

A high-angle photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a red short-sleeved top and a necklace with a cross pendant, working at a coffee bar. She is focused on a small white cup of coffee. The bar is equipped with several stainless steel coffee machines, a digital scale, and stacks of orange and blue saucers. In the background, there are wooden cabinets and a white countertop with a sink and a blender.

PRODIGY VENTURES

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Prodigy Family,

It is with great honor that I share 2023 highlights as Prodigy's first Executive Director after longtime leader and Prodigy's Founder, Steph Frances, transitioned her role. As many of you know, Steph's incredible vision and leadership were a catalyst for Prodigy's inception and its impact over its first eight years. We are forever grateful for her leadership and glad to see her still stopping by the shops for an occasional cortado!

In 2023, Prodigy celebrated 12 months of operations at the new Globeville shop and we have been excited to see the momentum this shop is starting to gain with community. The expansion to a second location allowed us to provide more opportunities for young adults to learn and grow in a 12 month apprenticeship. However, **2023 also saw the most applicants for our apprenticeships in our history with 170 young people applying for roughly 25 openings.** The need is great and we are continuing to rise to the occasion to support workforce readiness for young people.

In 2023, Prodigy started to formalize a plan to deliver a 3-6 month extension of the traditional **Prodigy apprenticeship to allow for a tailored focus on the transition to workforce** for Prodigy apprentices. This Next Gen Leadership Program will be fully realized and piloted in 2024 after lots of consideration and discussion in 2023 on the needs of our young people and providing them experiences in work outside of Prodigy.

Perhaps **the most exciting thing in 2023 was Prodigy's recognition in a national USA Today poll as a top 10 Independent Coffee Shop.** This recognition was predicated on the quality of our coffee and not the apprenticeship model for which we have seen tremendous success. That speaks to the quality and care our apprentices deliver every day as they continue to hone their craft.

Thank you all for your shared investment in young adults. Every day I am inspired by the apprentices in their commitment to their learning, their leadership development and to quality craft coffee being delivered to our community. I learned about the opportunity for the Prodigy Executive Director role from a Prodigy apprentice with whom I had the pleasure of knowing while I worked at Girls Inc. of Metro Denver. **It was a young person that brought me to Prodigy and it is young people that keep me excited every day for the work.** Stop by the shops for a great cup of coffee and to say hello!

In Partnership,

Jeslin Shahrezaei
Prodigy Executive Director



PRODIGY COFFEE

NOW
OPEN!



Mission

Through high-caliber professional development and hands-on learning in a Prodigy enterprise, marginalized young adults develop mindsets and skills for sustainable careers, economic mobility, and most importantly, to go forth and enrich their city.

Vision

We envision an economically equitable Denver with a new generation of thriving, healthy, community leaders who have activated their inherent greatness.

Our Commitment

Prodigy is committed to supporting and building a community that brings people from diverse lived experiences to learn and grow through deep work. We believe that all people deserve an opportunity to be uplifted and celebrated for who they are. Our commitment to workforce readiness is rooted in equitable restorative employment practices necessary for Apprentices to realize their inherent greatness. Prodigy supports Apprentices as they find ways to work and thrive through barriers perpetuated by race/ethnicity, national origin, sexuality, gender, age, socioeconomic status and religion.

As we work to deliver this for our team, we are committed to welcoming our neighbors and the communities we exist in, to an inviting, safe, positive environment and we are always striving to be better for those we care about the most.





Overview & Structure

Prodigy's Values



Inclusion & Belonging

We believe in creating a safe space where people can be fully and authentically themselves.



Community

We believe in honoring diverse lived experiences through intentional relationship building and a shared responsibility to each other.



Excellence

We believe in creating an environment where everyone can tap into their inherent greatness and have a shared commitment to high-quality customer experience and craft coffee.



Restorative

We believe in the whole person. We create opportunities for dismantling systems of oppression through identity work, creating space for authenticity, and resources to engage in healing work.



Accountability

We believe in the power of mutual respect & problem-solving. We honor the ownership of individual learning and growth to move towards a common goal.



Collaboration

We believe in the importance of working across our team, with the community, and with our partners to harness our collective strengths.



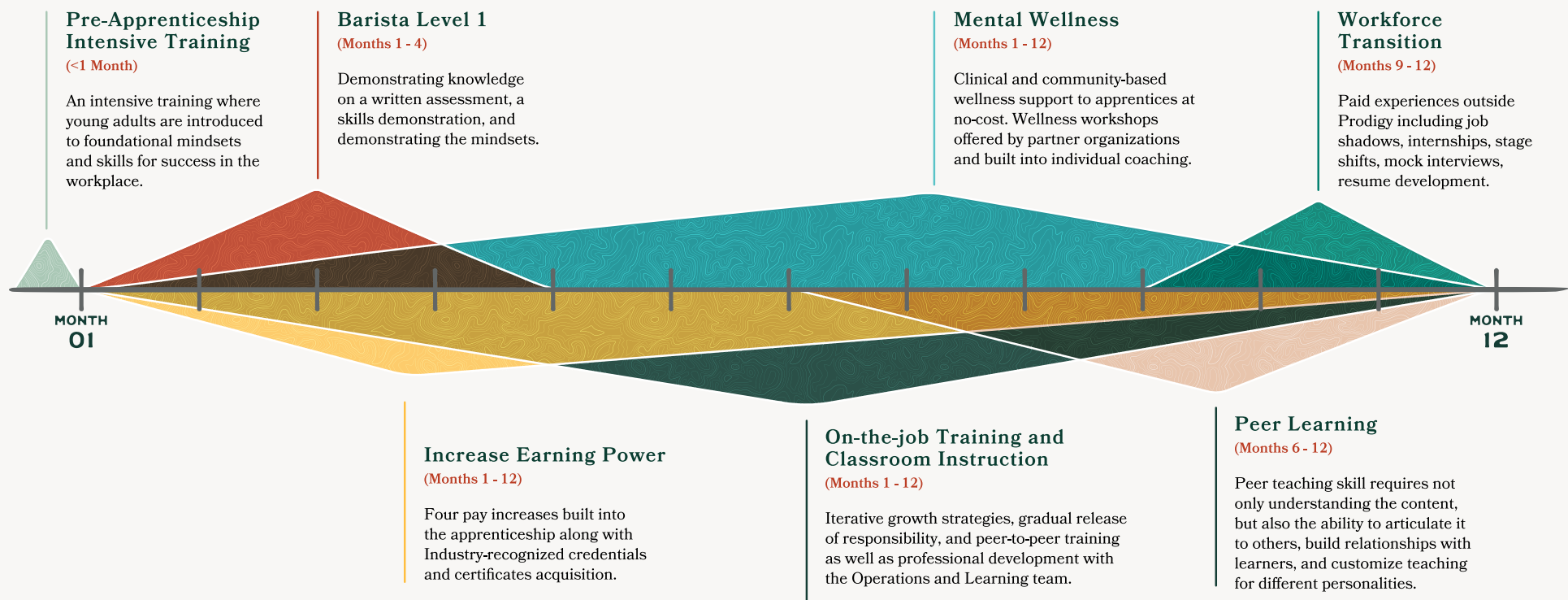
Prodigy's Model

The word 'prodigy' means:

A young person endowed with exceptional abilities. The organization 'Prodigy' was crafted by a team of educators on the conviction that the city's next great contributors are already here: the young adults just beyond our periphery, those disconnected from our institutions. These are the city's unlikely prodigies.

Prodigy Ventures:

Offers apprenticeships to young adults from Denver disconnected from traditional school and work structures. Through craftsmanship in high-quality coffeehouses, apprentices develop mindsets and skills for sustainable careers, economic mobility, and most importantly, to go forth and enrich their city.



Resiliency



Prodigy saw a lot of *resiliency* in the face of change in 2023.

We asked Apprentices to reflect on what that means to them and celebrate some of their successes.

What does resiliency mean to you?

Being able to bend and twist in life and being able to return to shape. Facing obstacles and troubles in life may deter you or bring you down, but as a person you should return to a stable ground and remember what defines you.

- *Ruben S.*

Resiliency to me means the ability to keep it pushing even in difficult situations.

- *Julisa B.*

Resiliency to me is to give your best everyday, even though your best looks different everyday. Just show up; sleepy, tired, sad, mad, or happy.

- *Lonni F.*

What was one change you navigated in 2023?

Transitioning into this job was very interesting to navigate. Prodigy is constantly pushing you to learn and take opportunities, even if it's a bit out of your comfort zone, it's nice to experience.

- *Jenays F.*

I have learned to be more confident and trust my own judgment, rather than doubting/second guessing myself.

- *Alli K.*

Has Prodigy supported your skills with transition and adapting to change?

Yes, definitely. They pushed me to do my best, they made me feel comfortable at work, especially with using my voice.

- *Alitzy B.*

Prodigy has supported me by taking things slow with me and also taking the time to help me understand things in my own way.

- *Brenda M.*

Prodigy has helped me adapt to new work skills and work field because being a barista is pretty new to me. The customer service perspective is a lot higher with interaction, on top of training with coffee 101, to training new people, and cash handling and product shifts. So working at Prodigy is more than just coffee.

- *Jesse M.*

What is one thing you are proud of from 2023?

For walking into a new job and with no knowledge of coffee whatsoever. And I don't regret it, along the journey I've got all my certificates from Prodigy and proud of how far I've come. Everything I learned.

- *Israel E.*

I am proud of myself for facing my fears and stepping out of my comfort zone. I am proud of myself for knowing what I deserve and fighting for it even when it's hard. I am proud of myself for choosing to take action rather than let life pass me by.

- *Jade F.*





94

Industry Recognized
Certifications



22

New Apprentices
Hired



73,000

Cups Of
Coffee Sold



\$507,000

In Apprentice
Wages

Impact 2023



54

Individuals
Trained



32,500+ Hrs

Workforce
Skill Building



364 Days

Coffeehouse
Operations



170

Apprenticeship
Applicants



Meet Julian

Apprentice graduate in 2023



How did you learn about Prodigy and get involved?

Actually it wasn't my choice to come here. I was doing this for my probation officer. He said "Come over here there's some really nice people, you can do an internship, get a nice resume, do self development." I did the 3 day training and thought it was cool as hell, so I decided to stay here and really apply myself.

What is your favorite drink at Prodigy?

The Elani special - It's 6 pumps of caramel, 3 counts of simple syrup and 2 little dashes of cinnamon, and has to be Breve so it's nice and thick. Elani hella put me on, it's got that extra sweetness, and that cut of cinnamon.

Elani was one of my coworkers, she had a really big impact on me because she was always being herself. She was really inviting when I first met her. She was a really nice person to meet when I first came here.

What has been surprising about your experience at Prodigy?

Didn't expect to like coffee, I hated coffee when I first came here. The first time I tasted coffee was like "ehh", then I started learning levels of coffee and tried bad coffee next to good coffee, that is something different!

I didn't expect to go back to school, the teachers weren't helping as much and then I came over here and everyone told me school is important, and another apprentice, Cooper told me school sucks but it's better to get it done while you can. Honestly, I feel like the routine of getting up at 6am helped me, I got used to getting up at 4am to be here at 6am, which is the same as school. It helped with self-discipline.

What do you think it means to be resilient in the face of change?

You have to know what you want and push through all of the hardships that are in front of you. Being resilient in the face of change is sticking to your true self, and your goals through it.

What was your favorite part of the apprenticeship?

Showing up to work everyday being with my friends, my coworkers, it was like work but it wasn't work because I liked to do it. Laughing with everybody, cause everybody was so cool. Professional development sessions were nice too.

What skills did you take with you from your time at Prodigy?

Time management definitely- Brady, when I was here I'd be late quite a bit, and he was like how are you going to get here on time and he gave me a day planner and that really worked. Now that I have the planner it helps keep me organized and on time.

What is one thing you want people to know about Prodigy?

That it's a lot more than a coffee shop, it can be a second home, a safe place to just chill, a place you can go to work on your school, it can be a lot of places. It's just somewhere you can be yourself because everyone is so accepting.

A young man with short, light brown hair and a beard, wearing a blue and white patterned button-down shirt, is focused on his work at a modern, white and chrome espresso machine. He is holding a small, dark metal pitcher under the machine's spout. In the background, other staff members and customers are visible, some taking photos with their phones. The setting is a bright, modern cafe with warm lighting and a clean, professional atmosphere.

Board, Staff & Partners

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2023 Prodigy Staff

Emilia Cano, Craft Learning Manager

Summer Davis, Assistant Manager

Nayeli Dimas, Manager in Training

Steph Frances, Executive Director (*through May 2023*)

Brady Grant, Director of Learning

Malinda Medina, Manager in Training

Keila Mendoza, Learning Manager

Jonathan Schultz, General Manager

Jeslin Shahrezaei, Executive Director (*starting May 2023*)

Lauren Sosa, Administrative Assistant

Erionna Tovar, Manager in Training

2023 Prodigy Partners

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CAP Logistics

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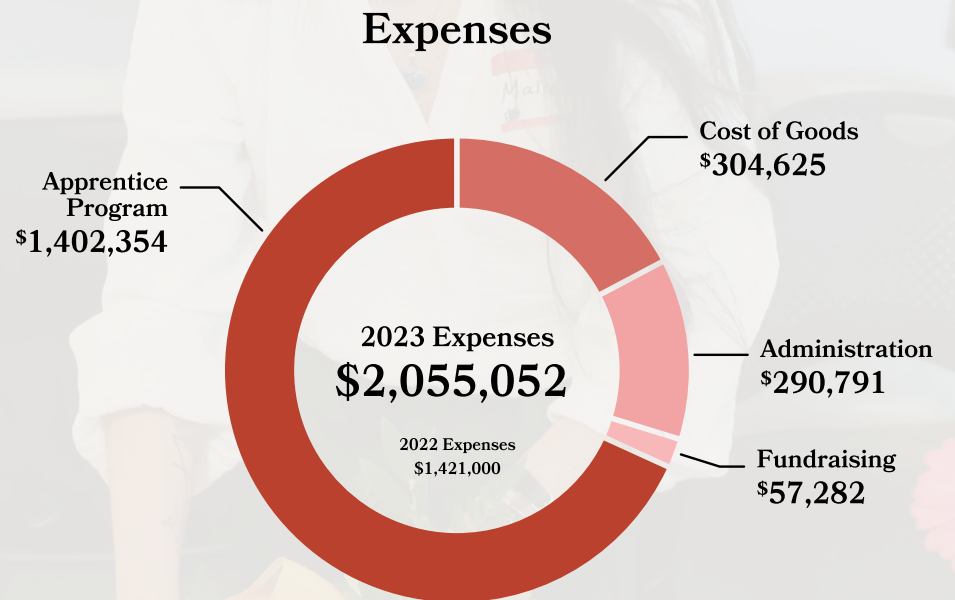
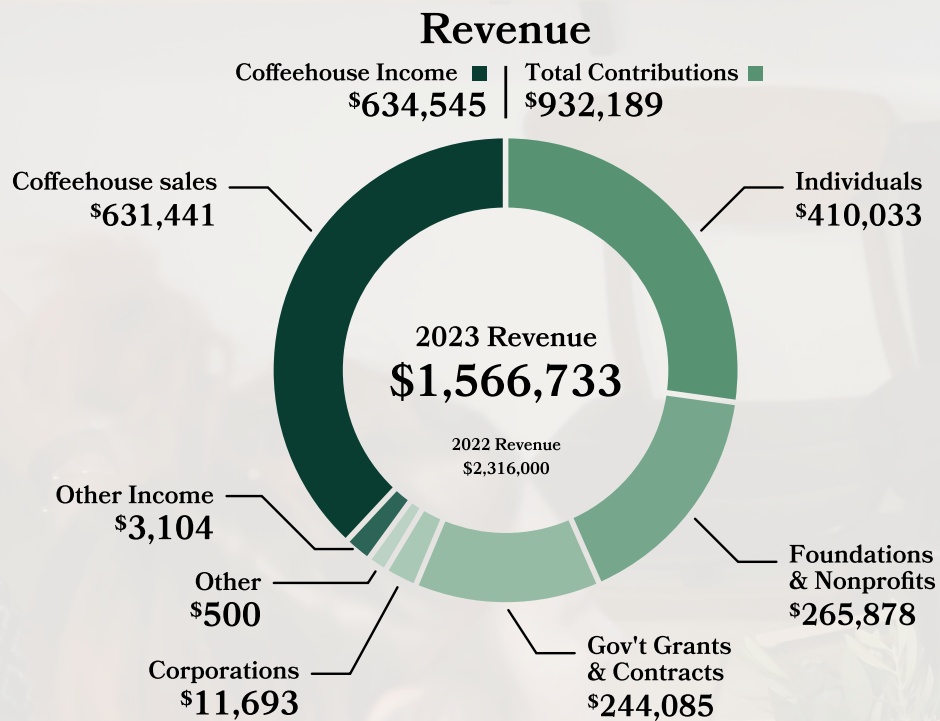
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**We are grateful for all of our supporters
and regret any omissions on this list

2023 Financials



*Prodigy experienced a deficit in 2023 that can be explained through leadership transition and more time needed to increase awareness of the second location. Prodigy has worked closely with donors, supporters and the board of directors and is confident that Prodigy's diverse funding base, long track record of success in program delivery and meeting budgets will showcase success overall.

~\$4500 was returned to Colorado donors through tax credits via Colorado Enterprise Zone Contribution Program

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of Donors*

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