

## SOUTHEAST REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT

### I. Introduction

Describe the process of creating a regional plan.

Regional Planning Team. Describe the different partner organizations brought together to be a part of the

Regional Planning Team. The Southeast Regional Planning team represents a broad spectrum of organizations spanning a large geographic region encompassing four Workforce Development Areas in the southeastern portion of Massachusetts including Bristol, Brockton Area, Greater New Bedford and South Shore. The region is comprised of 56 communities including six Gateway cities (Attleboro, Brockton, Fall River, New Bedford, Quincy and Taunton).

Originally formed in 2017, the team has seen both long term members and new additions over time. The continuity of our planning work has continued despite changes in leadership and organizational engagement over the years. As seen in the chart below, the team has striven to ensure contributions from a large array of organizations and included meaningful representation from the three Skills Cabinet sectors of Workforce Development, Education and Economic Development. The four Workforce Boards acted as the coordinating bodies in the plan development process. Workforce Development representation also included senior management from the region's seven career centers. Within the education sector, all three community colleges within the region have been active participants in the planning process as were the two public four year Universities situated in the southeast. The region's high schools, particularly our vocational technical high schools, were well represented with Superintendents and other representatives regularly engaged in strategic planning at the regional level.

Numerous Economic Development representatives actively contribute in our strategic planning as well. These included the MA Office of Business Development, Regional Planning Authorities, and area Chambers of Commerce.

It should be noted that ongoing feedback and information related to workforce and employment trends and issues within the Southeast region have been gathered from a broad group of stakeholders in the region that were and are not limited to the individuals listed below.

Individual Name	Individual Title	Organization Name
Tom Perreira	Executive Director	MassHire Bristol Workforce Board
Jason Hunter	Acting Director	MassHire Greater Brockton Workforce Board
Joseph Lopes	Executive Director	MassHire Greater New Bedford Workfc Bd
Ron Iacobucci	Executive Director	MassHire South Shore
Laura Buckley	Deputy Executive Director	MassHire South Shore Workforce Board
Bill Brennan	Dir. of Workforce Dev. Oper.	MassHire South Shore Workforce Board
Lorraine Albert	Director of Regional Training	MassHire Greater Brockton Workforce Board
Taylor Nicholas-Xavier	Deputy Operations Dir.	MassHire Greater New Bedford Workfc Bd
Holly Hill-Batista	Executive Director	MassHire Bristol Career Centers
John Murray	Director	MassHire Brockton Career Center
Tom Hickey	Superintendent	South Shore Vocational Technical HS
Peter Belezos	President	Bendon Gear and Machine
Paul Bello	Dir. of Career Comm. Dev.	South Shore Vocational Technical HS
Laura Douglas	President	Bristol Community College
Dan Evans	President	Evans Machine Co.
Catherine Feerick	Director of Economic Dev.	City of Attleboro
Elvio Ferreira	Director CTE	Brockton Public Schools
Lizeth Gonzalez	Director Economic Dev.	SRPEDD
Jim Pimental	Organizer	Bricklayers & Allied Craftsman Union
Robert Revil	Director of Training	Brockton Electricians JATC

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Carine Sauvignon	Dean for Canton Campus	Massasoit Comm. College
Sheila Sullivan-Jardim	Executive Advisor	MH Brockton Workforce Board
Michael Tamasi	Owner & CEO	AccuRounds
Brad Truini	Administrator	Alden Court Care and Rehab.
Mary Waldron	Executive Director	Old Colony Planning Council
Robert Watt	Exec. Director of Operations	Greater New Bedford Voc. Tech.
Sue Whitaker	Regional Director	MOBD
Mike O’Sullivan	President and CEO	SouthCoast Chamber of Commerce

**Regional Planning Process.** Briefly describe your region’s process to develop a Labor Market Blueprint.  
Regional Planning Process.

Representatives of the Southeast Regional Planning Team Steering Committee which include all four Workforce Board Directors, two Education representatives and two Economic Development Representatives developed an initial work plan resulting in a signed MOU by all three sectors involved in the regional planning process. There were four steering committee meetings and a meeting of the full planning team along with additional key stakeholders and priority industry employers. Additional analysis and work occurred between these sessions. Ongoing feedback and engagement of partners has occurred throughout the regional planning process to afford all organizations on the team with the opportunity to identify priority areas for investment, and shared priorities reflecting the application of the criteria to analyze local data. This work has been systemically fused into the ongoing implementation or regional workforce development activities. This has achieved tangible results and laid groundwork for future strategies to meet the needs of job seekers and businesses in the Southeast region.

**Business Engagement.** Describe how you engaged business to develop your blueprint, including the number of businesses engaged, the industries businesses associate with, and the format of engagement your team employed.

As Workforce Boards are at a minimum 51% private, our initial outreach centered on our Board members as Ambassadors for their industry. Focusing within priority and critical industry sectors to solicit feedback on ongoing workforce needs and business challenges within the region, we regularly facilitate workshops, focus groups and surveys to help guide the process for regional workforce development strategies.

Our Boards also utilized information gleaned from employer focus groups drawn from existing regional grant activities such as the HUB Healthcare grant, Center for Advanced Manufacturing Grant, and the Career Technical Initiative Grants. Sectoral work in the Southeast such as the Southeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium provided additional avenues for employer input.

Brokering meetings and individual conversations with direct care, behavioral health and home health care employers, manufacturing businesses, technology based occupational representatives, financial services and emerging industry representatives within southeastern MA were undertaken to engage employers in identifying career paths, current training capacity and steps to align curriculum. Relevant discussion on regulations that are changing their industry helped to form direction for the education and workforce partners.

In addition to the 10 businesses represented at Fall of 2023 Planning Activities, ongoing employer engagement activities reached more than 50 employers across priority and critical industry clusters.

**II. Where are we now?**  
Describe the current state of your region, including an analysis of industries, occupations, demographic shifts, and gaps between employer demand and employee supply.

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## 1) Regional Context

Utilize the information provided through state data sets and additional local analysis to highlight the region's unique geography, communities, population growth/change, education demographics, workforce history, high-level industry trends, etc.

Stretching from southern portion of Norfolk County just south of Boston southward to the entirety of Plymouth and Bristol Counties, the southeastern region shares most of the Massachusetts border with Rhode Island to the west with the eastern border primarily a long stretch of coastline from Hull to Plymouth and Wareham to Westport. The Southeast region of Massachusetts includes 56 communities encompassing four Workforce Development Areas (Bristol, Greater Brockton, Greater New Bedford and South Shore) with both common and divergent labor markets. The primary concentration of population is centered in six gateway cities located within the region.

As each Workforce Development Area in the southeast has at least one Gateway City within its borders, similar demands are made in English language acquisition (Foreign born: Brockton 28%, Fall River 20%, New Bedford 22% and Quincy 33%), building work ready skills through accessing post secondary education or specialized occupational training within the region's priority occupations (41% population 25+ have a HS diploma or less) and adapting to the change of an available labor pools.

Historically, the dense population made these communities ideal for factories and multi-unit residences to supply the workforce, however, these now 100 year+ facilities are posing challenges to the new industries and residents who are no longer focused on working and living in the same vicinity. From the foundation days of fishing & shoemaking, industries within the Gateway Cities face challenges on transition into new technology, regulations and transportation for their workforce.

Just as all the WDB have the commonality of urban Gateway Cities, within each region there are also pockets of suburbia, filled with small businesses driving the local economy that demands a different response in planning for the workforce. Many of these businesses have few opportunities for training and often have difficulty in filling both entry and mid-level jobs.

Describe critical trends in population changes over the next decade that may impact the workforce.

The Southeast region accounted for approximately 21% of the state's residents at the end of the decade. Between 2010 and 2020, the population increased at a modest annual rate of 0.3%. However, there was little growth in the native born population over the decade. Instead, strong annual growth in the region's immigrant population (4.2%) was the primary factor in the southeast's total population increase. The region has seen increased diversity over the past decade, with growing Black, Asian and Hispanic populations.

The population also became older as baby boomers approached retirement age. This resulted in all cohorts of residents age 45 and older growing during the decade, while nearly all the cohorts of those ages 44 and younger declined. (Commonwealth Corporation/New England Public Policy Center of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Labor Market Trends in the Southeast Region)

Within the UMASS Donahue Institute Report, *Long-Term Population Projections for Massachusetts Regions and Municipalities*, it is estimated that the southeast should expect to see continued population growth but at a slower rate in the future. The UMASS Donahue Institute model estimates that by 2035, it is estimated that the southeast region will approach 1.19 million persons. The report indicates that continued modest growth will be driven by in-migration of persons in their thirties and international migration. It is anticipated these two factors will counter population loss

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through domestic out-migration. It is relevant to note that domestic out-migration is strongly concentrated among the college-age population reflecting a long-term struggle to retain college graduates within the region.

The report also projects that the population will continue to age in the southeast. Significantly, it is estimated that 24% of the region's population will be over the age of 65 by 2035 which will represent a 77% increase compared to 2010. This age shift absent significant growth of the overall population has potentially significant labor supply implications in the region. Ultimately, as region's population ages, the share of the working-age and young people is declining.

The trends of a limited growth in the region's labor force are even more ominous when one considers the fact that southeastern MA employers face a net loss of approximately 123,000 employees who leave the region for work. More specifically, nearly 335,000 individuals are living and employed in the southeast. While roughly 155,000 individuals are employed in the region while living outside, a far more significant number (290,000) who live in the southeast are employed outside the region.

**Describe critical trends in regional demographics that impact the workforce. Age, education, etc.**

Examining raw population numbers is only a first overall step in analyzing the changing nature of the workforce and its preparedness in meeting the evolving needs in our region's economy. In determining the best strategies for ensuring that local job seekers have the skills necessary to secure employment in growth industries, it is necessary to review the regional demographics of our region's workforce in greater detail.

The skills sets and education levels of the region's population will always be a primary consideration in workforce development, education and economic development strategies to meet the workforce needs of area employers. As the local economy has evolved, the strongest growth occupations with high wages and career ladder opportunities are increasingly those with higher skill set requirements. The majority of southeast MA-based employment (60%) currently requires a high school diploma or less but again this is not indicative of priority and growth industries. Of the occupations that achieved a four or five STAR ranking in the Southeast region, 73% required at least an Associate Degree. This translated as well to priority industry sectors with roughly 2/3 of healthcare and almost ¾ of professional, scientific and technical services require at least some post secondary education.

This data becomes important within the context of the educational attainment rates among the region's population. Within the Southeast, Bristol and Plymouth County data (2016-2020 ACS gathered from American Factfinder) reveals educational attainment rates that are most often at the lower end of the Commonwealth's regions. The regional differences in high school graduation are relatively modest. Within Bristol and Plymouth Counties the percentage of age 25 and older population with at least a high school diploma or equivalency is 86.8% and 93.9% respectively. As we move to post-secondary education, the differences between the southeast and the remainder of the state become more pronounced. In fact, Bristol County has the lowest percentage of adults with some post-secondary education (54.8%) while Plymouth County (68.0%) falls within the middle of the state range of 55-78%. Finally, the percentage of Bristol County adults with a bachelor's degree or higher is only 31.1% with Plymouth County at 42.8% compared to the state average of 46.6%. This puts the majority of the southeast region at the low end of the range of MA Counties. In looking at the combined southeastern data, 41% of individuals 25 or older have a high school diploma or less, 27% have some post-secondary or an Associate Degree while 27% hold a Bachelors or higher (American Community Survey 5 Year Averages 2016-2020). In examining job seekers served at the seven Career Centers in the region, the numbers are lower still with 36% holding a high school diploma or equivalent, 16% with some college, 10% with an associate's degree and 16% with a bachelor's degree (EOLWD-Career Center One Stop Career Center Access Reports FY'23).

In addition to education levels, it is also important to note that a significant portion of residents require language or basic skill remediation in order to access specialized occupational training or post-secondary education. An examination of 2016-2020 averages reveals that 9% of the 18 and over population in the southeast are Limited English Proficient. That

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would translate to more than 87,000 individuals within the region. Similarly, 11% of the 18+ population, representing more than 107,000 individuals lack a high school diploma with approximately half of these at less than a 9th grade level in basic skills attainment. It should be noted that recent years has continued to see growth within immigrant and migrant populations which has also impacted language and basic skill needs in the region. The obvious implication to this data is a clear need for integrated Adult Basic Education strategies with contextualized curriculum, increased intensity (more hours per week) and potentially integrated ABE/Occupational training programs.

There is an obvious correlation between education levels and earning ability and this is confirmed by area wage data. In the southeast, the median wage is \$46,800 (Occupational Employment Statistics Wages, 2022) which is approximately 20% below the state median wage of \$58,450.

It is also useful to examine the demographics of the region's population within the context of priority regional industries. The implication of an aging population and shrinking workforce has already been noted above. In examining more practically how this might affect priority industries, it is important to note that the oldest workforce is within the manufacturing sector with 39% of its employees over the age of 55. In comparison, Professional and Technical Services, Construction and Health Care, only 21-28% of the workforce is over the age of 55. Accommodation and Food Service represents the youngest workforce in the region though many of the positions part-time, entry-level and low wage.

With regard to race, Healthcare is the most racially diverse industry, with 18% non-white employees with Construction the least racially diverse industry (8% non-white). All priority industries currently have a relatively low percentage of Hispanic employees. Professional, Scientific and Technical Services and Construction represent the lowest percentage with 6% and 5% Hispanic employees respectively. Manufacturing and Accommodation and Food Services were at 9% and 10% respectively.

With regard to education levels in priority industries, Construction (44% HS or less), Accommodation and Food Service (47% HS or less) and Manufacturing (41% HS or less) offer the most opportunities for individuals with a high school diploma or less. Conversely, individuals within just over 2/3 of Health Care positions and almost ¾ of Professional, Scientific and Technical Services have at least some post-secondary education. (Source for industry specific demographics: US Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics)

### 2) Industry Demand Analysis (NAICS)

Utilize the information provided through state data sets and additional local analysis region's criteria and labor market data (i.e. your region's account for [Lighcast](#), [DER data](#), [Quarterly Workforce Indicators](#)) to explore the following questions in discussion and develop consensus for each section.

Describe past and current high-level industry trends impacting workforce needs (i.e. growing, declining, emerging industries).

In examining industry trends within the southeast region, it becomes clear that recent changes mirror longer term trends that have been seen in this region over an extended period of time. The following represents employment share over the past five years including percentage growth and decline. It is important to include shorter term (2021-2023) data as the impact of COVID on the workforce dramatically affected 2021 statistics and somewhat skewed the five year loss/gain numbers causing trends that were not indicative of longer term historical data.

Southeast Employment By Industry

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Industry	2018	2021	2023	PCT of Workforce	Loss/Gain 18-23	Loss/Gain 21-23	Loss/Gain Pct 21-23
Health Care	99997	89914	95285	13.8%	-4712	5371	6.0%
Pub Admin/Educational Services	111478	84746	88909	12.9%	-22569	4163	4.9%
Retail Stores	151871	73271	83843	12.2%	-68028	10572	14.4%
Eating and Drinking	39214	54214	52973	7.7%	13759	-1241	-2.3%
Construction	36191	47972	48898	7.1%	12707	926	1.9%
Manufacturing	64161	43806	48555	7.1%	-15606	4749	10.8%
Services	35493	36635	40430	5.9%	4937	3795	10.4%
Professional Services	31498	33896	37133	5.4%	5635	3237	9.5%
Administrative and Support Services	27842	33105	35408	5.1%	7566	2303	7.0%
Wholesale	32171	25604	28237	4.1%	-3934	2633	10.3%
Transportation	12833	14097	18255	2.7%	5422	4158	29.5%
Real Estate	15177	15888	17195	2.5%	2018	1307	8.2%
Finance	13408	13482	15744	2.3%	2336	2262	16.8%
Information-Based Industries	11695	8754	13592	2.0%	1897	4838	55.3%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness	11432	12569	12588	1.8%	1156	19	0.2%
Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	11724	11465	11943	1.7%	219	478	4.2%
Waste Management and Remediation	3026	7607	8368	1.2%	5342	761	10.0%
Legal Services	5463	6429	6629	1.0%	1166	200	3.1%
Hotels and Accommodations	5875	5927	6280	0.9%	405	353	6.0%
Utilities	7775	3335	5413	0.8%	-2362	2078	62.3%
Warehousing and Delivery	4091	4132	4088	0.6%	-3	-44	-1.1%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	1991	2147	2917	0.4%	926	770	35.9%
Rental and Leasing Services	2285	2293	2605	0.4%	320	312	13.6%
Management of Companies	1916	974	992	0.1%	-924	18	1.8%
Mining	197	255	220	0.0%	23	-35	-13.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>740822</b>	<b>634538</b>	<b>688523</b>		<b>-52304</b>	<b>53985</b>	<b>8.5%</b>

Data Source: Dun & Bradstreet Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

### Southeast

### Avg Annual Wage

### Location Quotient

Industry	Avg Annual Wage		Location Quotient		
	2018	2020	2018	2021	2023
Health Care	\$46,373	\$51,276	0.99	0.87	0.88
Pub Admin/Educational Services	\$61,530	\$66,334	0.89	0.94	0.93
Retail Stores	\$30,649	\$35,384	1.27	1.30	1.41
Eating and Drinking	\$19,084	\$21,535	1.12	1.44	1.39
Construction	\$66,316	\$72,849	1.20	1.24	1.27
Manufacturing	\$70,751	\$75,557	1.32	1.03	1.02
Services	\$28,794	\$34,303	1.27	1.23	1.19
Professional Services	\$84,309	\$94,873	0.44	0.54	0.49
Administrative and Support Services	\$33,790	\$38,132	0.69	0.68	0.79
Wholesale	\$80,780	\$87,886	1.35	1.54	1.69
Transportation	\$39,829	\$49,890	0.68	0.93	0.94
Real Estate	\$50,478	\$57,569	1.38	1.54	1.42
Finance	\$70,815	\$86,831	0.38	0.40	0.40

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Information-Based Industries	\$86,025	\$78,292	0.53	0.34	0.41
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness	\$29,703	\$29,472	0.99	1.02	1.00
Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	\$71,322	n/a	2.06	1.86	1.63
Waste Management and Remediation	\$61,849	\$71,789.7	0.94	0.64	0.65
Legal Services	\$72,473	\$81,043.1	0.53	0.57	0.60
Hotels and Accommodations	\$22,671	\$25,721.4	0.41	0.63	0.62
Utilities	\$85,180	\$88,804.1	0.91	0.69	0.81
Warehousing and Delivery	\$50,524	\$65,696.9	1.14	1.54	1.30
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	\$95,958	\$94,911.6	0.99	1.15	2.09
Rental and Leasing Services	\$45,281	\$53,302.5	0.80	0.89	0.81
Management of Companies	\$106,872	\$111,161.7	4.33	0.11	0.09
Mining	n/a	\$57,327.8	0.60	1.02	1.06

Data Source: Dun & Bradstreet Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

### Southeast - Businesses

Industry	2018	2021	2023	Pct of Bus 2023	Loss/Gain 2018-2023	Loss/Gain 2021-2023	L/G PCT 2021-2023
Construction	8369	8335	8269	11.7%	-100	-66	-0.8%
Services	7906	8152	8222	11.7%	316	70	0.9%
Retail Stores	8038	7690	7682	10.9%	-356	-8	-0.1%
Professional Services	7191	7433	7442	10.6%	251	9	0.1%
Health Care	6509	6480	6494	9.2%	-15	14	0.2%
Administrative and Support Services	7337	5630	5353	7.6%	-1984	-277	-4.9%
Real Estate	3121	3028	3096	4.4%	-25	68	2.2%
Eating and Drinking	2909	2939	2889	4.1%	-20	-50	-1.7%
Pub Admin/Educational Services	2838	2652	2698	3.8%	-140	46	1.7%
Manufacturing	2820	2556	2598	3.7%	-222	42	1.6%
Wholesale	2958	2733	2579	3.7%	-379	-154	-5.6%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Fitness	1660	1775	1755	2.5%	95	-20	-1.1%
Legal Services	1755	1710	1711	2.4%	-44	1	0.1%
Finance	1820	1761	1679	2.4%	-141	-82	-4.7%
Transportation	1629	1624	1655	2.3%	26	31	1.9%
Information-Based Industries	1103	1060	1202	1.7%	99	142	13.4%
Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	948	842	856	1.2%	-92	14	1.7%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	655	602	627	0.9%	-28	25	4.2%
Rental and Leasing Services	477	438	457	0.6%	-20	19	4.3%
Hotels and Accommodations	289	311	321	0.5%	32	10	3.2%
Waste Management and Remediation	255	267	285	0.4%	30	18	6.7%
Warehousing and Delivery	275	241	266	0.4%	-9	25	10.4%
Utilities	166	213	223	0.3%	57	10	4.7%
Management of Companies	47	46	46	0.1%	-1	0	0.0%
Mining	26	27	30	0.0%	4	3	11.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>73119</b>	<b>70566</b>	<b>70458</b>		<b>-2666</b>	<b>-108</b>	<b>-0.2%</b>

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Focusing on the 2021-2023 trends, significant growth in raw numbers continues to occur the Health Care industry cluster. It represents the largest industry cluster within the region with nearly 14% of workers employed in the industry and more than 5,000 new jobs added to health care occupations over the past three years. This represents roughly 10% of total job growth in the southeast over this same period. Healthcare is included as a priority in each of the four Workforce Board's plans supported by the fact that career opportunities and wage potential are stronger in health care than in other growth industry clusters. Indeed, there are positions within the health care sector that exceed average annual wages in the Southeast. Still, while some of the growth occupations in this industry sector may be accessed with short term training, more advanced training and certificate and degree attainment is necessary to access the highest demand occupations that afford strong wages and opportunities for career growth.

A second industry trend that is significant in both raw numbers and employment share can be found in the manufacturing sector. In recent years, employment in the manufacturing sector has strongly rebounded from a sharp short-term decline during the COVID pandemic. In fact, 2021-2023 data reverses longer-term historical trends of job loss in the industry. More specifically, the manufacturing industry has seen a 10.8% employment gain in the past three years resulting in an increase of more than 4,700 individuals employed in related occupations. This is in stark contrast to a 3.6% loss in total employment with approximately 1,500 jobs lost between 2009-2016 as well as a more dramatic employment loss of 16.2% during 2007-2009 in the midst of a recessionary economy. The southeast as well maintains a relatively high percentage of manufacturing jobs with sixth highest employment share in the region with its 7.1% share. It is important to note that the larger reductions and layoffs in manufacturing 10-20 years ago were related to positions that were lower skilled and did not afford the affected workers with significant transferable skills to other industries. However, the current face of manufacturing occupations shows a need for higher skills sets. This comes with opportunity as wages in demand occupations such as CNC machinists and welders have increased even in recent months as evidenced by roughly 15-25% increase in entry level wages over the past two years for individuals placed out of Workforce Board coordinated specialized manufacturing training programs.

Other industry trends to note include the Professional Services industry maintaining a steady growth rate of 9.5% over the past three years and an increase in the growth in Construction (7.1%) over the past five years. The construction industry growth has benefited from major transportation, commercial and residential projects throughout the region in recent years. Construction has shown steady employment growth, adding nearly 13,000 positions over the past five years. It remains firmly within the top five industries clusters by employment percentage in the Southeast. While the Financial Service Industry represents a modest percentage of the total workforce, it has seen an impressive increase of nearly 17% from 2021-2023 with a strong growth in average annual wage.

Short term growth in other industries such as Retail, Accommodation and Food Services are worthy of note and can be integrated into planning through areas such as youth employment and career readiness. However, with wages that are somewhat lower than the average and career ladder opportunities not as closely tied to credentials, specific training and degree programs, these and similarly situated industries do not rise to the level of prioritized or critical.

Finally, the regional workforce skills partners are cognizant of the need to address the needs of emerging industries in the region. This has more recently centered on clean energy, most notably the offshore wind industry centered on the southern part of the Southeast region. With the prospect for employment opportunities that cut across priority and critical industry clusters such as manufacturing and construction, this sector has already generated coordinated efforts among regional workforce development, economic development and education entities.

While overall industry cluster analysis provides some basis for areas of focus, it is clear that analysis of sub-occupational clusters is highly important in the developing areas of priority and focus and implementing strategies to address the workforce needs of the region.



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**What top three industries are most important to the region's economic success and why?** (*volume of employment, projected growth, wage levels, etc.*)

What top three industries are most important to the region's economic success and why?

**Healthcare** is clearly one of the most important industries to the region's economic success. As noted above, Healthcare by far represents the largest industry cluster within the region with nearly 14% of workers employed in the industry and nearly 5,371 new jobs added to health care occupations over the past three years. This represents roughly 10% of total job growth in the southeast over this same period. The industry has the largest share of total wages paid representing approximately 19% of the regional total. From 2019-2022. The Health Care industry also includes a significant number of establishments in the area with a total of 6,494 separate employers now in the region. Multiple occupations within this industry are among the fastest growing jobs in the southeast. For example, Registered Nurse represents the top occupation by indexed employer demand and is projected to grow steadily by double digit percentages in all areas of the region. As well, Nursing Assistants, Home Health Aides, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Personal Care Aides, and Phlebotomists are only a partial list of Healthcare occupations that are projected to show long term growth of greater than 10%, in some cases approaching 37% in parts of the southeast region. (Department of Unemployment Assistance – Long Term Occupational Projections) Population trends will only add to the demand for Health Care services as it is estimated that 24% of the region's population will be over the age of 65 by 2035, compared to 14% in 2010.

**Manufacturing** represents an industry important to the region's economic success. Indeed, each of the four Workforce Boards has placed emphasis on manufacturing within their respective strategic plans. Through work with area manufacturers, it is evident that there are significant employment opportunities with career ladder possibilities for area job seekers but also major workforce challenges facing the industry.

While there is not an overall growth rate in certain manufacturing occupations, such a basic statistical analysis would not tell the complete story of future demand within the industry. More specifically, the manufacturing sector is marked by an aging labor pool in the southeast with approximately one third of the workforce over the age of 55. As a result, the industry faces large scale attrition over the next 10 years exacerbated by the fact that the region, despite expansion of training capacity in this sector, still has a limited training pipeline to develop the future workforce in this industry. Still, it should be noted that over the past three years, manufacturing has seen an impressive growth of 4,749 new jobs added in the Southeast.

While training opportunities exist through partnerships among Workforce Boards, vocational technical high schools and community colleges and some credentialing is present, the programs are not as formalized as in other industry clusters and in many cases lack regular sustainable funding with programming often grant driven. As well, manufacturing is regularly perceived as a declining industry with most of the region's youth and their parents do not identify it as a viable career path

However, this industry features highly accessible entry points with strong entry level wages for positions that can be obtained without advanced degrees (70% of the region's manufacturing workforce have less than a Bachelor Degree). Occupations such as CNC Machinists and welders can be accessed through relatively short term training programs and feature strong entry level wages in excess of \$20 per hour).

**Professional and Technical Services** offers a range of high level services and with few exceptions employers within this sector engage in activities that require high levels of expertise, advanced training and degree attainment. This has translated into strong growth prospects and high wages, and has shown a steady growth rate of 9.5% from 2012-2023. As well, wages in this industry have increased 9.7% over the same period representing the fourth highest average weekly wage in the southeastern region. The industry also has the fourth highest number of establishments in the region (7,442).

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In addition, many of the occupations within this sector, particularly in computer/IT occupations cut across multiple industry clusters. In most of these cases, the jobs are high demand (4 and 5 Demand STARS) rating and show strong projected growth. Examples include Computer Systems Analysts (16.8% projected long term growth) and Computer User Support Specialist (11.8% projected long term growth). It is also significant to note that attracting industry within this sector is a regional economic development priority supported by both the workforce development and education sectors. To illustrate the point with one example, the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District's (SRPEDD) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Life Sciences already make up a majority of employment within the knowledge and technology-intensive industry clusters throughout the region. The same report cites efforts throughout the region to attract bio-tech companies to the area, further noting the MA Biotechnology Council ranks several area communities as "BioReady". These efforts have been replicated in the region for different occupational clusters in an ongoing effort to attract knowledge based occupations that offer high wages and career ladder opportunities.

For the top three industries, what are the most significant workforce development challenges identified by business and industry partners from those industries?

Several common threads emerged among representatives from all three priority industry clusters:

- 1) The ability of employers to find workers with the right skills sets is a clear challenge. Employer expansion in some priority/critical industry clusters is clearly being hindered by an inability to find qualified/credentialed workers.
- 2) Many job seekers and employees lack work readiness skills. Workforce Development and Education partners have initiatives around this issue but not always coordinated.
- 3) Workforce training and development: Investing in the training and development of entry-level employees, particularly with small businesses, can be challenging due to limited resources, time issues, and lack of knowledge regarding assistance available through workforce development, education, economic development and Health and Human Service entities.

As one of the most rapidly growing sectors of the economy, the Healthcare industry also faces significant workforce development challenges. From a labor force standpoint, multiple important occupations within this industry face supply gaps resulting in labor shortages. Supply gap analysis shows most positions with low ratio of qualified individuals per opening (0.1to 0.9 per opening) with occupations such as Nursing, Physical Therapy Assistant, Licensed Practical Nurse, Medical Records and Health Information Technicians, Dental Hygienists, Nursing Assistants and Radiologic Technicians showing long term supply gaps in the southeast. The struggle in developing a talent pipeline for this industry is affected by limited training and education capacity in the region for certain for occupations. For example, there is only one Associates Degree program in Radiologic Technology in the southeast region and the limited number of slots in Registered Nurse degree programs impacted by lack of teaching capacity is well documented. All this is occurring against the backdrop of ongoing changes in the healthcare industry and the unquestioned trend for increase demand for services forcing providers to move toward redesigned primary care models away from acute hospital utilization.

Southeastern Healthcare employers have directly confirmed conclusions gleaned from current labor market data. More specifically:

- Vacancy rates have been and are still high
- Some employers have experienced high turnover rates (50% turnover in the first year)
- Extremely difficult to find LPN's and Nursing Assistants specifically
- Difficulty in encouraging upskilling of current workforce
- Aging workforce
- Trying to upskill and expand the pipeline is a struggle

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- Employer note difficulty in obtaining grant funding for programs that are longer-term for higher skill level positions
- Housing and transportation are factors into why job seekers are not choosing healthcare as a career pathway
- Lack of instructional capacity hindering development of additional pipeline training programs

Within the manufacturing sector, multiple labor supply gaps exist and are likely to increase in the near and longer term. The manufacturing sector is marked by an aging labor pool in the southeast with more than a third of the workforce over the age of 55. As a result, the industry faces large scale attrition over the next 10 which has been confirmed through feedback from the region's manufacturers, particularly among members of the Southeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (SAMC). This issue is compounded by the fact that, while grant such as the Career Technical Initiative have expanded training offerings, the region still has a limited training pipeline to develop the future workforce in this industry, particularly in advanced occupations that require longer term training. The region's vocational technical high schools provide valuable programs and a supply of graduates who enter the manufacturing field, but this number does not meet the demand or level for skilled employees in this industry. While additional training opportunities for adults exist through partnerships among workforce boards, vocational technical high schools and community colleges and some credentialing is present (i.e. MACWIC), the programs are not as formalized as in other industry clusters and in many cases, lack systemic funding.

Another contributing factor in the limited talent pipeline is the perception among area youth that manufacturing is a declining industry that does not offer strong career ladder opportunities or good wages.

Within Professional and Technical services, common threads emerged among employers, particularly within the IT occupational clusters. These include difficulty in finding the right talent as the technical skills required for many positions are highly specialized making it difficult to find an appropriate match among candidates. Employers have also noted high turnover rates within the IT sector. With its steady growth, this sector's skill sets are in high demand. As a result, there has been an upward pressure on salary expectations which particularly impacts smaller employers' ability to recruit qualified staff.

Other industries beyond the three noted above, that have warranted specific attention in this plan, also cite multiple workforce challenges.

The financial services sector is an industry that in recent years has faced dramatic changes in its operations and it appears that such trends will continue. Technology has been integrated into consumers' lives at a rapid pace. This has had significant residual effects in the financial service industry with demand for services growing but fewer people visiting banks. Online portals and self-service kiosks are examples of technologies that have streamlined services and changed the face of the labor force. Still, the industry shows steady employment growth and importantly, significant wage growth (22% from 2018-2020). On a talent development level, financial institutions often used the entry level teller position as the most common access point to career ladder progression but this has lessened somewhat as the industry has adopted a "Universal Banker" model. Representing many skill sets required by a Customer Service Representative, the Universal Banker provides customer service across a wide range of traditional financial services such as basic transactions, new accounts, and loan applications. The Bank Administration Institute named increased implementation of universal bankers as one of the most anticipated trends in retail banking. A significant challenge to the industry is that these and similarly situated positions require significant cross training. In addition, there is a lack of training and education programs in the region that are specific to entry level positions in financial services. Feedback from local employers reveals customer service, problem solving, work readiness skills, interpersonal skills, teamwork, financial literacy and writing skills as core competencies to succeed in the industry. Additional workforce challenges articulated by local employers include difficulty in identifying and recruiting a more diverse and multi-lingual workforce, challenges in attracting younger workers into the industry who often do not see the available career pathways, and the desire to "home grow" employees. Leaders in the

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industry have investigated several strategies to address some of these issues including an effort to establish apprenticeships in the region through such mechanisms as internships.

The construction industry continues to show impressive growth in the Southeast providing many opportunities for area job seekers. Then recent *Construction-Related Trades and Union Occupations in the Greater Brockton Region* report prepared by the UMass Donahue Institute’s Economic & Public Policy Research Group notes many of the workforce challenges this industry faces in the Southeast. The report notes that quantitative data as well as the qualitative data from the interviews and focus group revealed common barriers that people face in getting into construction-related trades occupations in the region. Some of those barriers include the marketing and awareness of these occupations, educational barriers, transportation, perception issues, language barriers, and issues with substance use. These barriers limit the construction trades workforce and working to remove these barriers can help grow and improve the workforce.

Direct focus groups and interviews revealed the following barriers:

- Advertising, Marketing, and Awareness: There is a lack of awareness and knowledge of construction-related trades occupations among the general population and among high school students. Jobs are not always listed.
- Educational Barriers: There is not enough training capacity to meet the needs of the region.
- Language Barriers: Non-English speakers may have more issues knowing about trades careers, knowing where to find jobs, getting a job or getting promoted.
- Job Expectations and Soft Skills: People who do get into construction trades work can find it to be more difficult or different than they thought. Employers are seeking trained and experienced, responsive workers

A number of additional industry concerns (transportation, regulation, energy costs) are not easily addressed by our partnership. Transportation is clearly a significant issue resulting in the labor pool for employers diminished due to job seekers unable to access employment and training throughout the southeast region. As a result, employers have shown a willingness to work with partners to identify creative solutions to transportation issues. As well, potential expansion of commuter rail in the southeast offers a potential opportunity for increase access to education, training and employment opportunities.

**3) Occupational Demand Analysis (SOC)**  
 Utilize the information provided through state data sets and additional local analysis using the region’s criteria and labor market data to explore the following questions in discussion and develop consensus for each section.

**Describe critical trends in occupational employment history** in the region (i.e. growing, declining, emerging occupations)

An examination of projected long-term growth rates reveals notable annual growth rates within the Southeast region’s priority and critical industry clusters:

SOC Code	Occupation Title	Employment 2020	Employment 2030	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Annual Openings
434171	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	20,110	25,611	5,501	27.4%	3,308
512090	General and Operations Managers	14,952	18,191	3,239	21.7%	1,683
533032	Customer Service Representatives	10,331	10,567	236	2.3%	1,339

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211093	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	7,376	9,028	1,652	22.4%	1,240
413091	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	6,668	8,247	1,579	23.7%	969
533031	Nursing Assistants	6,700	7,054	354	5.3%	865
537062	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	7,124	7,397	273	3.8%	822
434051	Construction Laborers	5,401	7,144	1,743	32.3%	783
395092	Registered Nurses	12,357	13,352	995	8.1%	764
436013	Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers	4,630	5,928	1,298	28.0%	705
291141	Electricians	3,646	4,855	1,209	33.2%	557
111021	Carpenters	4,295	5,413	1,118	26.0%	555
413021	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except T	4,816	5,250	434	9.0%	531
113031	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	4,242	4,931	689	16.2%	496
319091	Receptionists and Information Clerks	3,230	3,626	396	12.3%	469
414012	First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction	3,387	4,354	967	28.6%	458
119111	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	3,255	4,068	813	25.0%	452
512028	Medical Secretaries	3,564	4,034	470	13.2%	451
172112	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts	4,087	5,211	1,124	27.5%	449
319092	Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	3,801	3,952	151	4.0%	439
211022	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insur	3,125	3,625	500	16.0%	431
433021	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Coun	3,180	3,876	696	21.9%	392
472061	Financial Managers	3,200	3,929	729	22.8%	325
112022	Medical Assistants	2051	2483	432	21.1%	305
499021	Social and Human Service Assistants	2020	2327	307	15.2%	280
472111	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	3,154	3,431	277	8.8%	277
516031	Medical and Health Services Managers	2134	2840	706	33.1%	258
211023	Sales Managers	2,446	2,762	316	12.9%	250
311131	Driver/Sales Workers	1357	1786	429	31.6%	213
533033	Dental Assistants	1484	1709	225	15.2%	208
472031	Healthcare Social Workers	1909	2115	206	10.8%	203

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499071	Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and I	1438	1751	313	21.8%	181
311120	Billing and Posting Clerks	1483	1618	135	9.1%	172
292052	Sewing Machine Operators	937	1130	193	20.6%	136
151256	Insurance Sales Agents	1312	1394	82	6.3%	128
433031	Electrical, Electronic, and Electromechanical Assemblers, Ex	924	1026	102	11.0%	112
471011	Manicurists and Pedicurists	704	947	243	34.5%	111
472152	Machinists	861	999	138	16.0%	108
419099	Parts Salespersons	652	762	110	16.9%	95
412022	Sales and Related Workers, All Other	393	436	43	10.9%	57
514041	Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	410	461	51	12.4%	45
292061	Pharmacy Technicians	460	526	66	14.3%	42
211018	Industrial Engineers	468	554	86	18.4%	40

Not surprisingly, multiple healthcare occupations show both impressive long term growth percentages as well as significant numbers of job openings within the Southeast region. These include Home Health and Personal Care Aides, Nursing Assistants, Registered Nurses, Medical Secretaries, Behavioral and Mental Health Counselors, Licensed Practical Nurses, Dental Assistants and Medical and Health Service Managers among others.

Manufacturing occupation are also well represented in areas of long-term occupational growth. Occupations such as machinists, fabricators and industrial engineers are several examples. IT occupations such as Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts are worthy of note. Multiple construction based occupations (carpenters, electricians) show evidence of continued growth in the above chart. It is important to note that the demand for constructions occupations is likely to be reinforced by the emerging Offshore wind industry in the Southeast. Financial Service occupations such as Financial Managers and Sales Representatives show not only robust projected growth but impressive wage totals as well.

Source: OES Projections, IPEDS, MA Department of Higher Education, MA Department of Economic Research, MA Department of Unemployment Assistance

### What are the top occupations or occupational groups in which the region is facing the most significant employee shortages?

Utilize the **regional occupational list that ranks of 3, 4 and 5 star** occupations for the region and determine those with significant shortages based upon the “supply” data for the region, input from business, organizations and other input.

The following represents 3, 4 and 5 star occupations that fall within Southeast Priority and Critical Industry clusters:

#### 3-5 Star Occupations - High School Diploma

Occupation	Southeast Supply Gap	Star Rating
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Carpenters	555	5
Electricians	551	5
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	442	5
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	205	5
Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks	172	3
Insurance Sales Agents	162	4
Machinists	161	4
Insurance Claims and Policy Processing Clerks	110	3
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	106	5
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	106	5
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	97	5
Bus Drivers, Transit and Intercity	91	4
Public Safety Telecommunicators	76	3
Brickmasons and Blockmasons	59	4
Billing and Posting Clerks	56	3
Healthcare Support Workers, All Other	23	3

### Some Post Secondary - No Degree

Occupation	Southeast Supply Gap	Star Rating
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	969	5
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	210	4
Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers	191	4
Dental Assistants	191	3
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	122	5
Firefighters	42	4
Medical Records Specialists	42	4

### Some College - No Degree

Occupation	Southeast Supply Gap	Star Rating
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	822	5
Computer User Support Specialists	126	4

### Associate Degree

Occupation	Southeast Supply Gap	Star Rating
Physical Therapist Assistants	76	5
Dental Hygienists	69	4
Occupational Therapy Assistants	42	5

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Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians	41	4
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	36	5
Computer Network Support Specialists	39	4

### Bachelors Degree

Occupation	Southeast Supply Gap	Star Rating
Software Developers	297	5
Financial Managers	280	5
Medical and Health Services Managers	182	5
Construction Managers	214	5
Industrial Engineers	95	5
Personal Financial Advisors	57	5
Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	7	5
Registered Nurses	300	4
Accountants and Auditors	265	4
Computer and Information Systems Managers	52	4
Electrical Engineers	31	4
Logisticians	29	4
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	94	3
Financial Analysts	65	3
Mechanical Engineers	35	3

**Which occupations offer a “career pathway” for workers to move to higher skills and wages, especially workers starting at entry-level?** (You can include occupations without a star ranking that is entry-level yet important because of a career pathway or cluster.)

Career ladder entry points in Southeast priority industries can be accessed in positions that are entry-level and in some cases require no formal credential. While offering a wage that may be at or below the region’s median, these occupations offer an entry points to viable career ladder opportunities. The Health Care industry features numerous career ladder opportunities within the 4 and 5 STAR Demand ratings.

Nursing Assistant/Patient Care Aides offers a strong career ladder in the Southeast with opportunities for substantial increased wages over time.

Position	Education Requirement	Median Wage
Nursing Assistant	Non Degree Certification	41,643
Licensed Practical Nurse	Post Secondary Non Degree	64,135
Registered Nurse	Associates/Bachelors Degree	90,997
Nurse Practitioners	Masters Degree	107,431



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Other healthcare occupations within the Southeast with meaningful career ladder opportunities include Mental Health and Behavioral Health Workers, and medical records specialists. Occupations such as physical therapists offer meaningful wage advancement based on specialization.

Computer User Support Specialists offer opportunities to move into significantly higher wage positions in the Professional and Technical Services/IT Industry.

Position	Education Requirement	Median Wage
Computer User Support Specialist	Some College	63,005
Computer Network Support Specialist	Associates Degree	83,797
Computer Systems Analyst	Bachelors Degree	87,005
Computer Programmer	Bachelors Degree	100,807
Computer Information Systems Mgr	Bachelors Degree	128,876

In addition to the two examples above, defined career pathways are evident in the Southeast for the following occupations within our priority and critical industry clusters, Each shows short and long term growth projections within the Southeast.

Construction Occupations primarily through apprenticeship:

- Carpenters
- Electrician
- Plumbers

Customer Service Representatives and Tellers are common entry points into the Financial Service Industry with opportunities to secure positions with wages significantly higher than regional median wage. In fact, multiple Presidents of area financial institution began their career in the industry as a teller.

Utilize answers above to create a “high demand” occupational list for the region that is a focus for future pipeline programming, investments and talent expansion strategies across systems. (NOTE: Workforce and education partners at the state and regional levels will rely on this list to target investments. This includes programming issued by EOLWD, DCS and Commonwealth Corporation; Executive Office of Education including higher education capital planning, Chapter 74 programming, Skills Capital grants and more; Executive Office of Economic Development for workforce development; and beyond.)

Occupation	SOC	Demand Stars	High Demand	High Wage	Career Ladder
Computer Network Support Specialists	15-1231	4	In demand	x	X
Computer User Support Specialists	15-1232	4	In demand	X	X
Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians	17-3026	4	In demand	X	X
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	21-1023	3	In demand	X	X
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	29-2061	4	In demand	X	X
Registered Nurses	29-1141	4	X	X	X

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Dental Hygienists	29-1292	4	In demand	X	X
Medical Records Specialist	29-2072	4	In demand	X	X
Nursing Assistant	31-1131		X		X
Occupational Therapy Assistants	31-2011	5	X	X	X
Physical Therapist Assistants	31-2021	5	X	X	X
Healthcare Support Workers, All Other	31-9099	3	In Demand	X	X
Dental Assistants	39-9091	3	In demand	X	X
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	43-3031	5	X	X	X
Carpenters	47-2031	5	X	X	X
Electricians	47-2111	5	X	X	X
Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	47-2152	5	X	X	X
Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists	49-3031	5	X	X	X
Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	49-9021	5	X	X	X
Machinists	51-4041	4	In demand	X	X
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	51-4121	4	X	X	X
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	53-3032	5	X	X	X
Demand Star Ranking: Ranking of highest-demand, highest-wage jobs in Massachusetts, based on short-term employment projections, long-term employment projections, current available openings from Help Wanted Online, and median regional wage.					

### 4) Workforce Supply

Review information on existing unemployed workers, graduates coming from educational pipelines and other data on workforce supply.

### Describe the universe of the region's existing pipelines of new workers (credentials) across public and private secondary and post-secondary institutions.

- Highest and lowest number of new graduates by credential/CIP?
- How does retention of graduates in your region influence supply?

The southeast region includes numerous institutions that provide credentials within our priority critical industry clusters. These include two four year universities, three private four year colleges, three community college and seven vocational technical high schools. In addition, multiple secondary schools provide Chapter 74 Career and Technical Education programs. Finally, there are multiple licensed private proprietary schools that offer short term occupational training throughout the region.

The primary source of the region's existing pipelines of new workers is multiple post-secondary institutions within the region. These include Bridgewater State University, University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, Stonehill College, Eastern Nazarene College, Curry College, Bristol Community College, Massasoit Community College, and Quincy College.

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Through these public and private postsecondary institutions, the southeast saw the following degree and certificate awards (top ten fields of study ranked by associate's degree) in the 2020-2021 academic year.

<b>Fields of Study</b>	<b>Bachelors Degree</b>	<b>Associates Degrees</b>	<b>Certificates</b>
Liberal Arts	88	862	0
Business Management and Marketing	1,145	488	49
Health Professions	570	490	298
Homeland Security	367	277	113
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	55	133	14
Education	524	922	9
Public Administration & Social Services	98	95	21
Engineering	169	78	32
Computer and Information Sciences	88	60	19
Visual and Performing Arts	290	48	22

Source: National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Within the healthcare industry cluster, there are multiple degree and certificate programs within our post-secondary institutions. For example, associate degree programs include Lab Technician, Nursing, Physical Therapy, Radiologic Technology, Occupational Therapy and Respiratory Care. Bachelor's degree offerings include Medical Laboratory Science, Nursing, Healthcare Administration and Health Studies. Certificate programs are also offered including Medical Billing/Coding, Practical Nursing, Surgical Technology, Medical Assisting and Pharmacy Technician.

Multiple degree programs exist in professional and technical services particularly in computer/IT concentrations including bachelors degree programs in Computer Science and Information Technology. associates degrees and certificate programs include Computer Networking, Computer Technology, Computer Science, Web/Mobile Developer and Computer Network Technician.

The financial services industry includes a large number of programs in general Business Management and Marketing degree and certificate offerings in the region. In addition, there are bachelor's degree programs in Financial Management including one with a banking career concentration.

Another source of credentials within our priority industry clusters is the region's vocational technical high schools. Within the healthcare industry, 242 credentials were awarded. In addition, 557 certificates were awarded in production occupations particularly within manufacturing occupations. Students also receive industry recognized credentials through these programs including Microsoft Office, Manufacturing Center Workforce Innovation Collaborative (MACWIC), National Incident Management System (NIMS), Certified Nursing Assistant, Infection Control Certification, BLS Care Provider, Cisco Certified Entry Networking Technician (CCENT), CompTIA certification and hours toward journeyman licensure in multiple construction occupations.

Within the southeast, the following are programs within our vocational technical high schools that all within priority and critical industry clusters: Dental Assisting, Health Assisting, Medical Assisting, Programming and Web Development, Business Technology, Information Support Services and Networking, Machine Tool Technology, Metal Fabrication and multiple building trades programs.

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In comparing total credentials awarded to long term projected job growth in priority industries, retention of the area workforce within these industries. As noted above, it is likely that population trends in the region will continue to impact retention. More specifically, domestic out-migration is strongly concentrated among the college-age population reflecting a long term struggle to retain college graduates within the region. Certainly, this factor could have significant implications for the region's labor supply in our priority industries.

**What are the top three broad labor supply challenges for the region's priority occupations and career pathways identified in prior section** (e.g. retirement and aging of population, low high school graduation rate, education or workforce skills of existing labor pool, limited language proficiency, etc)?

The ability of employers to find workers with the right skills sets is a clear challenge. Employer expansion in some priority/critical industry clusters is clearly being hindered by an inability to find qualified/credentialed workers.

- 1) Many job seekers and employees lack work readiness skills. Workforce Development and Education partners have initiatives around this issue but not always coordinated.
- 2) Limited language and literacy skills offer a significant labor supply challenge. As each Workforce Development Area in the southeast has at least one Gateway City within its borders, similar demands are made in English language acquisition (Foreign born: Brockton 28%, Fall River 20%, New Bedford 22% and Quincy 33%). The increased migrant population is another factor affecting this category. Within the Southeast, Bristol and Plymouth County data (2016-2020 ACS gathered from American Factfinder) reveals educational attainment rates that are most often at the lower end of the Commonwealth's regions.
- 3) Slow population growth is compounded by domestic out-migration which is strongly concentrated among the college-age population reflecting a long-term struggle to retain college graduates within the region. In addition, projections show the population will continue to age in the southeast. Significantly, it is estimated that 24% of the region's population will be over the age of 65 by 2035 which will represent a 77% increase compared to 2010. This age shift absent significant growth of the overall population has potentially significant labor supply implications in the region. Ultimately, as region's population ages, the share of the working-age and young people is declining.

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## III. Where do we want to go?

Describe the collectively developed criteria, industry and occupational priorities, vision, mission, and goals for your region.

### 5) **Priority Industries and Occupations**

Using your regional context and mutually agreed upon regional criteria, list your priority regional industries and occupations or occupational groups.

**List your 2-3 priority industries by 2-digit NAICS.** Where you choose to prioritize an industry that does not fit neatly into a 2-digit NAICS code (i.e. creative economy), note where it would best fit (i.e. Arts and Recreation) and describe the portion of the 2-digit industry you are prioritizing. For each selection, write a brief justification of your choice.

#### 1) **Health Care and Social Assistance – NAICS Code 62**

Our prioritization in this industry centers on Nursing and Residential Care Facilities (NAICS Code 623), Offices of Physicians, Dentists and Other Health Care Practitioners (NAICS codes 6211, 6212 and 6313 respectively) and Medical and Diagnostic Laboratories (NAICS code 6215). Each of these categories represent numerous clinical and Ohealthcare support positions that are in demand in our region.

Health Care and Social Assistance represents the largest share of region's workforce. The industry also continues to show steady growth with a 6% growth rate from 2021-2023. In terms of career development, the industry is marked by strong career pathway opportunities with accessible entry points. Strong employer engagement within this industry is evident with sector partnerships in place within the region with workforce development and education participation already in place.

#### 2) **Professional, Scientific and Technical Services – NAICS Code 54**

Our prioritization in this industry centers on Computer Systems Design and Related Services (NAICS Code 5415). This industry encompasses a wide range of occupational categories that are supported by STEM education. However, computer related services were of particular interest as the occupations included in this category typically cut across multiple industry clusters including other prioritized and critical industries.

From 2021-2023, the Professional and Technical Services sector has seen an 8.7% increase in the number of establishments, a 9.5% increase in employment and an impressive 8.67% increase in average wage. The occupations within this industry are among the highest average weekly wages within the region Meaningful career ladder opportunities are available to those who access additional opportunities. More Specifically, significant supply gaps (0.20 to 0.8 qualified workers for each position) are evident in multiple Professional and Technical Service occupations including Computer User Support Specialists, Network and Computer Systems Administrators, Computer Systems Analysts and Database Administrators. While the top levels of the career ladder would in some cases require significant additional training and education requirements, there are opportunities for individuals with more limited skills competencies to enter the industry with relatively short term training interventions. The industry also aligns with regional priorities such as STEM initiatives occurring among education and workforce development partners.

#### 3) **Manufacturing – NAICS Code 31-33**

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Manufacturing represents an industry important to the region's economic success. While there is not an overall growth rate in certain manufacturing occupations, such a basic statistical analysis would not tell the complete story of future demand within the industry. More specifically, the manufacturing sector is marked by an aging labor pool in the southeast with approximately one third of the workforce over the age of 55. As a result, the industry faces large scale attrition over the next 10 years exacerbated by the fact that the region, despite expansion of training capacity in this sector, still has a limited training pipeline to develop the future workforce in this industry. Still, it should be noted that over the past three years, manufacturing has seen an impressive growth of 4,749 new jobs added in the Southeast.

Manufacturing features highly accessible entry points with strong entry level wages for positions that can be obtained without advanced degrees (70% of the region's manufacturing workforce have less than a Bachelor Degree). Occupations such as CNC Machinists and welders can be accessed through relatively short term training programs and feature strong entry level wages.

If you would like to describe **industries** that are notable in your region but will not be prioritized during this regional prioritization process, please list them here.

The **construction** industry offers a highly accessible career path for individuals without a college degree with opportunities for career advancement through the expansion of apprenticeships. The region offers strong educational capacity for this industry through workforce development partnerships with the region's vocational technical high schools. Construction also aligns with regional economic development priorities. For example, major transportation projects have resulted in increased hiring activity in the southeast. In addition, the emerging offshore wind industry promises to employ many construction workers in its expansion. There are a large number of potential candidates for employment in this industry through the region's Career Centers. The industry also features a strong average weekly wage in comparison to the regional average.

**Financial services** is an important industry in the southeast region, particularly in its northern tier, having impact on all other sectors through capital and finance provision. According to a study by Mass Insight, banks and other financial institutions account for \$36 billion, or 9 percent of the state's total economic output. The industry represents almost 9% of the southeast region's total wage output. In addition, wages in this industry are showing the highest growth rates with over 6% per year from 2021-2023.

**Emerging Industries:** The Southeast Team will closely evaluate emerging industries over time to determine if additional attention is warranted. For example, the "Blue Economy" has become a regional priority in the southern part of the region. While not a stand-alone priority industry, it includes construction, production and technology jobs that will likely see growth in this region. This would include the developing wind energy industry which may emerge as a significant part of the region's manufacturing industry in the southern part of the region. Emerging industries such as these will have a strong need to intersect with workforce development, economic development and education to meet their workforce needs.

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List your 3-5 priority occupations or occupational groups by SOC code (4-8 digit, as necessary) from the “high demand” list developed in Section 3 above. The Team should prioritize based on the occupations experiencing a constricted “supply” of workers or new graduates with necessary skills (credentials, degrees, apprenticeships etc.) for those occupations. For each selection, write a brief justification of your choice.

## Health Care Practitioners and Technical Occupations (SOC 29)

### **Dental Hygienists/Assistants (SOC 29-2021)**

- Demand STARS - 4
- Annual median wage significantly above regional median wage
- Existing supply gap in the region with approximately 0.7 qualified employees per opening.
- Accessible entry point with less than a bachelors degree required for entry level employment

## Health Care Support Occupations (SOC 31)

### **Home Health and Personal Care Aides; and Nursing Assistants (SOC 31-1100)**

- Demand STARS – 3
- Existing supply gap in the region with approximately 0.7 qualified employees per opening
- Accessible entry points with short-term, widely available training in the region
- Strong career ladder opportunities in the Health Care sector
- Increase specializations desired by employers has resulted in increased entry level wages

### **Physical Therapy Assistants (SOC 31-2021)**

- Demand STARS – 5
- Annual median wage is 36% above regional median wage
- Notable supply gap in the region with approximately 0.4 qualified employees per opening
- Intermediate Career ladder opportunities: Physical Therapist is a 5 Demand STAR occupation in the Southeast with high wages and a significant supply gap.

### **Construction Trades Workers (SOC 47-2000)**

- Demand STARS – 5n (Electrician, Carpenter)
- Among highest vacancy rates in the region
- Classified as High Demand
- Offers a highly accessible career path for individuals without a college degree with opportunities for career advancement
- Features a strong average weekly wage in comparison to the regional average

If you would like to describe **occupations** that are notable in your region but will not be prioritized during this regional prioritization process, please list them here.

### **Computer User Support Specialist (SOC 15-1151)**

- Demand STARS – 4
- Annual median wage - \$55,342 (30% above regional median wage)
- Offers career ladder opportunities to multiple 5 Demand STARS occupations in the region.
- Offers skill sets that are transferable to multiple industry sectors throughout the region.

### **Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers (SOC 53-3032)**

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- Demand STARS – 5
- Very High Demand
- Strong Entry Level Wages
- One of the highest supply gaps of all occupations in the Southeast

## **Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Behavioral Health Social Workers (SOC 21-1023)**

- Demand Stars – 3
- Strong Career Ladder Opportunities
- Region’s Employers demonstrate strong commitment to talent development
- Supply gap has widened in past five years

## **Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers (SOC 51-4121)**

- Demand Stars – 4
- High Demand
- Strong training capacity in region
- Short term training required for entry
- Strong entry level wages

## **6) Assets**

For each of the selected **priority industries and occupations (purple section)**, articulate existing assets and gaps in capacity.

**Credential Asset Mapping Tool.** For priority occupations that require credentials, use the Credential Asset Mapping Tool in Attachment 1 to demonstrate assets and gaps for each priority industry and occupation.

Credential Maps for the selected priority industries and occupations are attached. It is evident that priority health care occupations’ training programs, particularly degree offerings, are insufficient to meet employment demand. For example, there is only one Radiologic Technician Associates Degree and one Physical Therapy Assistant program in the southeast. It was also noted that technology changes require ongoing alignment with industry standards in the Computer Office User Specialist and related positions.

**Non-Credential Asset and Gap Analysis.** For priority industries and occupations that **do not** require a credential, describe what existing assets in the region can meet the employer demand, and where systemic gaps prevent meeting employer demand.

A source of training within our priority industry clusters is the region’s vocational technical high schools. Within the southeast, the following are programs within our vocational technical high schools that all within priority and critical industry clusters: Dental Assisting, Health Assisting, Medical Assisting, Programming and Web Development, Business Technology, Information Support Services and Networking, Machine Tool Technology, Metal Fabrication and multiple building trades programs. Through grants such as the Career Technical Initiative, many un and underemployed adults have access to entry level training in targeted occupations.

## **7) Vision, Mission, Goals, Strategies and Outcomes**

Using your articulated priority industries, occupations, and existing assets, articulate your broader vision, mission, and goals.



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**Regional Vision.** Create a **shared vision statement** for the Team to describe the ideal vision for the **priority occupational pathways** within and across regional industries to achieve workforce scale and quality. Craft the shared vision through the lens of education, workforce development, and economic development.

Our vision is that southeastern MA will offer its residents a high quality of life with diverse education and career opportunities that contribute to business health and a strong regional economy.

We hope the following to be true in our region in 10 years:

- Growth of globally competitive employers within multiple industry clusters
- A workforce that meets the needs of area employers through education, training and lifelong learning
- Residents will have increase ability to achieve a sustainable wage in order to enjoy the amenities and quality of life available in the southeast region.

Priorities include

- Expansion of training capacity by 10% in priorities occupations
- Expansion of contextualized ESOL and Adult Literacy activities delivered with occupational training in priority industries
- Expand career ladder opportunities in priority occupations

**Regional Mission.** State what each set of core partners has agreed to do in order to achieve your vision. What will educational partners do? What will economic development partners do? What will workforce development partners do? (For example: Our education partners will focus resources on expanding career awareness and exposure, as well as the quantity and variety of education programming in priority industries X, Y, and Z. Please note these are broad mission statements rather than specific strategies, below).

We will coordinate and align our efforts to contribute to the ongoing economic health and vibrancy of the region by preparing the workforce to meet the evolving skill set demands of area employers.

This effort will be supported by the following strategies:

- All partners will support demand driven education and training strategies across K-12, secondary and post-secondary education that directly address the workforce needs of the region's priority and critical industries.
- Our education partners will work to expand education programming in each of the identified priority and critical industries to support increased capacity for area job seekers including efforts to expand the availability of stackable credits..
- All partners will focus efforts on aligning and expanding work readiness and career exploration activities with the education and workforce development systems in the region.
- Our partners will promote progression of the region's workforce along career pathways with credentialing and lifelong learning strategies.

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- Our workforce development and economic development partners will organize industry sector partnerships and collaborations to gain their input in strategic planning and foster their investment in incumbent worker training.

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**Workforce Strategy for Priority Occupations.** Describe your *shared* goals, strategies and metrics for 2024 and 2025 for the prioritized occupations and career pathways in the region. Note that goals listed here should be ones that cannot be accomplished without participation of players from multiple entities and across two or three of the systems. **The Workforce Skills Cabinet will work with Team to support their work to achieve the goals for priority occupations below and review progress through quarterly reports on 2024 and 2025 targets.**

Priority Occupation	Regional Pipeline Strategy	Partners	2023 Annual Baseline Estimate # of New Entrants* to Occupation	TARGET: 2024 Goal for # of New Entrants to Occupation (Estimated) resulting from strategy	TARGET: 2025 Goal for # of New Entrants to Occupation (Estimated) resulting from strategy
Home Health and Personal Care Aides; and Nursing Assistants	Increase baseline number of new credentialed Nurse Assistants and related direct care occupations to reach 600 by 2025	Workforce Boards Community Colleges Private Proprietary Schools	340	500	600
Construction Occupations	Increase baseline number of skilled workers into the building trades to reach 300 by 2025	Workforce Boards Vocational Technical High School Trades Unions	80	150	300
Physical Therapy Assistance	Increase baseline number of physical Therapy Assistant Program slots by 15 in the region	Workforce boards Post Secondary Education	30	35	45
Computer User Support Specialist	Increase baseline number of Computer User Support Specialists to reach 80 by 2025	Workforce Boards Community Colleges Private Proprietary Schools	30	45	80

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### 8) Shared Strategies

While each system may make changes in individual programming to align with the region's priorities, all systems will need to commit to shared changes in the following areas, stated below. Describe how your region will work collaboratively in the following two areas.

**Continuous Communication.** How often and in what way will you meet to review progress towards shared goals and make course corrections?

Our partners have collectively agreed to establish formal mechanisms to oversee the implementation of the strategies set forth in this plan. A Steering Committee, comprised of the four workforce board directors and representatives from education and economic development, will be responsible for overall strategic direction of the partnership and implementation of policies, projects and initiatives around all aspects of the plan. Coordinated by the southeast region's workforce boards, it will take the lead in establishing protocols and processes around sharing information of partnership. The committee will also oversee the progression of the regional partnership toward its short and long-term goals. The committee will meet quarterly and will be facilitated and coordinated by the workforce board directors. Areas of focus are:

**Performance:** The Partnership will be charged with examining the possibilities and obstacles to the establishment of baseline performance measures, surveying existing data sources among the skills cabinet partners and the feasibility of data sharing, and reporting performance results to the partnership.

**Work readiness:** The Partnership will be charged with surveying the existing work readiness components existing among workforce development and education working to see areas of alignment, developing a universal work readiness curriculum and identifying potential state initiatives in this area.

**Resource Development:** The Partnership will regularly review funding opportunities from federal, state and private sources and identify those that could support implementation of our shared goals and objectives. These might include training capacity expansion in priority occupations/industries particularly where gaps exist, integrated occupational training and adult basic education programs or expansion of incumbent worker training opportunities.

**Education and Training:** The Partnership will engage in ongoing analysis of existing education and training programs in priority industries and occupations. It will address issues such as course capacity, demand driven curriculum, increased credentialing, stackable and transferable credits, etc. The workforce boards will utilize input from the regional planning team in the review of new Chapter 74 program applications to ensure alignment with priority industries and occupations.

**Employer Engagement:** A cross skills sector team will develop strategies to secure real time labor market data from area employers on a regular basis. Similarly, the team will collect data around evolving workforce needs of both large and small businesses in the region. It will also oversee the development of cross skills cabinet business assistance teams to link area employers to the wide range of resources available from all stakeholders. This will also be the initial source of information sharing from economic development partners regarding regional priorities in attracting new businesses and fostering growth in emerging industries.

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**Shared Measurement Systems.** What data and measurement systems will you rely on to support shared understanding of how well you are meeting your goals and making progress towards a shared vision?

In addition to readily available LMI, MOSES and other data, team members recognize a need for shared metrics among partners that ultimately tie directly to shared outcomes. Currently, information around goals is captured in different areas among all three skills cabinet sectors, and in some cases beyond. Our partnership will survey the various data collection sources utilized currently to determine the potential sources to capture and measure progression toward the region's planning goals. We will also examine the feasibility of customized measures and data collection sources generated through partnership activity. For example, increase activity among Regional Sector Partnerships may afford an opportunity to collect additional employer and labor market information.

**Other Shared Strategies.** What other shared strategies will the region adopt to ensure progress towards the common agenda?

Our partnership has agreed on initial strategies to impact the goals established in this blueprint. These will be further refined and likely expanded through the work of the partnership.

A clear consensus developed around implementing common/universal work readiness components at the region's secondary, post-secondary and workforce development programs. At present, there are multiple work readiness activities occurring among multiple partners. While there are some commonalities in these activities, there is not true alignment. As work readiness skills are identified almost universally by area employers as a critical need, our partnership will work to develop a universal/aligned work readiness component that links to a credential. The partnership does recognize that further alignment of work readiness curriculum would need to take into account the need to have some customization based on the target population being served.

As a major business challenge centers around lack of resources for employers, particularly small businesses, to address workforce needs, our partnership will establish regional business outreach teams that include representatives from all three skills cabinet sectors. These teams will not only connect employers with available programs and resources, they will also secure employer feedback regarding ongoing workforce needs and business challenges.

To increase career awareness among area youth, the partnership will develop career ladder documents in each prioritized and critical industry cluster to be utilized in K-12 and at local Career Centers. In addition, all three skills cabinet sector partners will work together to more efficiently industry involvement in career awareness activities.

Resource development was a recurring and common theme in regional planning meetings. Our partnership will utilize existing resources and establish a resource development committee to access new grant opportunities to develop programming with direct input from business in priority/critical industries.

Our partnership is committed to working to expand training opportunities for credentialed occupations. To that end, we will seek to increase capacity of healthcare training programs within the region by 10% and increase the capacity of training programs in Computer/IT occupations by 10%

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The Southeast Regional Team will work closely with our post-secondary partners to increase the number of stackable and transferable credits from certificate to associates degree to bachelors degree programs within our priority industry sectors.

The partnership will seek to increase seat capacity for customized training programs at vocational technical high schools and/or comprehensive high schools by 10% between 2019 – 2022.

### 9) Mutually Reinforcing Activities

To ensure that the work each partner is doing is supportive of the common agenda, describe the specific activities regional partners have committed to doing.

**Education.** Describe the changes in programming, recruitment, retention and placement strategies, assessment, tracking, or other strategies specific educational partners have committed to in order to meet shared regional goals.

- Curriculum development, refinements and development of training programs that tie directly to growth occupations and lead to credential attainment in priority industry clusters.
- Adapt and expand Adult Basic Education/Language Skills programming to align with career objectives of learners and the needs of priority/critical industries and occupations.
- Work toward expansion of stackable credits in priority industries that allow for increased degree attainment among the region's population.
- Work with other partners to develop universal work readiness components with integration of this at all levels
- Develop programming that aligns with partners' career pathways work.

**Workforce Development.** Describe the changes in programming, employer relations, recruitment, retention and placement strategies tracking, or other strategies specific workforce development partners have committed to, to meet shared regional goals.

- Maintain up to date knowledge of employer needs and demand through ongoing LMI analysis, convening industry sector partnerships, CEO roundtables, etc.
- Coordinate expansion of career awareness/exploration programming with education partners and Career Centers.
- Utilize existing and secure additional funding for job readiness activities across all partners.
- Coordinate alignment of work readiness activities across the partnership
- Coordinate and lead cross skills cabinet business teams for employer outreach and assistance.

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**Economic Development.** Describe the changes in economic development strategy that economic development partners have committed to in order to meet shared regional goals.

- Assist partnership in aligning activities with regional economic development priorities
- Assist in maintaining up to date knowledge of employer needs in the area of workforce and other services (financial, space, etc.) that will result in an integrated employer service strategy.
- Connect new businesses and other employers to education and workforce development partners.
- Participate in cross sector business service teams.

### IV. Conclusion

**Conclusion.** Describe any closing remarks, next steps, or considerations.

The regional planning process has revealed that each of skills cabinet sectors share many goals and objectives. Many share goals have emerged among the stakeholders. There are strong existing partnerships in the southeast but clearly there is room to establish closer coordination among workforce development, economic development and education and expand coordination beyond workforce area boundaries.

Our large region results in significant regional economic and demographic variations as well as connections to different labor markets (i.e. Quincy to Boston) but enough common needs exist to make meaningful impact through partnership. It is evident that translating broader goals to specifics (i.e. common metrics) may be challenging.

It should also be noted that while our partnership will look at ways to leverage assets, existing resources would likely result in more modest progression toward short and long-term goals. Still, we are confident that our efforts will expand activities and programming that will positively impact economic growth in the region.

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