

BUILDING NEW LIVES,
CONSTRUCTING A NEW ORGANIZATION



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One of the most remarkable outcomes of the 1992 Development Agreement between Bayer and the city of Berkeley was the creation of Berkeley Biotechnology Education, Inc. (BBEI). Bayer's start-up funding led to the inception of this unique program – the only one in the country specifically targeting minority and low-income high schoolers with academics, paid internships, and support to bring them into the growing biotech field.

As part of BBEI's founding, Fern Tiger Associates worked closely with the agency for a decade, playing an instrumental part in its development and fostering partnerships for the agency with industry, funders, elected officials, community colleges, schools, and the media. FTA helped BBEI plan for incremental growth, as well as a shift to diversified funding sources. FTA also guided BBEI in assembling a solid board of directors, hiring an executive director, embarking on a long-range plan, and (years later) planning for management and leadership transitions.

A 2001 evaluation showed that 97% of BBEI participants pursued post-secondary education, compared to 88% of students nationwide and only 74% of similar at-risk youth. In 2002, with a grant from the Irvine Foundation, FTA produced *The Story and History of BBEI*, a chronicle of the key decisions that shaped the agency over time, written in part for a national audience of educators who might seek to replicate the program.

BERKELEY BIOTECHNOLOGY EDUCATION, INC. (BBEI), a nonprofit organization, offers a unique, comprehensive education-to-employment program that prepares youth, who are not traditionally college-bound, for jobs in science.

An innovative organization meeting a real need in the community can make for great press. But BBEI made more than a local splash for its creative program, which bridges education, biotechnology, and youth development. Within BBEI's first year, FTA successfully got the small start-up organization covered in the New York Times and on NBC Nightly News. (The Los Angeles Times was a little late, not picking up the story until five years later.) But perhaps most interesting, was the placement of the story on "United Airlines in the Air," a news piece seen by thousands who flew daily on United, over a month-long period.