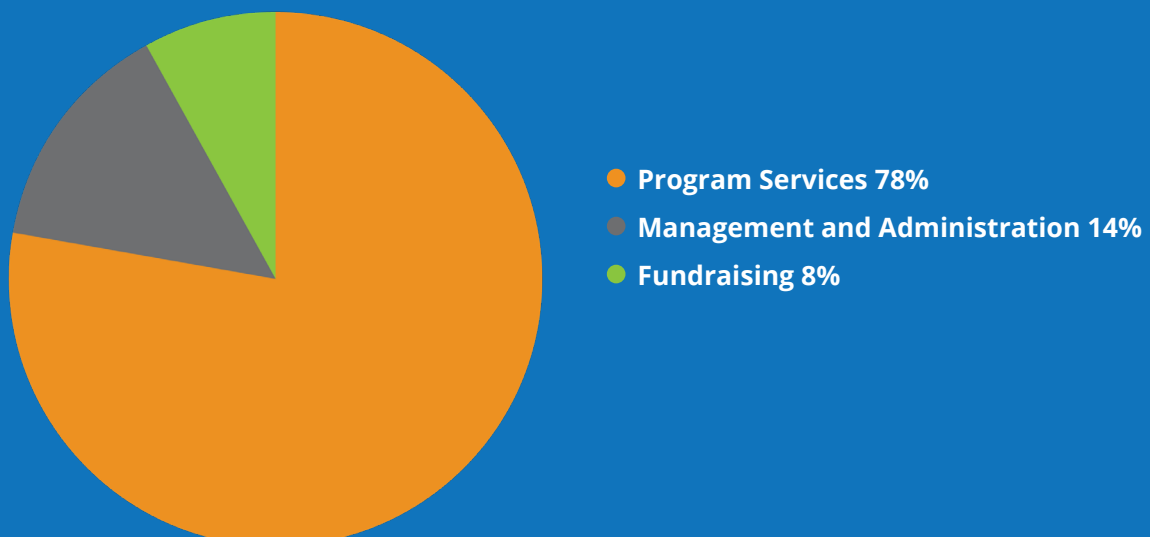
Defy Ventures' 2023 total public support & revenue was \$4,104,118.

For more information, please see our [audited financials](#).

Revenue



Expenses





Community of Supporters

Defy's work is only possible through partnership across sectors including funders, program partners, employment partners, and business community volunteers and allies. We are grateful for our many partners in 2023. Together, we can create a world of true second chances and legitimate first chances.



● Funding Partner ● Program Partner ● Employment Partner

Program Partners provided workshops for EITs, helped develop programs and curriculum with Defy, or provided event space or other non-monetary resources to run Defy programs.

Employment Partners hired or employed Defy EITs.

From a Defy EIT In Their Own Words

Gratitude & strength

Growing up I never considered a life of crime
School was a favorite past time
Somewhere along the way, I lost my will to try
I have spent years trying to discover
who I am meant to be
I lived in fear of myself, acting in all my insecurities
Abandonment led to seeking attention,
In all the wrong people, places, and things
Selfishly I chose to puppeteer life on strings.

My choices led to prison statistics and grief
I lost all motivation with nothing to believe
Fourteen years in, I discovered something new
with the pain of my past, hope and intention grew.
I persevered in growth, with family and friends alive
We defied the odds and became CEOs of life.
DEFY enterprise came and changed my view
offerring a different look
In 4 easy to read books.
I know have a chance to succeed
with my fellow friends, family, and EITS.

Today I stand here a different woman then when I came
like many of you here, I am sure you feel the same
we all have come from different walks
drove down different lanes
Yet through life experiences we all can relate.
All of us here know the feelings of pain
at least once in our lives have been afraid
With love we all know comes heartbreak
Every loss produces a different ache.

BUT

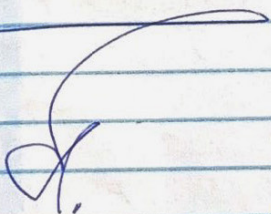
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In Their Own Words

In this room there is so much power and faith
Enduring every obstacle that has ever stood in our way
We all have stories to relay
Testimonies of addiction, success, and change
We are all the masters of our minds and specific trades
We have made our beds, but in growth we lay.

I am so grateful to be standing with you in grace
To Family, friends, and DEFY we must give thanks
Because of them there is nothing we cannot face
Each of us have fallen, yet we have overcome
Defying the odds in every single way
As EITs & CEOs of our new life it is time to reframe
Stand firm in our business, beliefs, and be brave
DEFY has provided us the chance to be
Anything and Everything we can possibly dream

So... Give it up to the Graduation Class of DEFY
2023



By Jamie
Founder of Portline Queen.

How to Get Involved and Support Defy's Work

Volunteer

Defy can only achieve our mission with the help of the broader community. By volunteering with Defy, you're helping to shift mindsets and create a more inclusive economy and society. You can find our available volunteer opportunities on our [volunteer website](#).

Volunteer opportunities include:

- Prison program events
- Community-based transitional facility program events
- Community-based entrepreneurship events
- Community building events

Corporate Partnership Opportunities and Fair Chance Hiring Workshops

Defy offers corporate volunteering opportunities, fair chance hiring workshops, and other ways for your company to make a difference in creating a world of fair chances for all. Contact us to learn more!

Donation Information

We are so grateful for the support of our community!

You can support Defy's work with a donation [online](#) or by sending a check to:

Defy Ventures, Inc.

P.O. Box 102117

Pasadena, CA 91189

Defy's tax ID number is 27-3611908.

You can find other ways to donate (like contributing stock or cryptocurrency) [on our website](#).

To connect with us, please contact info@defyventures.org.

The Defy Volunteer Experience

Volunteering is a mutually transformative and beneficial experience for both Defy Entrepreneurs in Training (EITs) and for volunteers. Through Defy's programs and volunteer events, all participants experience humanizing connections, changing perceptions about human potential, challenging of mindsets, and personal growth. Volunteers are an integral part of Defy's program, and we invite you to join us. As a volunteer, you are a part of our model to create systemic change and shift mindsets!

Defy has in-prison and post-release volunteer opportunities that take place both in-person and virtually.

- **Prison Program Events (In-Person):** Prison events are full-day experiences that are instrumental to Defy's in-custody program, CEO of Your New Life. Prison-based events take place in person and will often include bus transportation to and from the correctional facility. [Read more here!](#)
- **Community Transitional Facility Events (In-Person):** Like prison events, community transitional facility events are instrumental to Defy's in-custody program, CEO of Your New Life, serving people who have started their reentry journey at a community-based transitional facility. Transitional facility events are typically 3–6 hour experiences that take place in person within metropolitan areas where Defy chapters serve.
- **Community-Based Entrepreneurship Program Events (Virtual):** Virtual volunteer events support Defy's post-release Entrepreneurship programs, including a 17-week Entrepreneurship Bootcamp, a Pre-Accelerator, and Business Accelerator that are open to anyone formerly incarcerated in the states where we serve. These events are typically two-hour, virtual experiences.

Event Locations:

- Virtual Defy Volunteer Events (Zoom)
- Defy California: In-Person Events across Southern and Northern California
- Defy Tri-State: In-Person Events in NY, NJ, CT
- Defy Illinois: In-Person Events across IL
- Defy Washington: In-Person Events in the greater Seattle area
- Defy Pennsylvania: In-Person Events in Philadelphia

Contact partnerships@defyventures.org with any questions.



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For more information, email us at info@defyventures.org or visit us at defyventures.org.