

**By His Excellency
CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR**

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 561

**ESTABLISHING A STATE TASK FORCE
ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY FOR POPULATIONS FACING CHRONICALLY HIGH RATES OF
UNEMPLOYMENT**

WHEREAS, within the Commonwealth there are populations—including African Americans, Hispanic or Latino Americans, persons with disabilities and recently returned veterans—that have experienced chronically high rates of unemployment which exceed the national average rate of unemployment;

WHEREAS, as of December 2014, these groups continued to experience higher than average rates of unemployment — ranging from 7% to 12% — both nationally and in Massachusetts as compared to the overall national average rate of 6.2% and the Massachusetts average rate of 5.8% as reported by the United States Department of Labor;

WHEREAS, Massachusetts' current workforce development system and policies may not adequately meet the needs of these populations;

WHEREAS, there is a clear link among access to meaningful employment, individual well-being, and community well-being;

WHEREAS, increasing access to meaningful employment begins with increasing and improving access to workforce development and training for those who have experienced and continue to experience higher rates of unemployment; and

WHEREAS, programs and policies tailored to such populations could increase access to employment opportunities;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Charles D. Baker, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution as Supreme Executive Magistrate, Part 2, c. 2, § 1, Art. 1, do hereby order as follows:

Section 1. There is hereby established a Task Force on Economic Opportunity for Populations Facing Chronically High Rates of Unemployment (the "Task Force"), which shall advise the Governor, and is mandated to develop strategies to improve economic opportunities for populations that face higher hurdles to full participation in the workforce.

Section 2. The membership of the Task Force shall consist of the following:

1. The Secretary of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, who shall serve as Chair of the Task Force;
2. The Secretary of the Executive Office of Housing and Economic;
3. The Secretary of the Executive Office of Education;
4. The Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human;
5. The Secretary of Veterans' Services;
6. The Director of Access and Opportunity; and
7. Additional members from the community appointed by the Governor upon the recommendation of the Secretary of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

The Secretaries may select designees involved in implementation to participate in the meetings and work of the Task Force.

Section 3. The Secretary of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development has identified African Americans, Hispanic or Latino Americans, persons with disabilities, and recently returned veterans as populations facing chronically high rates of unemployment. These populations, along with any other populations similarly facing chronically higher rates of unemployment shall constitute the "Target Populations" for the Task Force. The Task Force shall have the following charge:

1. Identify and quantify the challenges and barriers to employment experienced by the Target Populations in Massachusetts;
2. Review the current workforce development system in Massachusetts, document how the Target Populations currently access and use the system, identify any barriers to access and use, and recommend ways to eliminate those barriers;
3. Conduct a review of best practices for workforce development programs, practices, and related policies in addressing the needs of Target Populations;
4. Recommend strategies to expand current internal best practices, adopt external best practices, or create new programs, practices and related policies, including a skills pipeline to prepare and connect Target Populations to employment opportunities, in a cost efficient, effective and equitable manner. Such strategies should include short-term and immediate actions that can be implemented as soon as practical;
5. Identify and recommend possible consolidations, reorganizations and other reforms to more efficiently and effectively address target population needs;

6. Develop and recommend metrics and targets, including a timeline for affected agencies to adopted metrics and targets, to measure implementation of recommended programs, practices, and policies and expected outcomes for Target Populations;
7. Compile and present all findings, recommendations, and targets to the Governor and the Cabinet Secretariats in a Strategic Plan by November 15, 2015 together with recommendations for legislation, if any.

Section 4. The Task Force shall meet as frequently as necessary to complete its charge. The Task Force is empowered to hold public meetings, fact-finding hearings and other public forums to solicit feedback from community-based organizations, community groups, business leaders, local officials and other interested persons. The Task Force shall consider information received from these sources in the development of its policy recommendations.

Section 5. The Task Force shall terminate thirty days after presenting its Strategic Plan.

Given at the Executive Chamber in Boston this twelfth day of March in the year of our Lord two thousand fifteen and of the Independence of the United States of America two hundred thirty-nine.

CHARLES D. BAKER

GOVERNOR

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

WILLIAM FRANCIS GALVIN

Secretary of the Commonwealth

GOD SAVE THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS