



The Road to Opportunity

*Sustainable Employment
Best Practices*



“I’m able to provide for my wife and two children because I have steady employment. The two most important things I gained from the program were the certifications and the practice working in a group.”

—Ramon,
graduate, JFY NetWorks
Environmental Technology Training Program

Contact Us

For more information or questions on this manual visit uwmb.org or call 617.624.8000 and ask for staff on the sustainable employment team.

The Road to Opportunity

Sustainable Employment Best Practices

Sustainable Employment Terminology

United Way of Massachusetts Bay (UWMB) uses the term “sustainable employment” rather than “workforce development” as a matter of emphasis. Sustainable employment is a desired outcome, whereas workforce development is one of the steps, albeit a necessary step, along the path to sustainable employment. Additionally, the field is increasingly realizing the importance of engaging employers with jobs that have self-sufficient wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. Therefore, “workplace” is equally as important as “workforce.” For the purpose of this report, the terms workforce development and sustainable employment will be used interchangeably.





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United Way of Massachusetts Bay (UWMB) has a vision to make the greater Boston area the best place for children in the country.

Among the principle ways to improve the future for our children is to both strengthen the financial stability of their parents today and ensure that kids are getting the nurturing support and educational opportunities that will prepare them for adulthood. A crucial piece of this vision is providing low-skilled individuals and low-income workers with the necessary skills and opportunities to earn a sustaining wage to support themselves and their families.

Sustainable Employment Overview

UWMB believes this vision is possible by investing in a network of non-profit agencies that conduct sustainable employment programs in Eastern Massachusetts. We have collected the best practices from this network as the starting point and foundation for this report. In addition, we have considered and included promising ideas from select national literature research.

Our purpose in authoring this set of best practices is to create a tool that is user-friendly for those who want a concise overview of the field. This document is designed to be a straightforward and easily digestible summary. Examples for practical application are offered, and links and tools for further, more comprehensive research are provided.

Select Best Practices include:

- **Offer continuum of services** including wrap-around and life skills supports.
- **Link education and training** to small business development and job placement and provide follow-up services.
- **Target skill development** in fields where a substantial number of good jobs with self-sufficient wages and benefits exist.
- **Adapt program design** and referral networks to the needs of the population being served (i.e. adults with disabilities, immigrants, re-entry from correctional facilities, young adult workers, etc).
- **Partner** with employers, community colleges, other training programs, and social service providers.
- **Promote advocacy efforts** on various issues, such as work eligibility status, a more comprehensive service delivery system, and adequate resources to meet the needs of workers and employers.



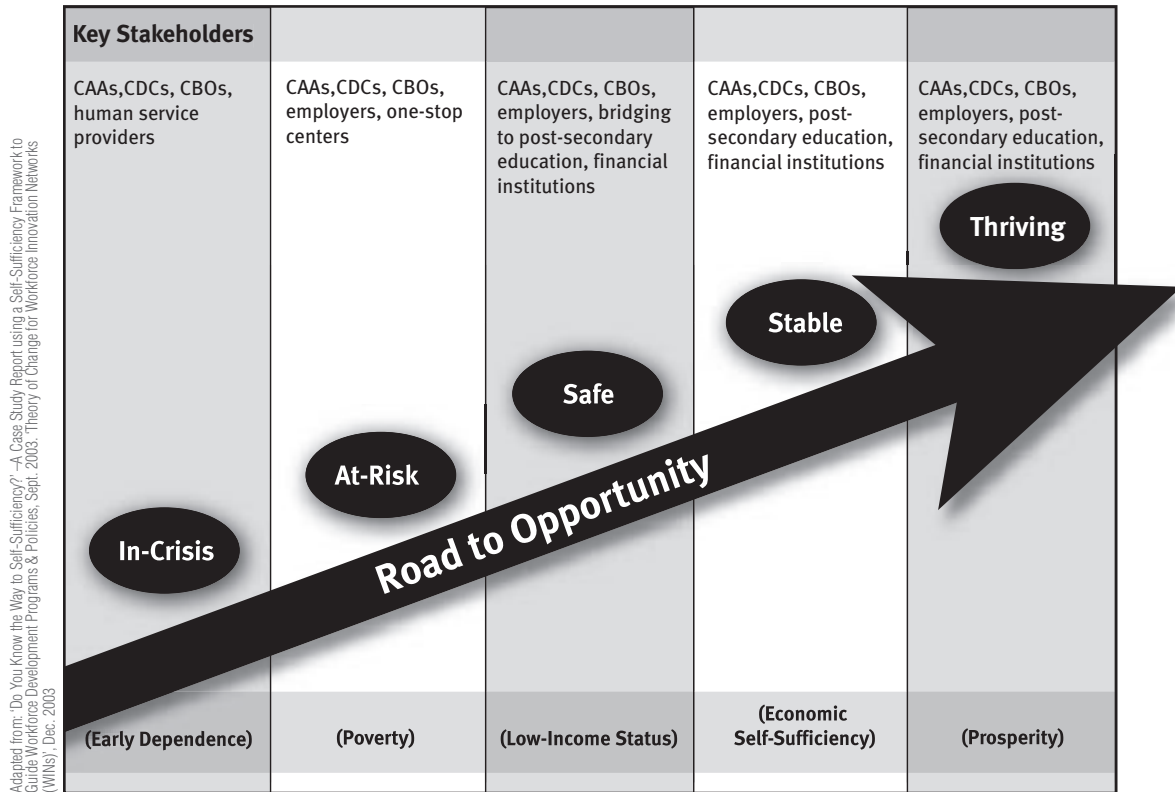
Conceptual Framework

We acknowledge that the pathway to economic self-sufficiency is often not linear.ⁱ

United Way of Massachusetts Bay uses the conceptual framework (page 4) to illustrate the pathway to sustainable employment. As basic needs are met (In-Crisis Stage), program participants often gain basic education and pre-employment skills training (At-Risk and Safe) as the building blocks to achieve employment and movement toward economic self-sufficiency (Thriving and Stable). UWMB supports the progression of individuals along the continuum as one way to improve community conditions. Our report on best practices is organized accordingly, moving from basic education to skills training for both job seekers and incumbent workers. The Labor Market and Systemic Advocacy sections are included to provide context within which the overall field operates.

Please note: Many of the best practices found in the Adult Basic Education section of this report are transferable to the Vocational Skills Training section, and vice versa. We would like to note that this document is intended to be an aggregate look at best practices for the workforce development field. We have not identified one example of program outcomes that reflect every best practice, nor do we expect every best practice to be applicable to every program.

Chart 1: Framework



CBO—Community Based Organization
CAA—Community Action Agency (a type of CBO)
CDC—Community Development Corporation (a type of CBO)



Adult Basic Education (ABE)

There is an increasing importance placed on skills and education as more than one million Massachusetts citizens lack the skills needed for the new economy.ⁱⁱ

The premium on education leaves people who do not speak English, adults without a high school diploma, and those who may have a high school diploma or even some college education but have limited skills, with few options.ⁱⁱⁱ On the way to achieving self-sustaining employment, basic education skills—including math, reading, and language proficiency—often need to be mastered. Adult Basic Education can greatly increase low-skilled workers' job options and provide a foundation for further vocational skills development and learning.^{iv}

Education Program Design

SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Employers often cite a lack of suitable soft skills, or general work readiness, as a particularly potent barrier for low-skilled job seekers.^v While many employers feel technical or occupational skills can be developed on the job, they increasingly demand soft skills *prior* to employment.

A variety of work-readiness skills incorporated into vocational training greatly increases the likelihood that workers will have the requisite skills to get and keep a job. A good contextualized sector-specific curriculum integrates the content of basic education, English language, job-readiness skills, and life skills, and uses various learning methods.^{vi}

Best Practices include:

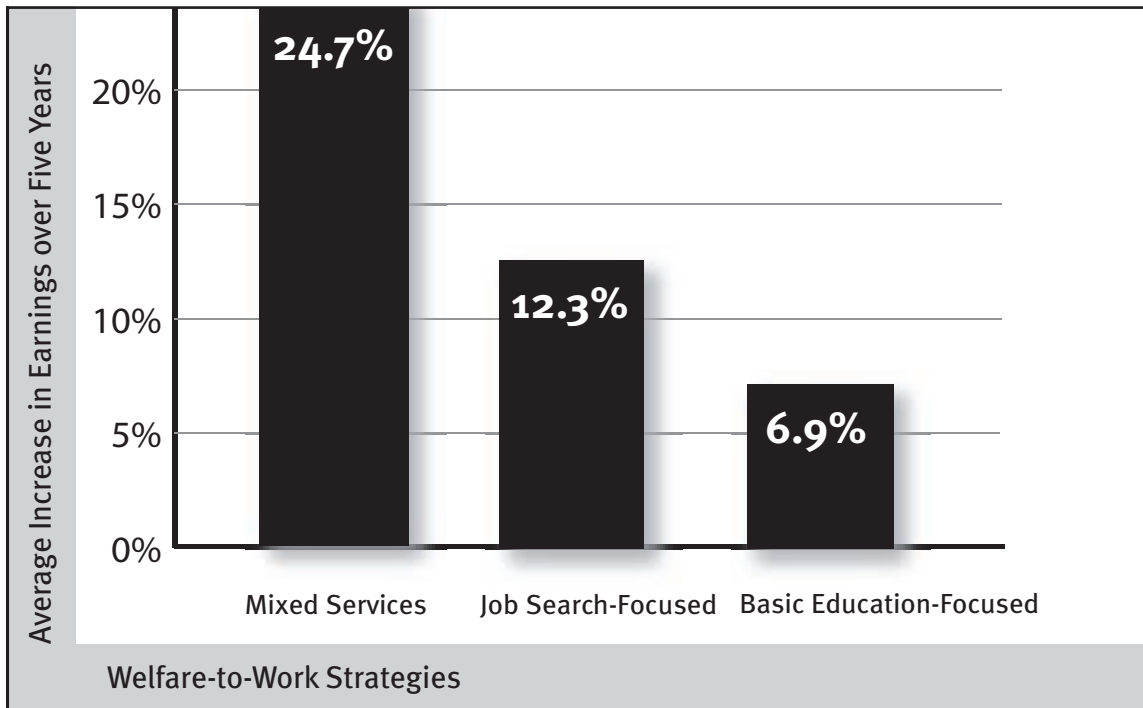
- **Teach job readiness skills and soft skills** such as technology and computer orientation, time management, appropriate dress and decorum, leadership development, resume writing and interview practice.
- **Develop clients' basic life skills** such as financial literacy, health and wellness, and community involvement.
- **Adapt curricula** to meet the immediate self-identified needs of students.
- **Provide English language instruction** including vocational, business reading, writing, and oral components.
- **Use strategies that reflect a variety of learning models** such as small group work, one-on-one instruction and tutorial, field trips, volunteer engagement, peer-support groups, and activities that facilitate quality family time and networking within the community.

RESOURCES

- ▶ The **National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)** sponsors Equipped for the Future, an initiative that develops content standards for Adult Basic Education. It outlines what adults need to know and be able to do to meet the demands of their roles as workers, family members, and citizens.
Visit: nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/masters/eff_framework.doc
- ▶ The Massachusetts Department of Education's **System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES)** promotes high-quality adult basic education services through training, support, and resources.
Visit: sabes.org

Chart 2: From Welfare-to-Work Study

Average Increase in Earnings Over Five Years for Three Sustainable Employment Strategies



Between 1991 and 1999, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services undertook a study of the effectiveness of welfare-to-work programs. The National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies (NEWWS) set out to discover “What works best, and for whom?” by looking at eleven mandatory welfare-to-work programs in seven locales. Julie Strawn’s ground-breaking research shows that the most effective programs “provide a range of services—including job search, basic education, and job training—that are individualized to each participant’s circumstance.” Such Mixed Services programs perform far better than programs more narrowly focused on job search or basic education activities.^{vii}

Visit: mdrc.org/publications/64/execsum.html

TRANSITIONING THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING LEVELS

In 2002, the median income for year-round, full-time workers 25 years of age and older without a high school diploma was \$22,584. With a diploma, workers earned \$29,800. Incomes averaged \$35,505 for workers with some college but no degree, \$36,784 for workers with an associate's degree, and \$48,896 for workers with a bachelor's degree.^{viii} A high school diploma and a bachelor's degree predict a respective 32% and 117% wage advantage. These statistics clearly show the benefits of more education. Providing a seamless transition from remedial adult basic education into and beyond other opportunities for vocational training and further education is critical to helping low-skilled workers achieve sustainable employment.^{ix}

Best Practices include:

- **Progressive learning levels** offer students skills training and education course options on a continuum of levels, ranging from remedial to intermediate to advanced. If multiple levels are not offered in-house, make referrals to other programs. Develop mini-courses to address specific competency needs to accelerate student progress through grade level increases.^x
- **Conduct placement screening/assessments** for applicants prior to registration. Sensitivity and attention to each individual's skill-set and barriers will ensure that clients do not begin programs they are not ready to complete.
- **Partner with community colleges.** These accessible institutions can serve as a next step for low-wage workers as they complete English language, basic education and short-term job training. Interested students may benefit from "bridge" programming to successfully transition from ABE to community college.

RESOURCES

► Examples of successful partnerships between Community Based Organizations and community colleges can be found in:

1. *Career Advancement for Low-income Workers Through Community College and Community-based Organization, Partnerships*, Knowledge Works Foundation, 2002
Visit: kwfdn.org
2. *The Best of Both: Community Colleges & Community-Based Organizations Partner to Better Serve Low-income Workers and Employers*, Public/Private Ventures, 2002
Visit: ppv.org/ppv/publications/publications.asp
3. *Building a Career Pathways System: Promising Practices in Community College-centered Workforce Development*, Workforce Strategy Center, 2002
Visit: workforcestrategy.org
4. *Breaking Through: Helping Low Skill Adults Enter and Succeed in College and Careers*, Jobs for the Future, November 2004
Visit: jff.org

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Effective programs are outcome driven and make securing long-term employment their primary focus.^{xi} Programs should set performance targets and measure progress toward outcomes on a regular basis. Strategic plans that outline desired goals can help determine and maximize an organization's role in the local workforce development landscape.

Best Practices include:

- **Solicit feedback** and suggestions from students continually. Articulate how data will be used and make program improvements. Analyze performance data as an ongoing element of program management.
- **Incrementally track participants** and measure their performance for program evaluation and ongoing funding. Revisit strategic plans every one or two years.
- **Use an information management system.** If possible, allocate staff and other resources for regular data collection, entry, cleaning, reporting, and analysis of longitudinal data.

Supportive Services

Until low-income families establish enough income, assets, stability, and social capital to create their own safety nets, they will need multiple supportive services to buffer the often long and complicated road to economic self-sufficiency. In fact, supports can be as essential to a successful workforce development program as education, training and job placement.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Case managers should be prepared to help clients access wrap-around supportive services when, where, and how they are needed.^{xii}

Best Practices include:

- **Provide comprehensive deep supports** covering a host of basic family needs including food, housing, transportation, childcare, and mental health services.
- **Offer long-term or wide services** to mitigate unanticipated problems that can quickly set asset-poor individuals back months or even years.
- **Use bi-level case management** to teach and empower individuals to advocate for themselves in the larger service system.

CAREER ADVISORS

Case managers can serve as career advisors and individual advocates, making referrals, vouching for their clients, and opening doors that are usually shut to low-skilled workers.^{xiii}

Best Practices include:

- **Provide customer-driven vocational planning** that is responsive to clients' work histories, education, aptitudes, skills, interests, level of motivation and job readiness. Encourage clients to set their own goals and help them design their own career pathways. Keep options open.
- **Offer a broad inventory** of appropriate, accessible and readily available jobs, pre-screened vocational programs, and work-related supports.
- **Keep advisor-to-client ratio small.** Low case loads are essential if staff are to keep in frequent contact with each worker and have time for in-depth, face-to-face conversations.^{xiv}

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION



Project Match, Chicago, IL

The case managers at Project Match emphasize nurturing strong relationships with program participants. They support all aspects of the individual journey to employment, from developing a specific job lead to helping solve a school problem that is affecting a client's child. Program staff keep in frequent contact with both the employer and the employee during the initial phase of a new job placement and are ready to assist a client when he or she loses a job, regardless of the reason.

Visit: pmatch.org

REDUCE BARRIERS TO ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Inexperienced and low-skilled job-seekers often must overcome significant obstacles to obtain the basic skills and education needed to get and maintain employment.^{xv} Program staff identify and reduce barriers to attendance and participation in basic education programs due to the lack of childcare, transportation, inadequate housing, immigration status, substance abuse issues, and a criminal record.

Select best practices include:

- **Make specific referrals** to appropriate services that are not provided in-house. Maintain good relationships with a variety of state and local bureaus, departments and offices, and other community-based organizations.
- **Follow-up client referrals** with individual advocacy to ensure that services are obtained. Maintain quality working relationships with the local Attorney General's Office, District Attorney's Office, translation services, law firms, and other essential offices and organizations that provide pro-bono services.
- **Make sure programs are accessible.** Set flexible schedules with respect to class days and times. Have convenient class locations that are accessible to public transportation. Provide low- or no-cost programming whenever possible.^{xvi}

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION



Project Hope, Boston, MA

Project Hope's Adult Learner Program combines full-time intensive basic literacy, General Education Development (GED) preparation, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) academics with a variety of wrap-around supports to help the low-income and homeless clients flourish within the program and advance economically. The case manager keeps each student's empowerment and self-development in mind as s/he helps the client navigate the organization's many services, including financial literacy, leadership development, career services, nationally accredited childcare, homelessness prevention and housing search, emergency shelter, food pantry, and emergency financial assistance.

Visit: prohope.org

Outreach and Access

Because of inevitable capacity limitations, programs will not be able to serve everyone in need of basic education and skills training. Agencies should develop intentional outreach strategies that clarify priorities and specify the populations it will serve. Programs' capacities are maximized without being overwhelmed, the public benefit is optimized, and credibility within the community is established.^{xvii}

Best practices include:

- **Target the most vulnerable populations** and/or geographic areas. Use linguistically and culturally appropriate strategies. Intentionally engage other appropriate community-based organizations, such as community health centers.
- **Actively recruit people** who would not otherwise have the opportunity to receive employment services. Use an interactive website, e-newsletter, print/radio/television advertisement and/or door-to-door engagement.
- **Encourage clients to refer their friends**, family and neighbors by word-of-mouth. This strategy has the dual benefit of acquiring new clients and supporting those already in the program.

RESOURCES

► The Beehive Boston

A good place to begin a search for support services is UWMB and One Economy's Beehive Boston website. This local branch of the national Beehive website is an easy-to-navigate, English/Spanish search engine that provides links and information on a wealth of area resources such as:

- **Affordable child care**, after-school, and summer programs
- **Boston public transportation** information
- **Affordable housing** resources
- **Emergency financial assistance** and food pantries
- **Immigration services**, citizenship classes and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- **Legal services**
- **Mental health** and disabilities services, domestic violence shelters and substance abuse
- **State and city agencies'** programs and links

Visit: thebeehive.org

► Mass211

UWMB also supports the **Mass211** information and referral hotline. To access, dial 2-1-1, Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.

Visit: uwmb.org/find-help/index.html



Labor Market Analysis

A \$6.75-an-hour minimum wage job that brings in an annual salary of \$14,000 will leave a client far short of “thriving” or even “stable” along the continuum of self-sufficiency.

(see page 4 for conceptual framework)

An intense focus must be placed on training individuals for jobs that pay, or quickly lead to paying, self-sufficient wages in order for the participant to meet economic self-sufficiency.^{xviii} Successful sectoral programs are able to intervene directly in local labor markets by utilizing current knowledge of the regional vocational landscape to capitalize on major growth industries.^{xix} A local labor market analysis can help agencies identify the most promising employment opportunities for low-skilled workers. It can also help structure training programs to provide clients with the skills necessary to get and retain quality jobs. Providing easily digestible labor market information about career pathways, skill and competency expectations, training access, and how to obtain financial aid will greatly help clients. UWMB has put together a brief analysis of the current labor market in Greater Boston.

Please note: The Labor Market Analysis provided in this report presents a macro framework, focused on large-scale industry growth, job openings and wage data. When designing a program’s strategic focus and selecting employer partners, it is equally important to look at the micro level. What is the scale of the agency’s work? How many job placements will be made in the next year or two? How many other providers are already calling the same local employers in the same industries? What is the attitude of an industry vis-à-vis the public system? Does an agency have an established inside connection through a Board member, etc?^{xx} For a more detailed, micro labor market analysis, please use the resources referenced.

RESOURCES

▶ **U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)**

The BLS has compiled information on 725 discrete occupations, each categorized by a unique Standard Occupational Code (SOC). Data categories include median and 10th percentile earnings data, job openings due to growth and net replacement openings, educational attainment cluster, post-secondary education or training.

Visit: bls.gov

▶ **Private Industry Council (PIC)**

PIC, Boston’s Workforce Investment Board, provides updated quarterly employment trends for the city of Boston by job type and profession.

Visit: bostonpic.org

▶ **SkillWorks: Partners for a Productive Workforce**

SkillWorks conducted a 2005-2006 analysis of employment and job vacancy developments in Massachusetts by occupational category both at the state level and in selected sub-state areas. The report assesses the implications of these findings for future workforce development planning and policymaking in the Commonwealth.

Visit: skill-works.org/Downloads/occupempl.pdf

See page 31 for more information on SkillWorks.

▶ **Boston Workforce Development Coalition (BWDC)**

BWDC has developed a manual designed to help workforce development practitioners understand career ladders and how to create and sustain them. It includes a comprehensive chapter on how to assess local labor markets on the micro level.

Visit: bostonworkforce.org/publications.htm#bcl

Greater Boston Labor Market: Brief Analysis

In identifying target jobs for workforce development programs, understanding the prospects for low-skilled workers in their labor market is important. Which jobs are projected to grow in terms of numbers of openings? Which jobs offer wages and benefits that allow for self-sufficient living? Which jobs offer potential for advancement? What skills are required for these jobs? Without careful attention to local trends, even well-structured and demand-driven initiatives may not live up to their promise.

It is critical that job opportunities place employees on the path to economic self-sufficiency. In 1997, the Crittenton Women’s Union, formerly the Women’s Educational and Industrial Union, developed and released the *Self-Sufficiency Standard for Massachusetts*. Updated in 2006, this report calculates the costs of housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, miscellaneous (e.g., clothing, shoes, household items, telephone), and taxes that a working family in the Commonwealth faces. The Standard covers only essentials and does not include items such as college savings, credit-card payments, eating out, or vacations. Thus, it represents the bare-minimum a family needs to live without public or private assistance.^{xxi}

Chart 3: Self-Sufficiency Standard

The Massachusetts Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Standard for Four Family Types in Boston

	One Adult	One Adult, One Child	One Adult, Two Children	Two Adults, Two Children
Boston	\$25,872	\$49,801	\$58,133	\$62,093

RESOURCES

- ▶ The **MassFESS Standard** was calculated for 70 different family types across 39 regions of the state. For 2006 updated information for eight communities, see the website below.
Visit: massbudget.org/article.php?id=261
- ▶ **Hot Jobs for Women**
See job areas that are in high demand and earn self-sufficient wages that require two or fewer years of post-secondary training.
Visit: liveworkthrive.org/hotjobs.php

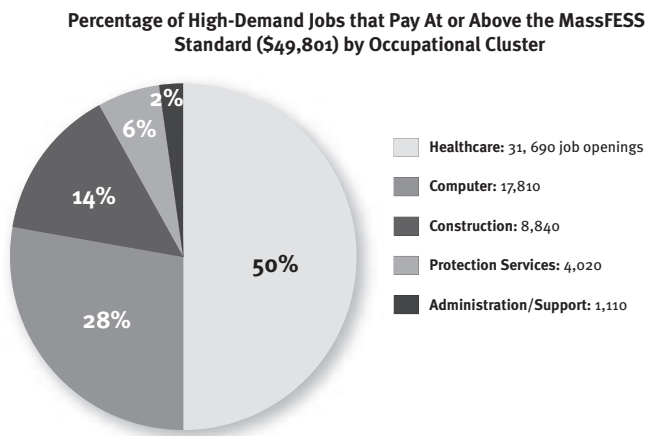
CAREERS WITH LONGEVITY

In 2005, The Crittenton Women’s Union compiled Massachusetts wage data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics of jobs that require an Associate’s degree or lower, are classified as “high demand,” and fall above the MassFESS Boston Standard.^{xxiii}

The MassFESS Boston Standard for a single parent with one child (\$49,801) was used as a proxy measure to represent a city-wide self-sufficiency standard. Overall, 63,470 job vacancies requiring an associate’s degree or less, in 12 high-demand occupations, will be available in Boston before 2010. As you can see from the graph on the right, 92% of these job opportunities will occur within three occupational clusters: healthcare (50%); computers (28%); and construction (14%).

Highlighted below are three high-demand, well-paying occupations based upon each job’s

Chart 5: High-Demand Jobs



suitability for low-skilled workers, training accessibility, and opportunities for advancement. Programmatic strategies for workforce development initiatives to make the job more accessible to low-skilled workers are provided.^{xxiv}

	Licensed Practical Nurse/ Licensed Vocational Nurse (LPN/LVN)	Computer Support Specialist	Carpenter
Mean Annual Salary	\$41,180	\$53,310	\$44,240
Job Openings in MA by 2010	6,630	14,400	5,310
Educational Profile	1-2 years vocational training or certificate	Associate's degree	Less than one year of on-the-job training
Accessibility of Jobs to New Entrants	*Given the current nursing shortage, graduates are all but guaranteed employment *Highest demand in long-term care *One of the most stable industries in the US with little risk of off-shoring, industry decline or technological evolution.	*Somewhat limited access – job experience is the most important qualification *Formal training and industry certification can open up entry-level opportunities *Soft skills (communicating, troubleshooting) are critical *High risk of off-shoring and technological evolution	*With no required licensing, jobs are very accessible to white males (even those with CORIs). Current workplace culture often limits access to women and minorities. *High school diploma or GED typically required *Physically demanding work; fitness required *Highest labor demand in residential building *Highest wages in non-residential building
Accessibility of Training Programs	*Much more accessible than RN programs *Competitive; more candidates than available slots *High academic entrance requirements; eleventh-grade level in reading and in math *12 months of full-time study *Little flexibility in training schedule; difficult for participants to work	*Short, 3-6 month programs designed to prepare students for certification exams are available *Few programs provide the internship experience and soft skills training employers are likely to demand from candidates without a four-year degree	*Pre-employment training is typically 12 weeks of classroom instruction and on-the-job training *Unionized jobs often require formal, 3-year apprenticeships, during which the apprentice earns a wage (50-60% of full salary). The programs are competitive with one spot for every two candidates and waiting lists.
Career Paths and Advancement Options	*Advancement options are limited without additional training *Some opportunities for management positions within the long-term care sector *Can advance to RN level with additional training. LPN-to-RN programs may be more accessible to low-skilled workers than the typical RN program. There will be 29,000 RN job openings in Boston before 2010.	*Many opportunities for advancement through a combination of gaining experience and taking continuing education courses *Promotions and wage gains depend primarily on job performance *Can move into supervisory positions or advance to mid-level *Can become a network administrator with relevant certification	*A lot of flexibility in terms of range of work and advancement opportunities *Can progress to crew foreman or supervisor, or project manager *Need only a moderate financial investment and a contractor's license to own a business. 3-years of work experience and the passage of a state-administered standardized exam are required to obtain a license
Strategies for Adapting Programs to Low-skilled Workers	*Provide intensive academic remediation to prepare students for highly academic work and to pass program entrance exams *Offer part-time or evening/weekend schedules so participants can work *Provide academic tutoring	*Include an intensive internship to address employer preference for candidates with work experience *Provide training in professional/soft skills *Constantly update and revise technology training to reflect rapidly changing industry and employer needs	*Connect participants to GED programs *Help candidates secure apprenticeship slots and provide remedial instruction in math, reading, and spatial reasoning to prepare candidates for entrance exams *Conduct outreach to women and minorities

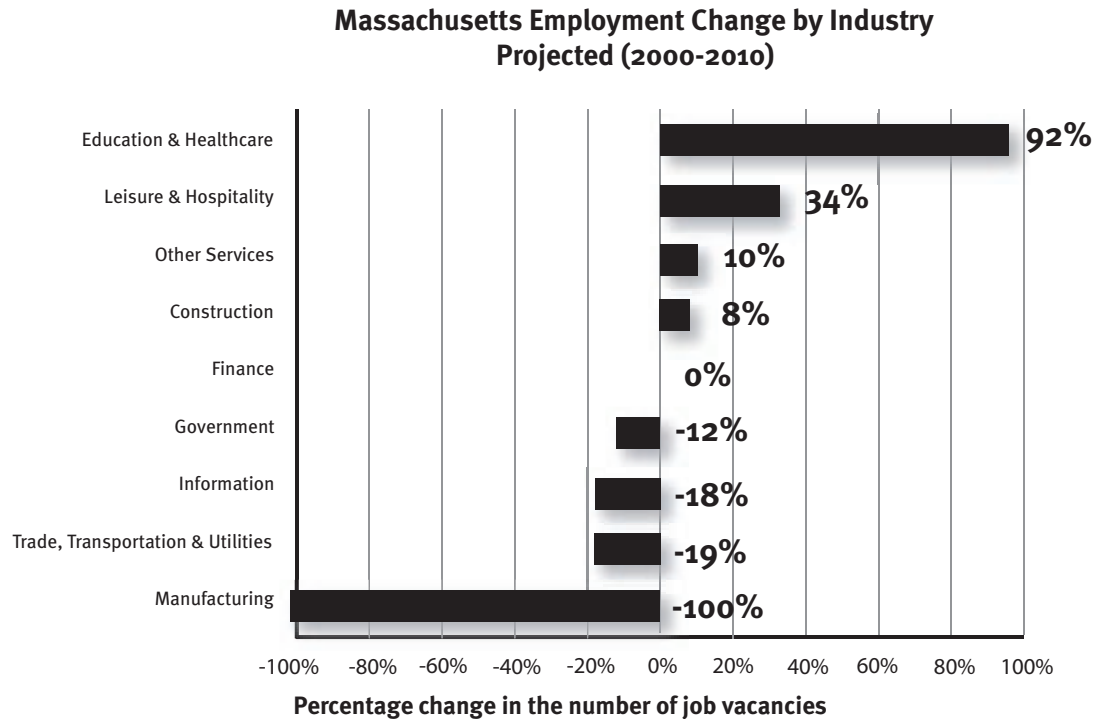


Vocational Skills Training

Workforce development is, at its core, about economic security. Employment enables people to support themselves and their families.^{xxv}

Skills-training programs can create new paths into high-wage industries for low-income workers by targeting a growing occupation, or cluster of occupations, within an industry, determining the competencies required of workers, matching training strategies to those competencies, and working with employers to increase hiring of trainees. Arming individuals with marketable skills enables them to get hired—and earn a sustainable wage.

Chart 4: Employment by Industry



It is equally important that job seekers and incumbent workers are prepared for jobs in high-demand industries where there are likely to be a substantial number of openings with advancement options over a relatively long period of time. The Employment by Industry graph (chart 4) is adapted from a job vacancy survey on employer hiring needs conducted by

the Commonwealth Corporation. CommCorp calculated the percentage change in vacancies for the period 2000-2005 and made predictions through 2010. It is important to note that the Employment by Industry graph represents the job vacancies for an entire industry and not just those available to low-skilled workers.^{xxii}

RESOURCES

► Local Labor Market Employment and Demographic Trends

According to the Private Industry Council (PIC), 21% of all Boston residents have no high school diploma and 31% of the Boston Public Schools' graduating class of 2000 was not engaged in any form of school or training nine months after graduation. More statistical information is available on the PIC's website.

Visit: bostonpic.org

Sectoral Employment Development Learning Project (SEDLP)

In April of 1997, the Aspen Institute launched the SEDLP to document the experiences of 732 participants in six different vocational programs. One year after completion of the program,

participants reported higher employment rates, substantial gains in annual personal earnings and earnings per hour, increased work hours, and improved job satisfaction. Median annual individual earnings increased by 64%, enabling participants to contribute an average 22% more to their household incomes.^{xxvi}

Visit: aspenwsi.org

Chart 6: Pre-Training Income

Sources of Household Income Before SEDLP Skills Training

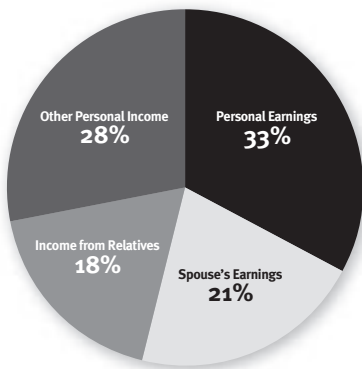
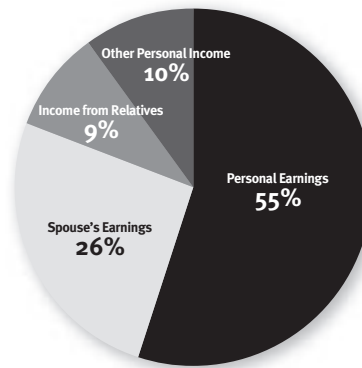


Chart 7: Post-Training Income

Sources of Household Income One Year After SEDLP Skills Training



RESOURCES

▶ Aspen Institute's Workforce Strategies Initiative

The Aspen Institute developed a Business Value Assessment Tool intended to help Workforce Development providers determine and document the value of their programs in terms of time, money, and other results for employer partners.

Visit: aspenwsi.org/BVAResources.asp

▶ The Commonwealth Workforce Coalition (CWC)

CWC offers information about similar model projects taking place here in Massachusetts. CWC also provides a wealth of locally focused workforce development resources for direct service staff and managers.

Visit: cwc.cedac.org

▶ WorkforceUSA.net

Funded by the Ford Foundation, this resource is an interactive online library for workforce development programs and staff.

Visit: massworkforce.com/workforce-solutions-act.php

Workplace Readiness

Increasingly, the importance of general work habits, such as punctuality, workplace comportment, and anger management has come to the fore. In the entry level workforce, many employers prefer non-certified individuals with strong professional skills over those with excellent occupational skills who are not ready for the realities of the workplace.^{xvii} By simulating workplace conditions, training programs can demystify the workplace and build participants' work-readiness skills through real-world experience.^{xviii} A good skills-training curriculum integrates workplace soft skills, work orientation, and job search and placement with thorough vocational preparation in a specific, applicable skill-set.

Best Practices include:

- **Integrate workplace soft skills** such as appropriate dress and decorum, attendance and punctuality, teamwork, communication, critical thinking, problem solving, and leadership skills into curricula.
- **Provide workplace orientation** skills and knowledge relevant to the particular sector that students are preparing to enter, including specific computer programs and technology skills, information on taxes and benefits, pertinent language and vocabulary and cultural expectations.
- **Teach job search and placement strategies**, including orientation of available research sources, resume and cover-letter writing, and interview techniques.
- **Incorporate internships** and workplace-based active-learning models into training. Workers gain practical experience of different workplaces, build resumes, and begin networking. Employers are able to assess workers before hiring.

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION



Training, Inc., Boston, MA

YMCA Training Inc.'s Computerized Office Skills program uses innovative workplace simulation to provide low-income individuals with living-wage job training. During the first eight weeks of the four-month program, trainees learn skills such as business communication, keyboarding, customer service/receptionist, and Microsoft Office skills. Over the final two months, trainees participate in a workplace simulation, move into unpaid part-time internships, and launch job searches. The program's design and curriculum immerse trainees in the culture of work, to help them make a smooth transition to being dependable employees who produce quality work. Participants strictly adhere to business expectations, language and dress codes. They gain an understanding of how all departments and levels of management depend on each other to succeed. Classes take place in a work-like site in the heart of the business district and follow a 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. schedule. Staff are called "supervisors" and "trainees" are "hired" into their internships. Standards of employability are used to measure outcomes.

Visit: traininginc.org

Employer Engagement

Some employers are wary of hiring graduates of subsidized training programs, believing that “something must be wrong” with people who are eligible for such efforts. Additionally, most private companies will not hire welfare clients or other low-income people simply out of goodwill or social obligation.^{xxix} Therefore, the most effective sustainable employment organizations are able to show employers how participating in a workforce development initiative can increase their bottom line by curtailing the exorbitant costs of employee turnover. Engaging employers as customers enables agencies to learn about companies’ specific education and skill need or requirements. Programs can then provide job applicants with a curriculum of highly relevant vocational skills, generating workers that contribute to productivity and profitability—and thus are very employable. This “dual customer” approach meets the needs of both workers and employers.^{xxx}

Best Practices include:

- **Carefully select employer partners** who are willing to accommodate individuals from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and who offer a livable wage with benefits and opportunities for advancement in high-demand industries.
- **Involve employers in program design and delivery.** Company staff can help design curricula, serve as board members, conduct mock job interviews, host students for job site visits and speak at workshops.
- **Manage expectations.** Uphold a professional, business-like image. Model efficient business behavior in program design and implementation. Provide regular and accurate outcomes data.
- **Create networking opportunities** for employers to hire new workers and for participants to seek out and apply for jobs. Maintain a database and host job fairs.

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION



Project QUEST, San Antonio, TX

Project QUEST is a sectoral employment program for targeted jobs that pay \$10 an hour with benefits and offer career paths in the health care, business services and light industry sectors. The agency works closely with employers to develop skill standards for each occupation and to design the preparation and training to meet those requirements in an ongoing process. Program staff recruit, train, develop and support adults so they are qualified and ready to fill employers’ needs for skilled workers. In addition, QUEST systemically works with employers in the health care industry to restructure entry-level jobs to require more skill and command higher wages. The agency focuses its mission and marketing on demonstrating the economic benefits that can be achieved for the society at-large by investing in long-term training for those who would otherwise not have the opportunity.

Visit: questsa.com

Incumbent Workers

POST-PLACEMENT SERVICES

For many low-skilled workers, keeping a job is harder than finding one. Many programs follow workers for 90 or 180 days, but a great deal of attrition happens in the 6- to 12-month period. Therefore, the most important work to be done with job seekers often occurs after training and placement.^{xxxi} Effective sustainable employment programs recognize that success is not just placing clients into good positions, but ensuring that they remain connected to and advance within the labor market.^{xxxii} Programs should offer individualized post-placement services to participants for a period of at least one to two years.

Best Practices include:

- **Provide regular support** with monthly contact for one year. Help workers with situational and psychological problems that may impede their ability to remain on the job. Provide work site conflict resolution and make sure that new employees understand company policies, including disciplinary procedures, union information, safety codes, and the consequences of rule violations.
- **Continue providing supportive and referral services** such as housing, transportation, childcare and mental-health counseling.
- **Set-up workplace mentoring** programs and peer-support groups.
- **Work with companies** to reduce practices that exacerbate turnover, including poor supervisory skills, cultural insensitivity, workplace hostility, and difficult working conditions.
- **Track client progress** to manage individual client service delivery, detect trends in service utilization and needs, and collect outcomes data for funders and partners.

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION



Boston Health Care and Research Training Institute, Boston, MA

The Training Institute is a major collaboration, led by Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation and Fenway Community Development Corporation, to help entry-level workers and neighborhood residents pursue successful careers in the healthcare industry. Detailed career pathways are mapped out for each client. These pathways specify training requirements and intermediate steps and lead to positions such as Registered Nurse and radiation technologist that pay more than \$17 per hour. Participants are tracked for two years and receive assistance with moving along the rungs of his/her career ladder. The program's retention rate is 90%. Over 50% of employees have received promotions or merit increases and over 40% have taken multiple steps to achieve their career goals.

Visit: jpndc.org/workforce/boston_hcrti.html

CAREER LADDERS

In 2005, the Commonwealth Corporation conducted a study of ten UWMB affiliates with sustainable employment programming. The resulting document, *Career-Focused Models for Sustainable Employment*, reports that most program participants enter jobs that pay hourly wages between \$8 and \$12, a sum that still falls far short of the more than \$20 an hour needed to afford an average one-bedroom apartment in Greater Boston.^{xxxiii} It is therefore very important to clearly map out career ladders that show how each program participant will progress from an entry level job to a job with family sustaining wages in a particular career field.^{xxxiv}

Best Practices include:

- **Work with employees and employers** together to develop workplace-specific strategic plans for career-ladder mobility. Include corresponding education and training. Teach supervisors and CEOs about managing and supporting professional development for long term gain.
- **Help employers find start-up funding** for workplace-based courses until company budgets can cover expenses. Aid workers with accessing tuition reimbursement or various forms of financial aid to upgrade skills on their own.
- **Offer classes before and after shifts.** Encourage employers to provide partial work release for professional development. Collaborate with employers to make trainings available at the worksite.
- **Build a job advancement** focus into vocational programs by integrating leadership and management workshops into the curriculum.
- **Partner with community colleges** for education and skill upgrades.

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION



District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, Philadelphia, PA

District 1199C is committed to education as a vehicle for providing unionized healthcare and human service workers with opportunities to advance into better jobs. GED classes, Nurse Aide Training and a Practical Nursing Program are offered on a flexible, part-time, evening and weekend schedule to enable incumbent workers to upgrade on the healthcare career ladder. Participants have access to continuing education counseling and tuition reimbursement. District 1199C also functions as a broker between employers and area schools of nursing and allied health. The Fund works directly with employers to create industry-specific workplace-based continuing educational programs that serve as a cost-effective ways for hospitals and other providers to upgrade employees' skills.

Visit: 1199ctraining.org

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Employment does not necessarily guarantee solvency. Frequently there is a gap between what new workers earn and what they need. Studies of people leaving welfare for work have found that more than 50% have incomes below the federal poverty line.^{xxxv} By supplementing and leveraging earnings, work supports narrow the wage gap and can mean the difference between earning above or below a basic family budget. Work supports also improve employment outcomes. Workers who have childcare firmly in place and have accumulated a small amount of savings are far more likely to focus on and succeed at training programs and new jobs.^{xxxvi}

Best Practices include:

- **Increase access to financial enhancements** to household income including: health insurance, childcare subsidies, transportation assistance, food stamps, Individual Development Accounts (IDAs see page 26), and benefits packages provided by employers.
- **Promote the use of the Earned Income Tax Credit** and state and local tax credits. Offer assistance with tax preparation.
- **Integrate financial skills**, including money management, budgeting, and banking into curriculum.
- **Work with employers** to advance workplace benefits that promote financial security, including direct deposit and 401(K) contributions. Help employers provide employees with information on public benefits.^{xxxvii}

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION



Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), Boston, MA

Increasing participants' net income to achieve economic security is central to the vision of JVS's Center for Careers and Lifelong Learning (CALL). In the long term, staff help clients find higher-paying jobs and further their training and education; but in the short term, they seek to supplement earnings with work supports. CALL integrates the "Economic Literacy and Financial Life Skills" curriculum into all vocational and skills training programs and require it of all students. Core learnings include managing monthly expenses, understanding workplace benefits, new-hire paperwork and tax credits. Students with particular needs, such as debt reduction, credit repair and long-term savings with IDAs, are able to attend workshops taught by volunteers.

Visit: jvs-boston.org

RESOURCES

CHILDCARE

- ▶ The **Child Care Aware** homepage has a zip code finder that links users to their local Child Care resource and referral organization. The site also contains helpful tips on evaluating providers, finding after-school and summer care, and childcare for children with special needs.

Visit: childcareaware.org

- ▶ The **Child Care Bureau** of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's "Parent's Place" has links to local information about locating and paying for childcare, finding Head Start programs and contacting state child-support offices.

Visit: acf.hhs.gov/programs/ccb/parents/index.htm

HEALTH CARE

- ▶ The **State Children's Health Insurance Program** of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has a tool for enrolling eligible children and provides links to state programs.

Visit: insurekidsnow.gov

- ▶ **Families USA** offers a "Customer Info" section with a wealth of resources and links, from understanding how managed care works to information on insurance for particular groups of people.

Visit: familiesusa.org

- ▶ The **Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance** provides health insurance benefits for state residents while they are receiving unemployment benefits.

Visit: mass.gov/Edwd/docs//pdf/claimants.2161.pdf

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

- ▶ The **Housing Vouchers and Public Housing** branch of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development explains all federal voucher and public housing programs. The website also includes a local housing authority locator tool.

Visit: hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/

- ▶ Detailed information on the **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** can be found on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website.

Visit: acf.dhhs.gov/programs/liheap

TAX CREDITS

- ▶ The **Center of Budget and Policy Priorities** publishes an outreach kit called "Make Tax Time Pay." It is available in the several languages and easily downloaded from the website. An easy calculator is also posted.

Visit: cbpp.org/eic2004/eitcchoose.htm

- ▶ The **National Community Tax Coalition** has a database of all the free tax preparation programs in the country.

Visit: centerforprogress.org/programs.html

RESOURCES

FOOD ASSISTANCE

- ▶ **America's Second Harvest** provides information on Food Stamps and other federally-funded food and nutrition programs. The website contains a searchable database for emergency foodbanks.

Visit: secondharvest.org

- ▶ The **Food and Nutrition Service** of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has a food stamps pre-screening tool.

Visit: fns.usda.gov/fsp

FINANCIAL LITERACY CURRICULA

- ▶ The **Freddie Mac Corporation** has developed a curriculum called Credit Smart to help consumers understand, build, and maintain better credit. Academic programs are available in both English and Spanish.
Visit: freddiemac.com/creditsmart/
- ▶ The **Money Smart** curriculum, created by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, is available in English and Spanish.
Visit: fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/moneysmart
- ▶ The **National Endowment for Financial Education** is a nonprofit foundation that creates specific financial literacy materials for nonprofit service organizations.
Visit: nefe.org

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

ACCOUNTS (IDAs)

- ▶ The **IDA Network's** State Pages section of its website is a database of all the IDA programs in each state.
Visit: idanetwork.org

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION



Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)

IDAs are income-eligible savings accounts that are matched anywhere from a 1:1 to 4:1 ratio from a combination of private and public sources. Participants' use of funding is restricted to investments in qualified assets, such as a home, post-secondary education, or a small business.

Funding Futures, a United Way of Massachusetts Bay IDA Initiative, is administered by MIDAS, an asset development collaborative of community-based organizations across Massachusetts.

Visit: massassets.org

Collaborations

Ideally, sustainable employment programs would provide the entire range of comprehensive and coordinated services highlighted by this document to help clients gain employment and family-sustaining wages. In most cases, however, no single organization can do it all. Effective programs engage in strategic partnerships, establishing relationships with employers, agencies and organizations to help address the needs of the target population.^{xxxviii}

Best Practices include:

- **Partner with employers** and industry associations to ensure that there will be career opportunities at the conclusion of programs. Structure relationships to create shared ownership.
- **Collaborate with supportive service providers** to help clients overcome barriers to employment, job retention, and advancements.
- **Work with community colleges** for more sophisticated facilities and equipment, qualified faculty, and connections to higher education.
- **Align with Government entities**, such as One-Stop Career Centers and Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to connect workers with jobs in established and emerging industries.
- **Form an Advisory Board** of employers, practitioners, higher education and government partners, labor leaders, student/workers, and community organization leaders, to strengthen and solidify programs' goals and missions.

Small Business Training and Microenterprise

Small business and microenterprise development can expand economic opportunities for low-income workers who cannot fully access traditional sources of capital and business assistance. By lending small amounts of capital, supplying technical assistance and/or providing basic business management training, community-based organizations can empower clients to earn family-sustaining wages or supplement their traditional incomes.^{xxxix}

Best Practices include:

- **Help clients access capital** through an in-house loan fund with non-traditional underwriting methods and collateral requirements, loan packaging, and referrals to possible lenders.
- **Provide flexible and personalized technical assistance** on cash flow budgeting, basic bookkeeping and tax preparation, business planning, loan applications, and marketing and advertising.
- **Provide financial literacy** and small-business management education.

RESOURCES

- ▶ **The Aspen Institute** conducted a quantitative study of 478 participants in five small business development programs. Eighteen months after program completion, the number of clients with incomes at or below 150% of poverty dropped from 63% to 18%. Total income increased 97%.^{xl}
Visit: fieldus.org/Projects/training.html
- ▶ **City of Boston's Office of Business Development** revitalizes the city's neighborhood commercial districts through Boston Main Streets and the Boston Business Assistance Center. These programs offer access to City resources, programs, and services provided by City of Boston Technical Assistance partners, lending institutions, community organizations, and state and federal agencies.
Visit: cityofboston.gov/dnd/obd
- ▶ The **Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations** is a resource for CDCs who support small, locally-owned businesses through technical assistance, training and lending programs.
Visit: macdc.org



Systemic Advocacy

Meeting the needs of low-skilled workers and employers can be challenging and requires adequate funding.^{xi}

Many regulatory and policy issues affect each program's ability to maximally help low-income employees advance to economic self-sufficiency. Organizations can engage in public policy advocacy to secure additional resources and achieve long-term, sustainable improvements in the workforce development system.

Advocacy

The public workforce development system is highly complex. The chart on page 32, developed by the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance, illustrates the myriad of levels and types of agencies and departments involved. These range from Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop Career Centers to community colleges and Adult Basic Education (ABE) and skills training providers. Understanding the system in context is important to good public policy work.

Best Practices include:

- **Acquire in-depth understanding of the needs of local communities and organizations.** Disseminate analysis to key stakeholders.
- **Develop close working relationships with policy makers** and agency officials able to leverage impact.
- **Advocate for increased flexible workforce development resources** including: adult education, incentives for education, trainings to target high-wage jobs with career ladders, training programs for the hardest-to-serve participants, and post-placement support.
- **Support integration and coordination of services** and resources to enable individuals engaged in workforce training to access childcare, transportation, health care, and other work supports.
- **Promote One-Stop career centers.**
- **Monitor the Workforce Investment Act** reauthorization and amendments.
Visit: clasp.org/publications/workforce_07_budget.doc
- **Learn and participate in policy advocacy groups** that organize advocacy and legislative campaigns around workforce development issues, such as the Workforce Solutions Group, Mass Workforce Alliance, Adult Literacy Resource Institute and MIRA.

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION



- ▶ **Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition, Boston, MA**
MIRA organizes and advocates for the rights and opportunities of immigrants and refugees. The Policy Analysis and Advocacy Program carefully and promptly evaluates the impact of public policies on immigrants' and refugees' abilities to achieve sustainable employment. Staff identify and analyze local, state and federal public policies impacting this ability, and disseminate analyses to key stakeholders. Staff also develop and implement appropriate legislative, administrative and individual advocacy strategies to expand access to employment programs and services.

Visit: miracoalition.org

RESOURCES

► Massachusetts Workforce Alliance PEER Project

MWA's **Policy, Education, Engagement & Response (PEER) Project** builds the active engagement of community-based workforce development practitioners in policy issues by:

- providing education about the structure of Massachusetts' Workforce Development and legislative process
- increasing practitioners' confidence in their abilities in policy and advocacy arenas
- helping practitioners craft strategic advocacy plans

To join MWA's listserv, please email massworkforce@aol.com.
To inquire into a PEER training session contact 413-586-1683.

Visit: peer.mwapolicy.org

BEST PRACTICES IN ACTION



► **Skillworks**, funded in part by United Way of Massachusetts Bay, is a five-year, \$15 million public/private investment of philanthropy, government, community organizations, unions, and employers geared to improve the workforce development system in Boston and the state of Massachusetts by focusing on three strategies:

- Capacity building for service providers
- Workforce partnership programs
- Public policy advocacy

Visit: skillworks.org

► The **Workforce Solutions Group** is SkillWork's public policy advocacy grantee. In 2006, WSG achieved a major public policy victory with the enactment of the Economic Stimulus Bill. The bill includes an \$11 million workforce development trust fund designed to help thousands of people access ABE, ESOL and job training. The bill can be viewed in its entirety in the 2006 state budget.

Visit: skillworks.org/downloads/workforcesolutionsact.pdf

SETTING PUBLIC POLICY

in Massachusetts' Workforce Development System

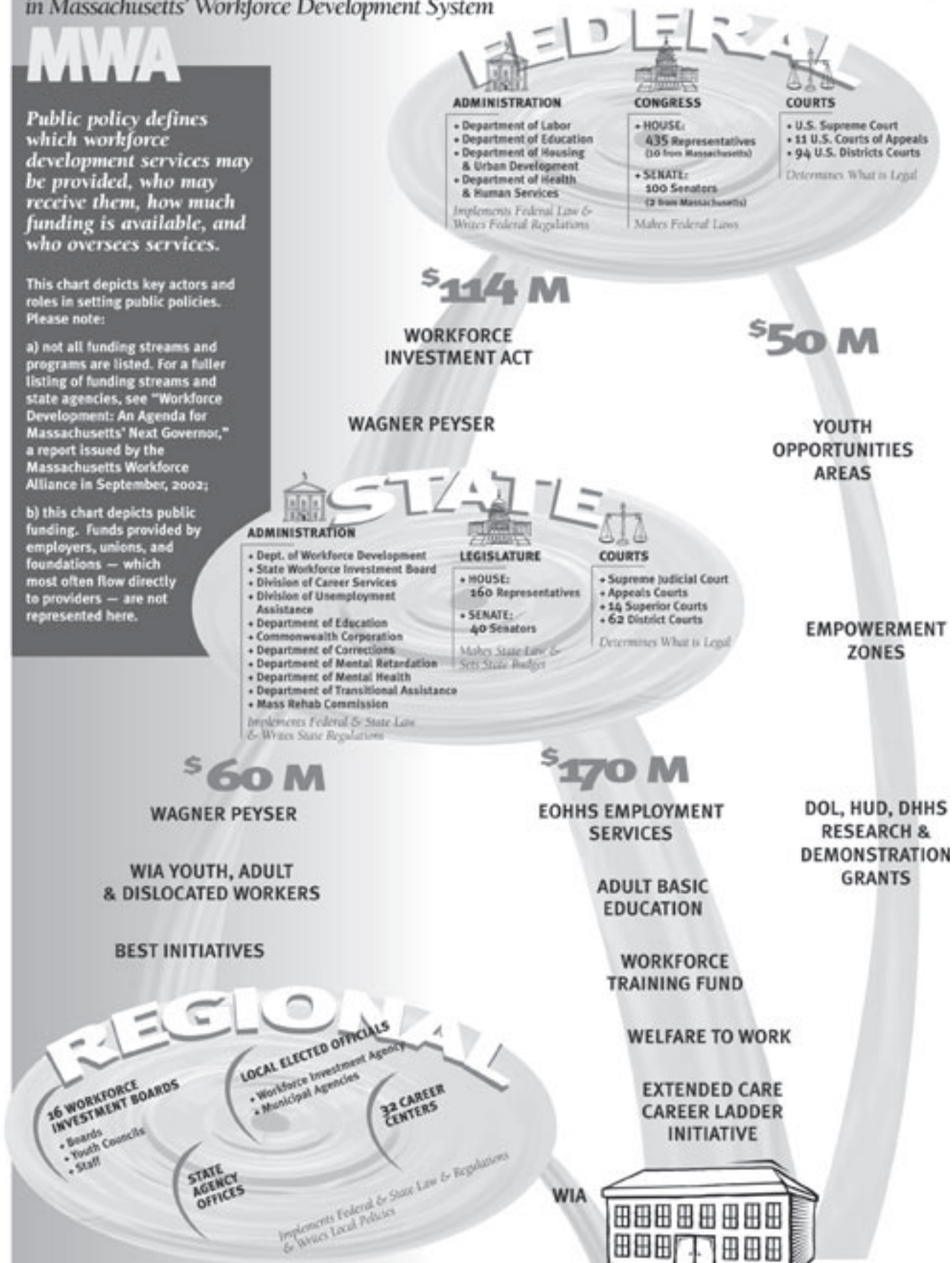
MWA

Public policy defines which workforce development services may be provided, who may receive them, how much funding is available, and who oversees services.

This chart depicts key actors and roles in setting public policies. Please note:

a) not all funding streams and programs are listed. For a fuller listing of funding streams and state agencies, see "Workforce Development: An Agenda for Massachusetts' Next Governor," a report issued by the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance in September, 2002;

b) this chart depicts public funding. Funds provided by employers, unions, and foundations — which most often flow directly to providers — are not represented here.





Moving Forward

Within our Sustainable Employment conceptual framework, UWMB is an intermediary organization with established relationships in both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors.

We are refining strategies that strengthen the financial stability of families so that children may thrive and low-income workers may move along the path to economic self-sufficiency.

For more information or questions on this manual visit uwmb.org or call 617.624.8000 and ask for staff on the sustainable employment team.

Glossary of Terms

Adult Basic Education (ABE): An umbrella term used to describe a range of educational services for adults from basic literacy (including English for non-native speakers of English), numeracy, and high school equivalency (GED)/adult diploma programs (ADP).

Apprenticeship Training: A formal process by which individuals learn their jobs through a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training from a skilled expert.

Asset-poor: Having savings of less than three months worth of living expenses.

Career Coaching: A career coach works with an employee consistently and over time to ensure that s/he understands and pursues appropriate steps toward career advancement such as: developing a career advancement plan, accessing education or training, and meeting at regular intervals to assess progress toward goals.

Career Ladder: An institutionalized career path with measures of incremental progress along it. The measures generally relate to increased education, experience, and/or skill requirements, with compensatory increases in wages.

Case Management: The management of the entire range of services offered to a trainee. In addition to the formal educational components of training, case management provides assistance in accessing supportive services, developing an individual education/career plan, and helping the trainee access any other services that will help ensure successful completion of the training program.

- **Pre-employment Case Management** helps trainees access services that will ensure successful job placement.
- **Post-placement Case Management** helps trainees navigate new work culture, address work-life balance issues and access any other services that will ensure successful job retention.

Certificate Training: Training for licensed, certified or regulated professionals and para-professionals.

Education/Career Counseling: Services that help individuals explore, understand and pursue appropriate steps toward education/career goals.

Entry-Level Jobs: Jobs that are lowest-paid within an industry or firm, and require minimal work experience and limited educational background as conditions for hire.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL): Classes assist non-native English speakers in obtaining speaking, listening, reading, writing and math skills.

Financial Literacy: A range of courses in personal financial management in which participants learn how to manage and save money, track their spending, create a workable budget, improve their credit score, and set financial goals.

General Educational Development (GED): Programs provide academic skills instruction geared toward enabling participants to pass the exam and obtain a high school diploma equivalency.

Individual Service Plan (ISP): An individualized plan of activities that address the individual's education, training, employment and/or financial planning needs. The ISP guides and documents the individual's progress toward the achievement of planned goals.

Information and Referral (I&R): I&R services assess the needs of the client/inquirer, evaluate appropriate resources, identify organizations capable of meeting his/her needs, provide information about the organization to allow the client/inquirer to make informed choices, actively participate in linking the client/inquirer to the services needed, locate alternative services if necessary, and follow up on the referral to ensure the service was received and/or provided.

Job Placement: Services that offer support in job searches, including those programs that offer job training as well as placement services upon the completion of the training program.

Literacy: As defined by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, meaning an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

Massachusetts Family Economic Self-Sufficiency (MassFESS): The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Massachusetts measures the real costs of living, working and paying taxes in the Commonwealth without subsidies. The Standard takes into account the costs of securing adequate housing, child care, food, transportation, medical care, and miscellaneous expenses, while also including the impact of taxes and tax credits. The Standard does not include money for savings or education. It is geographically specific because costs of living vary greatly throughout the State.

Mixed Services Programs: Vocational programs that mix both employment search and education/training, as opposed to programs that focus on just one service.

One-Stop Career Centers: Thirty-seven One-Stop Career Centers in Massachusetts offer employment services for job seekers and assistance to employers in finding qualified workers. The Department of Workforce Development charters career centers and the local charter process is operated by the local Workforce Investment Board. Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), a variety of state agencies are mandated to support career center operations to ensure that they are a one-stop system, including the MA Department of Education (DOE), MA Rehabilitation Commission, the MA Commission for the Blind, the Department of Transitional Assistance, and veterans' services.

Pre-Vocational Skills Training: Services directed toward helping people gather entry-level vocational skills with the explicit purpose of obtaining employment. Includes job-readiness services and programs that help prepare people for successful entry into the workforce.

Soft Skills Training: Training that helps build an individual's ability to succeed in any workplace, by developing non-technical skills such as teamwork, interpersonal relationships, communication, working with supervisors, time management, conflict resolution, and punctuality. Soft skills are distinguished from job-specific employment skills.

Sustainable Employment: The skills and opportunities to earn a sustaining wage to support oneself and one's family.

Vocational/Occupational Skills Training: Services directed toward helping adults to master vocational skills with explicit focus on obtaining employment. Includes such services as job readiness training; work/career exploration activities; training in specific job skills; and training and support in job searches.

Welfare-to-Work: Social program of the United States government, initiated by President Clinton in 1997. The concept is to wean individuals off their reliance on income support and encourage them back to the workforce. Welfare recipients are required to meet certain participation requirements to continue to receive their time-limited welfare benefits. These requirements are often a combination of activities, such as training, rehabilitation and work experience, intended to improve the recipient's job prospects. Although the program officially ended in 2004, new welfare reform policies are modeled from a similar premise.

Work Supports: Federal and state “work supports” are programs designed to help working families make ends meet when earnings alone are not enough. Because these benefits help workers retain jobs, they also reduce turnover and reduce costs for businesses. As a result, work supports benefit both working families and employers.

The following specific work supports have been identified by the Center for Law and Social Policy as programs that serve low-income families and help those families find work, keep their jobs, and maintain their families.

- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Subsidized Child Care
- Food Stamps
- Publicly Funded Health Insurance—Medicaid & State Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance
- Child Support
- Transportation Assistance (bus passes, other forms of public transportation, car repairs, van service in area without public transit)

Workforce Investment Board (WIB):

Massachusetts’s 16 regional Workforce Investment Boards provide workforce development leadership in their communities. The business-led WIBs have the critical role of governance and oversight of the federal and state resources that support the regional network of One-Stop Career Centers and education and training investments in their regions. WIB membership consists of private-sector businesses, working in concert with labor, education and the public sector to design effective demand driven workforce development services for job seekers and employers. To keep businesses competitive and sustain economic growth, WIBs:

- Identify changing workforce needs as part of the regional economic development strategy
- Develop strategic responses to the labor market and industry
- Work to build a comprehensive workforce system in response to the demands of the marketplace, workplace, and workforce
- Focus on accountability, customer satisfaction and measurable results

Workplace-Based Programs: Contextualized training, career development or other vocational programming provided to incumbent workers at the workplace.

Wrap-around Supportive Services: Services provided to individuals to enable them to participate successfully in work and/or training. Examples include childcare, transportation assistance, and counseling.

Resources

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- ⁱⁱ Comings, Sum and Uvin, *New Skills for a New Economy*, pp. xvi.
- ⁱⁱⁱ *IBID*, pp. v.
- ^{iv} Winter, *Best Practices in Workforce Development*, p. 18.
- ^v Kingslow, *Connecting Families to Jobs*, pp. 21-22.
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Notes

“ I feel good about the fact that I have a job where I can advance. I’m setting a good example for my kids. The most helpful thing about the program is that they hold you accountable and make sure that you’re doing what you need to do to be successful in the workplace.”

—Kendrick,
graduate, JFY NetWorks
Environmental Technology Training Program



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