

Case study:

CITY *of* BOSTON



Government-grade time tracking

**How the City of Boston uses Timely
to power youth career development**

by Timely



The City of Boston leverages Timely’s automatic time tracking to help 328 at-risk young people gain employment experience through 15 partner organizations.

The Challenge

The City of Boston’s Department of Youth Engagement and Employment (DYEE) helps to employ, develop and engage Boston’s youth. Each year they provide career development opportunities for at-risk youth — which in 2020 amounted to 328 young people working across 15 partner nonprofits. But it’s all dependent on securing an annual grant. Keeping youth activity, payroll, hiring and coordination transparent across so many organizations is no mean feat — especially in the midst of a mass remote work experiment. That’s why the program team turned to Timely to accurately capture it for them. “Timely removes human error and subjectivity from time reporting”, explains Youth Career Development Coordinator Malaina Saha: “Other tools don’t provide our funders with that same confidence.”

“No other time tracking app offered such accuracy or simplicity. Timely made the whole tracking experience youth-friendly and easy.”

— Malaina Saha,
Youth Career Development
Coordinator



Company

City of Boston

Departement

Youth Engagement and
Employment

Size

328 youth
15 partner groups

Problem

To accurately track youth work across 15 partner organizations for accurate payroll, funder reporting and auditing.

Priorities

Accuracy
Objectivity
Remote visibility
Ease of use
Efficiency

Results

Ensures accurate timesheets and payroll information.

Saves time and money at the end of the grant reporting period.

Shows the full story of what each person on the program achieves.

Minimizes time tracking admin with automatic timesheets.

Provides a simple and intuitive interface popular with youth.



Research

DYEE thoroughly researched time tracking tools before deciding on Timely. The guiding criteria was threefold: to accurately track youth work and time for funders; to ensure youth employee time records were accurate and matched payroll information; and to provide an objective account of all DYEE's efforts supporting youth career development for annual auditing.

Crucially, Timely had to work for young people on the program as well as partner organization staff. To do this, DYEE set up each of their 15 partner organizations as a project and assigned a set of tags to reflect the responsibilities young people undertook each week. Youth employees then added the right tag when logging their time, which partner organization managers checked at the end of each month to approve a youth timesheet. DYEE also used this time data to quickly generate detailed reports in Timely for annual grant auditing.

Experience



Accuracy

Timely's automatic time tracking features proved to be a huge selling point. By capturing all youth activity in the background for them, Timely removed human error and subjectivity from payroll and audit reporting. "No other time tracking app offered such accuracy or simplicity", explained Malaina: "Timer-based tools just can't provide our funders with that same confidence." Youth employees also took advantage of Timely's automatic timesheet features to expedite the time logging process.

offered such simplicity", said Malaina: "The app was immediately very user-friendly, with pleasing aesthetics and a clean UI...It made the whole tracking experience youth-friendly and easy".

Customization

Aside from making the time tracking process simple, DYEE also favoured Timely's flexible feature set: "Timely was very customizable to our program", explained Malaina, "and I really liked the customer service from the start." This helped to further differentiate Timely from DYEE's two other front-running tools during research: "Toggl didn't do anything we needed it to, and didn't seem customizable at all, and Time Doctor had too many irrelevant features for us."

Youth-friendliness

Working with young people across multiple organizations, usability was a primary concern for DYEE. Unlike many manual time tracking technologies, Timely proved to be intuitive and easy to use: "With Timely, it just felt right. No other time tracking app



Value

The data produced by Timely provides DYEE with accurate timesheets and payroll information that their funders can trust. Timely's reporting functionality also facilitates the creation of professional detailed reports, which has saved the team a lot of time and money at the end of the grant reporting period.

These audit reports help to tell the full story of what any young person on the program achieves during their employment. This has been particularly difficult to glean with people working remotely, but Timely has helped DYEE bridge the remote visibility gap.

Perhaps most importantly, Timely was popular among DYEE's youth employees, who valued Timely's automatic timesheets and intuitive interface. The ability to quickly copy time entries across multiple days when working on long projects was particularly appreciated, helping to minimize time tracking admin.

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