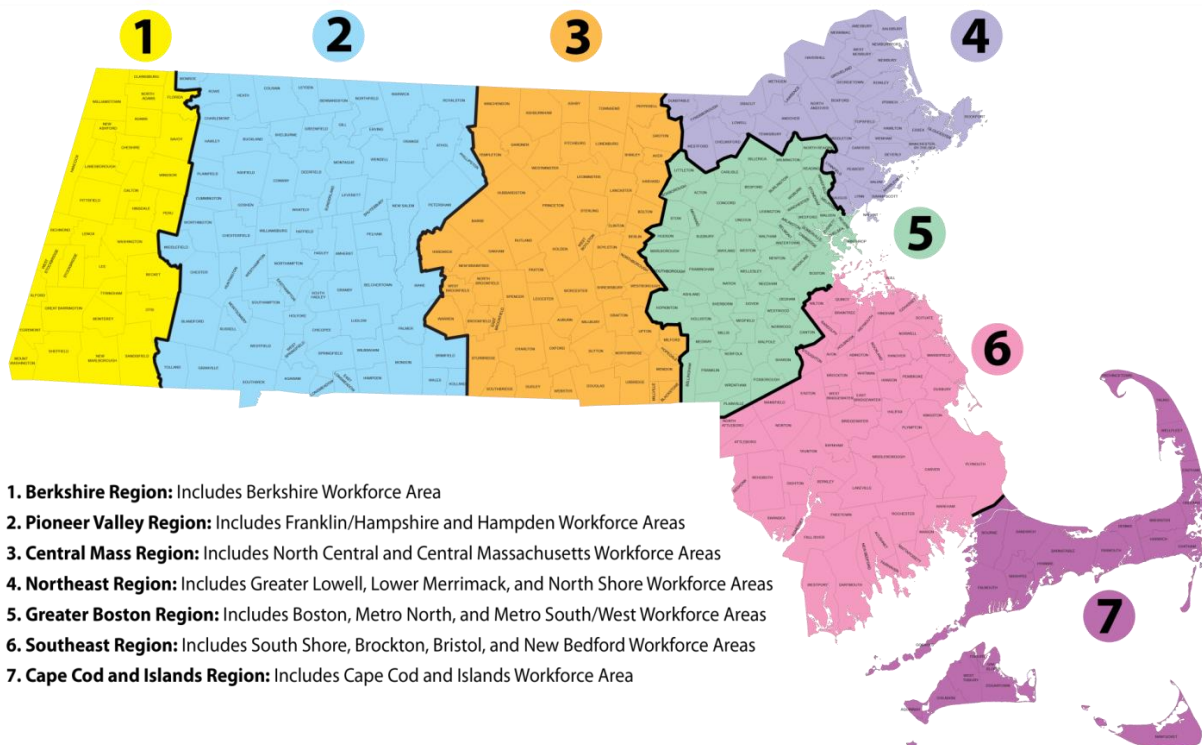


## INTRODUCTION

The Regional Workforce Skills Planning Initiative was launched in April 2017 with the aim of fostering strategic alignment between state and local programs, policies and resources to fuel job growth and address employer demand for talent across the Commonwealth.

The original Regional Labor Market Blueprints—developed through a comprehensive year-long planning process that involved local, regional, and state leadership from workforce development, education, and economic development, and input from business and community stakeholders—reflected a collective understanding of regional priorities and strategy for investments in seven regions across the Commonwealth: Berkshire, Pioneer Valley, Central, Southeast, Cape, Greater Boston, and Northeast.



In order to promote a better understanding of the current and projected needs of the workforce system, a second round of regional labor market data packages was released in 2019.

## PURPOSE

This document offers a **guiding template** for Regional Teams to provide an update to their Regional Labor Market Blueprint. Intended as a resource for external audiences, the update should illustrate how the Regional Team fosters strategic alignment and ensures that the workforce system is industry-relevant, responding to the changing economic conditions and workforce needs of the region.

<p><b>I. Where are we now?</b> Describe the current state of your region, including a summary of regional industry and occupational priorities, demographic shifts, and gaps between employer demand and employee supply.</p>	
<p><b><u>Criteria for Priority Industries/Occupations</u></b> The regional kick-off meetings with the WSC suggested a number of foundational criteria to prioritize industries and occupations, including existing job openings, jobs with low barriers to entry, jobs that lead to career pathways, and occupations with high demand (current openings, short/long term projections), and self-sustaining wages.</p>	
<p><b><u>STATE CRITERIA</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High employer demand</li> <li>▪ High demand and wages (4+ star ranking)</li> <li>▪ Talent gaps (supply-demand ratio)</li> <li>▪ Career pathways</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>REGIONAL CRITERIA</u></b></p> <p>The regional planning team also developed additional criteria it felt were important to help us identify industries and occupations that might best fit with higher need job seekers to ensure they are not overlooked in this process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong Employer engagement (employers willing to become actively engaged in working with workforce system stakeholders)</li> <li>• Low barriers to employment (employment opportunities that do not by their nature exclude residents with barriers to employment, such as those that exclusively seek bachelor's degrees or above)</li> <li>• Alignment with high need job-seeker populations (employment opportunities that may be available to job seekers currently ready for employment or those with the ability to gain readiness with short term education, training and support)</li> </ul>

### **Priority Industries and Occupations**

Describe the collectively developed industry and occupational priorities for your region.

**List your 2-3 priority industries by 2-digit NAICS.** Where you have prioritized 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 sector that you prioritized.

The priority industries that the regional planning team selected are:

- Healthcare and Social Assistance (NAICS Code 62)
- Manufacturing (NAICS Codes 31-33)
- Transportation, Warehousing and Logistics (NAICS Code 48-49)

**List 3 to 5 priority occupations or occupational groups by SOC code (4-8 digit, as necessary).**

The priority occupation groups the regional planning team identified are:

- Healthcare Practitioners Occupations (SOC Code: 29-0000)
- Production Occupations (SOC Code 51-0000)
- Computer and Mathematical Occupations (SOC Code 15-0000)
- Transportation and Material Moving Occupations (SOC Code 53-0000)
- Construction Occupations Construction and Extraction Occupations (SOC Code 47-0000)

### **Regional Context**

Use the information provided through state data sets (i.e. data packages and dynamic data tools) and additional local analysis to explore the following questions and develop consensus for each section.

**Are there any new demographic, labor pool or talent pipeline considerations that will have an impact on labor supply in your region?** *Age, education, worker mobility, etc.*

In addition to the original blueprint's regional context, we've determined new emphasis should be placed upon the following areas that negatively affect the available labor force in our region;

- People working in low-wage – low advancement jobs (i.e., assisting people working in “dead end jobs” develop the tools and skills necessary to move up and out of the cycle of poverty)
- People hesitant to move off of public supports due to the “cliff effect” — supporting people as they give up public assistance to enter/re-enter the workforce.

- People from families that lack college education; while there are numerous opportunities to exit poverty through jobs that only require middle skills (less than a four-year degree) the need for an Associate's Degree or higher often serves as a significant barrier to earning a living wage. The challenge of helping more people attain college degrees is made more difficult by a variety of factors, not the least of which is that the very *idea* of attending college seems beyond their reach. Helping them see themselves as a successful college graduate is therefore part of the needed solution.

**Have there been any developments related to business and industry that will have an impact on workforce demand in your region? *New employers, policies/regulations, etc.***

We have seen continued growth in automated services delivery in a variety of industries, including retail, manufacturing, and distribution. Additionally, communication and service delivery through the use of smart phones continues to advance.

Additionally, it would appear the COVID-19 pandemic will have a significant impact economically upon our region (see Appendix H).

**New Priority Industries and Occupations (Optional)**

If the team would like to propose any changes to the articulated list of priority industry sectors and occupations or occupational groups, please use this space to provide an updated list. Include a justification of any changes based on your regional context and mutually agreed upon regional criteria.

**List your 2-3 priority industries by 2-digit NAICS.** For any proposed changes, write a brief justification of your choice.

No changes are being requested to the region's priority industries; however, after reviewing labor market data and speaking with employers and training partners we are adding in additional trades within two of our three priority sectors and one of our critical sectors;

- Welding is added to our manufacturing – priority industry sector
- Automotive technician is added to our transportation/logistics/warehousing – priority industry sector
- Culinary is added to our retail/hospitality – critical industry sector.

**List 3 to 5 priority occupations or occupational groups by SOC code (4-8 digit, as necessary).**

No changes to our priority occupation groups are being requested.

## II. How are we doing?

Evaluate the strategies you have jointly employed to align the work of multiple systems around your shared vision, mission and goals.

### **Focusing Resources**

Summarize your efforts to align resources that support and meet training and employment needs of priority industry sectors and occupations in your region. (See Appendix D for additional detail.)

**Resource Acquisition.** Provide a summary of new resources secured to support priority industries and occupations (state, federal, private, etc.).

Regional blueprint partners have assisted with more than 70 new program applications to support priority industries and occupations, including:

- 10 Skills Capitol Grant Project Proposals
- 9 Innovation Pathways HS Programs
- 7 Chapter 74 Vocational Programs
- 8 Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, TRAIN, Learn to Earn Projects
- 20+ Post-secondary & community-based training programs –
  - Fitchburg Housing Authority-HUD economic assistance grant
  - Worcester Jobs Fund programming
  - Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing at WPI
  - Greater Worcester Community Health Foundation – allied health
- 29 Workforce Training Fund Project Proposals

**Resource Allocation.** Provide a summary of existing resources re-allocated to support priority industries and occupations.

The following existing resources have been aligned to support priority industries and occupations:

- YouthWorks (summer and year-round) – priority focus of placement of participants in worksites that are in alignment with priority industries/occupations.
- WIOA Youth Programming – support for program providers selected through competitive procurement that was aligned with the region’s blueprint.

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- Connecting Activities – greater emphasis placed upon career readiness activities for partner schools tied to blueprint goals and priorities.
- Career Center – ITA’s and business services: career center counselors and Business Services representatives have been familiarized with the blueprint and align customer services where possible, including targeted industry-based career fairs for priority industries.
- Workforce Training Funds – employer outreach and project application reviews incorporate awareness of the regional blueprint and alignment with proposed trainings.
- Existing board partner programs – the region’s two Workforce Development Boards has also educated area training partners, including secondary school vocational training providers, Quinsigamond and Mount Wachusett Community Colleges, community-based training organizations (including Training Resources of America, South Middlesex Opportunity Council, the Worcester Jobs Fund, The Polus Center, and Worcester Night Life)

### **Expanding Pipelines**

Identify your efforts to meet training and employment needs of priority industry sectors and occupations in your region. (See Appendix E for additional detail.)

**Pipeline Expansion.** Provide a summary of new seats added in programs related to priority industries and occupations.

We have added approximately 110 new trainee seats in the manufacturing field, and 88 new seats in healthcare, and 20 new training seats for transportation/logistics/warehousing.

**Pipeline Improvement.** Provide a summary of upgraded seats related to priority industries and occupations.

Through our support of Skills Capital grants, Innovation Pathways and Chapter 74 program applications we have helped upgrade the training in our priority industries, including the addition of new training equipment and facility improvements, and increased access to expanded career technical training (see Appendix D for additional detailed information).

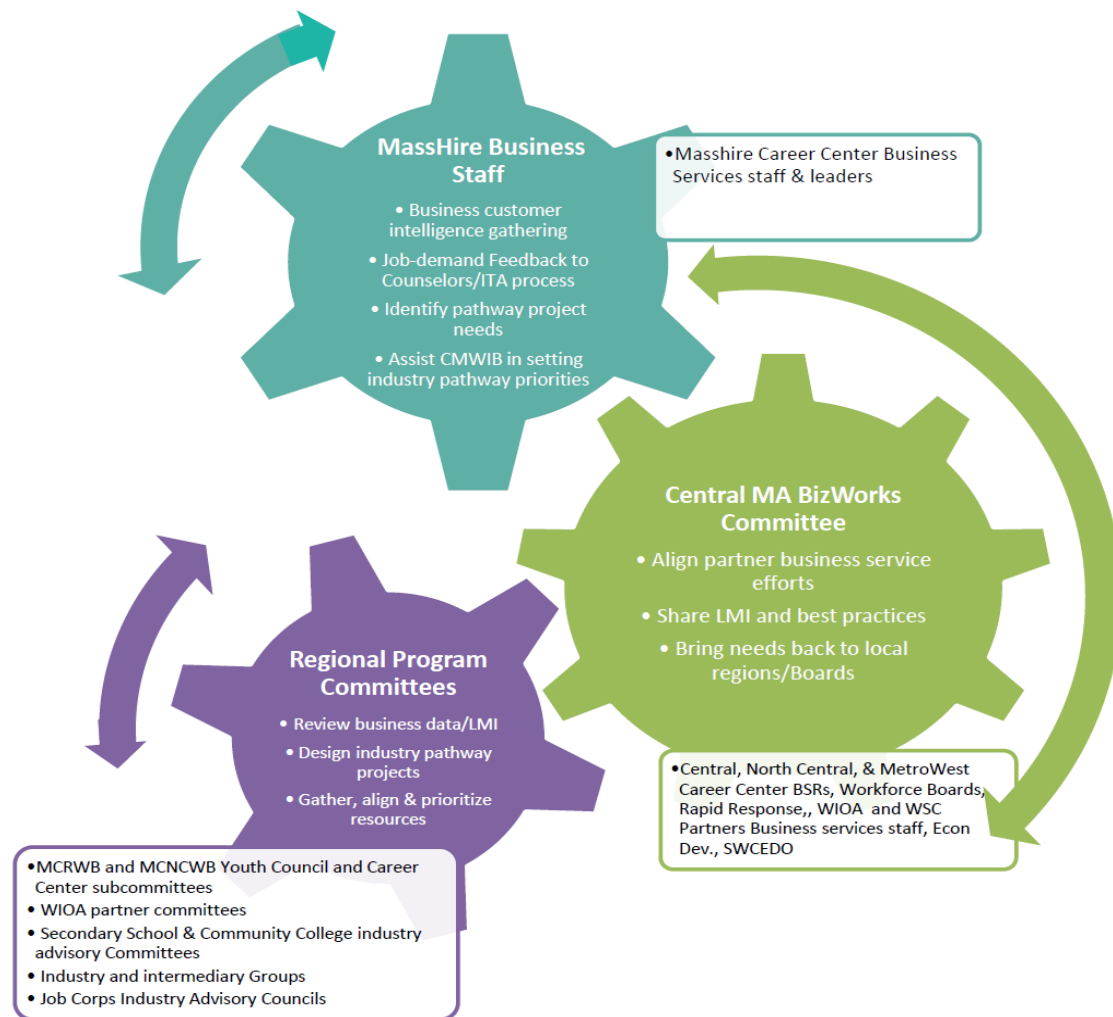
### **Shared Strategies**

While each system may make changes in individual programming to align with the region’s priorities, all systems must commit to shared changes in the following areas, stated below. Describe how your region has worked collaboratively in the following two areas.

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

Our regional blueprint partners align our efforts through an overarching leadership team that meets twice yearly to review progress and trends. Additionally, we have established a regional workforce consortium for each of the three priority industry sectors (healthcare, Transportation/Logistics/Warehousing, and manufacturing) that meets bi-monthly to address issues specific to their respective fields and drive forward programming and blueprint goals. Lastly, the blueprint partners attempt to coordinate our collective efforts through the variety of existing groups, councils, and committees we participate in, including the workforce boards and our subcommittees, the regional MassBizWorks group, and education/program advisory committees.

### Central MA Demand-Driven Program Development





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

We attempt to track the number of training programs/classes in each priority sectors, as well as the number of training slots. We also look at supply/demand ratio, and data from the Burning Glass labor market Insights tool, such as the number of job postings and the time required to fill postings to gauge relative demand. Attempts to track other measures, such as job vacancies by industry, and career center services by industry have been more difficult to access.

**Other Shared Strategies.** What other shared strategies do you employ to promote collaboration and strategic alignment among your region's core partners?

Our utilization of regional consortia for our priority sectors has proven helpful in gathering partners and employers together to identify and address needs for their respective industry sector. It has also served as a way to keep communication open between partners and increase relationships of leadership and staff. These consortia set their own meeting schedules and work plans to help us focus our work.

### III. Where do we want to go?

Summarize your upcoming plans to address the priority industries and occupations identified in the Blueprint.

**Priorities.** Describe your priorities for 2020. Note that the priorities listed here should be those that need participation of players from multiple entities and across two or three of the systems for accomplishment.

We will be continuing the work of the consortia to provide guidance and collaborative resources and open communication between workforce, education, economic development and employer partners. Special efforts for the future include addressing the needs of our newly identified priority populations (people working in low-wage – low advancement jobs, people hesitant to move off of public supports due to the “cliff effect,” and people from families that without college education), while also seeking to address the continued rise in automation and the use of smart phones and virtual services for service delivery.

We will also look to support an increase to the number of qualified, available instructors for career technical education/training programs; as we seek to expand the amount of training within our region (especially for high priority sectors/occupations) we will need to increase the number of instructors – the current supply of qualified teachers is inadequate and further growth will require efforts to recruit and train new instructors.

We will also seek to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (see Appendix H).



**Partnerships.** Describe your plans for developing additional strategic partnerships.

We hope to expand our collaboration with a variety of strategic partners to advance our region's blueprint goals. These include:

- Increasing industry group partnerships for connection to a larger pool of employers and better understanding of industry trends, especially those in the healthcare field working to address the staff reimbursement rate issue, and those in the facilities/engineering field that can assist with support for development of short term certificate facility repair technician training.
- Expanding training facilities available in the Central MA region through partnership with a municipality or community partner able to host a CDL training course.
- Partners in the Information technology field to help identify industry trends and certificate training programs in high demand.
- Partners that work closely with our priority populations to help with training project design, recruitment, and retention support/case management.

**Employer Engagement.** Describe your plans for maintaining or strengthening employer engagement.

As stated previously, we have established industry consortia for our priority industry sectors that includes employer representatives. We hope to expand these relationships to strengthen our connection to employers and awareness of industry trends and needs. We will also continue to work closely with our MassBizWorks partners and actively participate in the regional BizWorks committee. Finally, we will also continue to work very closely with our MassHire Career Center business services staff to align their efforts with our regional blueprint goals as closely as possible.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

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

We are obviously approaching this work at a challenging time with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the major shock it has delivered to all facets of our society, including our region's economy, as well as the uncertainty that comes with it. We are therefore seeking ways to adjust our strategies as appropriate to meet these new challenges as we continue to implement this blueprint including the implementation of virtual services/trainings that support the health and safety of our communities.

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## APPENDIX A. REGIONAL PLANNING TEAM ORGANIZATION

Regional Planning Team		
<b>Regional Planning Team.</b> Describe the different <b>partner organizations</b> brought together to be a part of the <b>Regional Planning Team</b> (K-12 District, Vocational Technical School, Community College, State University, Workforce Development Board, Massachusetts Office of Business Development, Regional Economic Development Organization, and more) and provide contact information.		
Individual Name	Organization Name	Individual Email
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Brenner, Kyle	Worcester Technical HS	Brenner, Kyle BrennerK@worc.k12.ma.us
Shiela Harrity	Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical HS	harrity@montytech.net'
Ethan Brown	City of Worcester Economic Development	brownea@worcesterma.gov
Jackie Belrose	Mount Wachusett Community College	'jbelrose@mwcc.mass.edu'
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Jil Wonoski	Advantage Truck group	'jil.wonoski@tristatetruckcenter.com'
Joshua Froimson	AbbVie	'joshua.froimson@abbvie.com'
Joyce Clemence	MA DTA	'joyce.clemence@state.ma.us'
Janet Pierce	Central MA Regional Planning Commission	'jpierce@cmrpc.org'
Jeff Roberge	MassHire North Central Workforce Board	jroberge@masshirenorthcentralwb.com

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Kelley French	MassHire North Central Workforce Board	KFrench@massshirenorthcentralwb.com
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Luis Pedraja	Quinsigamond Community College	lcosta@qcc.mass.edu
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Russ Pottle	Worcester State University	'rpottle@worchester.edu'
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Sherri Pitcher	Fidelity Bank	sherrigpitcher@gmail.com
Susan Mailman	Coghlin Electric	SueMailman@coghlin.com
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Tim Murray	Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerec	'tmurray@worchesterchamber.org'
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Wendy Savary	MA Dept. of unemployment Assistance	'wendy.savary@state.ma.us'
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Staci Johnson	MassHire North Central Career Center	sjohnson@massshirenorthcentralcc.com

## APPENDIX B. BEST PRACTICE DOCUMENTATION (1 OF 2)

*Note that compiled best practices will be shared across Regional Planning Teams.*

<b>Best Practice (BP) Documentation Tool</b>		
Using the following template, document two (2) proven processes or initiatives.		
<b><u>Best Practice Identification</u></b>		
Describe a best practice or achievement in support of your vision and strategic goals.		
<b>Title</b>	<i>Us of an Workforce Industry Consortium</i>	
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	<i>Each priority industry sector (Healthcare, Manufacturing, Transportation/logistics/Warehousing)</i>	
<b>Description</b>	<i>Use existing blueprint partners affiliated with a given industry sector to develop an expanded target list of potential representatives from employers, training providers/educators, or economic development and workforce systems with expertise in the given industry; ask those with existing relationships to contact them – invite them to learn more about the consortium. Hold consortium meetings to review the blueprint and to gather additional information as needed to create a consortium work plan.</i>	
<b>Results</b>	<i>Stronger partnerships; Identification of new industry needs and root causes of challenges; refinement of blueprint goals and strategies; readiness for new project development</i>	
<b><u>Knowledge Management</u></b>		
Use the following fields as a guide to provide more information for other potential users.		
<b>Resources</b>	<i>Labor market data that can be parsed by industry/occupation, and geography to share with partners.</i>	
<b>Barriers</b>	<i>Time and resources necessary bring partners together multiple times to review material and brainstorm</i>	

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<b>Timeline</b>	<i>It took approximately 3 months to develop the initial consortium and implementing it is ongoing – but at least three meetings over 6 months to gain traction among partners</i>	
<b>Measurement</b>	<i>Impacts to programming are the most easily seen in the short-medium term, including programs established/offered, enrollments, and completions and placements</i>	
<b>Commentary</b>	<i>It can be difficult to blend a large group of stakeholders – all with a different vision, needs, and agendas; developing trust can go a long way toward achieving success</i>	

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## APPENDIX C. BEST PRACTICE DOCUMENTATION (2 OF 2)

*Note that compiled best practices will be shared across Regional Planning Teams.*

<b>Best Practice (BP) Documentation Tool</b>		
Using the following template, document two (2) proven processes or initiatives.		
<b><u>Best Practice Identification</u></b>		
Describe a best practice or achievement in support of your vision and strategic goals.		
<b>Title</b>	<i>Incorporate existing leadership structures</i>	
<b>Strategic Alignment</b>	<i>This works across all industries/occupations</i>	
<b>Description</b>	<i>Have blueprint leadership members identify the existing standing groups/committees/councils that may play a role in achieving blueprint goals and what role they may play. Then look to ensure there is a mechanism to communicate with blueprint partners about what information is shared during the support group meetings/events, this might include having time during blueprint meetings to report out for each group, or having a way to share notes through email or a leadership team platform (such as Slack). Try to use this information to avoid duplication and to gather additional resources and support for blueprint goals</i>	
<b>Results</b>	<i>Greater alignment between systems; increased access to resources and services; decrease in duplication of efforts and time commitments</i>	
<b><u>Knowledge Management</u></b>		
Use the following fields as a guide to provide more information for other potential users.		
<b>Resources</b>	<i>Knowledge of existing groups, committees, councils in the area that dovetail with blueprint efforts</i>	
<b>Barriers</b>	<i>One challenge is turn-over of representatives – if a liaison leaves his/her job, then there may develop a gap in representation. Another challenge is ensuring consistent flow of information and follow through on items by third-party groups/systems</i>	



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<b>Timeline</b>	<i>Approximately three months to identify the various potential groups and ongoing thereafter.</i>	
<b>Measurement</b>	<i>Participation among the groups, potential for additional leveraged resources to support blueprint goals</i>	
<b>Commentary</b>	<i>Given how busy everyone is, this is an opportunity to maximize the work we all do by connecting more dots!</i>	

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APPENDIX D. RESOURCE TRACKER

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RESOURCE	APPLYING ENTITY	OCCUPATION	INDUSTRY	APPLICATION STATUS
<i>Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grants for Training &amp; Placement / Advancement Programs.</i>	<i>Mount Wachusett Community College</i>	<i>Warehousing Logistics</i>	<i>Warehousing and Logistics</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>U.S Department of Labor Job Corps Program</i>	<i>Shriver Job Corps</i>	<i>Skilled Labor</i>	<i>Trades</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>National Defense Education Program for STEM</i>	<i>MassMEP</i>	<i>Critical DOD Advanced Manufacturing Careers</i>	<i>Advanced Manufacturing</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>Fy21 Rd 1 Capital Skills Grant</i>	<i>Minuteman Vocational Technical School</i>	<i>Logistics management, supply chain management, Logistics Engineering</i>	<i>Logistics automation Engineering</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>Fy21 Rd 1 Capital Skills Grants</i>	<i>Nashoba Valley Technical High School</i>	<i>Plumbing</i>	<i>Construction</i>	<i>Applied</i>

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<i>Fy 21 Capital Skills Grants</i>	<i>Fitchburg High School</i>	<i>Production worker, CNC Operator, CNC Technician</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>Fy 21 Capital Skills Grants</i>	<i>Gardner High School</i>	<i>Production worker, CNC Operator, CNC Technician</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>Fy 21 Capital Skills Grants</i>	<i>Quabbin Regional High School</i>	<i>Production worker, CNC Operator, CNC Technician</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>State - Manufacturing Consortium</i>	<i>MNCWB/MCRWB</i>	<i>CNC Machinist, Quality Control Technician, Production Worker</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>Received</i>
<i>MA - Learn To Earn</i>	<i>MCRWB</i>	<i>Pharmacy Tech</i>	<i>Healthcare</i>	<i>Received</i>
<i>MA – Learn To Earn</i>	<i>Riverside Collaborative</i>	<i>Food Service/Production</i>	<i>Hospitality</i>	<i>Received</i>
<i>MA DESE - Innovation Pathways</i>	<i>Worcester Public Schools</i>	<i>CNA, Machine operator/production worker, IT Customer Support, Civil Engineering/Construction</i>	<i>Healthcare, Manufacturing, IT, Construction</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA DESE -- Project Lead The Way</i>	<i>Milford HS</i>	<i>Biomedical, Engineering and Computer Science programs</i>	<i>STEM fields</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA DESE -- Project Lead The Way</i>	<i>Southbridge HS</i>	<i>STEM Foundations Program</i>	<i>STEM fields</i>	<i>Applied</i>

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<i>Manufacturing USA</i>	<i>Worcester Polytechnic Institute</i>	<i>Robotics/manufacturing</i>	<i>manufacturing</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA DESE – Innovation pathways</i>	<i>Dudley-Charlton Regional School District</i>	<i>Engineering/STEM, Biomedical Science and Global Awareness</i>	<i>STEM fields</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA Skills Capital Grant program</i>	<i>Northbridge HS</i>	<i>Information Technology (with an emphasis on automation and engineering), Healthcare</i>	<i>IT, Manufacturing, Healthcare</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA DESE - Innovation Pathways</i>	<i>Uxbridge HS</i>	<i>Biomedical science</i>	<i>Healthcare, Manufacturing,</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA Skills Capital Grant program</i>	<i>Bay Path Regional Vocational HS</i>	<i>Advanced Manufacturing, IT</i>	<i>Manufacturing, IT</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA DESE – Chapter 74 HS Vocational program</i>	<i>Bay Path Regional Vocational HS/Minuteman Tech</i>	<i>Information Support Services &amp; Networking program/Animal Science</i>	<i>IT/health</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA Skills Capital Grant program</i>	<i>Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District</i>	<i>Engineering technologies</i>	<i>STEM fields</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>STEM Learning Ecosystem Community of Practice Grant</i>	<i>Central MA STEM Network</i>	<i>STEM fields/IT occupations</i>	<i>STEM fields/IT</i>	<i>Received</i>

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<i>MA EOLWD - Apprenticeship Expansion-Innovation Challenge Grant</i>	<i>MCRWB</i>	<i>Child Development teachers</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Received</i>
<i>MA Skills Capital Grant program</i>	<i>Pathfinder HS</i>	<i>Science and Health - Prototyping and Fabrication Lab- digital fabrication tools related to medical and biomedical engineering</i>	<i>Professional services, STEM, Manufacturing</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA – Re-entry Planning Grant</i>	<i>Blackstone Valley EdHub, MWCC</i>	<i>Quality Control Technicians, Electro-Mechanical Wire Technicians and Machine Operators,</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA – Re-entry Planning Grant</i>	<i>Worcester Community Action Council</i>	<i>CDL – Class B drivers</i>	<i>Transportation</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>US DOL - YouthBuild</i>	<i>Training Resources of America</i>	<i>Construction trades; health careers</i>	<i>Construction, healthcare</i>	<i>Received</i>
<i>MA Skills Capital Grant Program</i>	<i>QCC</i>	<i>Dental Tech, Healthcare</i>	<i>Healthcare</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA Department of Early Education and Care</i>	<i>QCC</i>	<i>Child Development Teachers</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Received</i>

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<i>MA Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development – Urban Agenda</i>	<i>Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce/Town of Clinton</i>	<i>Culinary/Hospitality Maker Space Training Center</i>	<i>Hospitality Clinton K-12 Manufacturing</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>US DOL – WANTO grant</i>	<i>Northeast Center For Tradeswomen Equity</i>	<i>Construction trades</i>	<i>construction</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>City of Worcester; Worcester Jobs Fund</i>	<i>MCRWB - COW</i>	<i>Various (CDL, EKG Tech, Phlebotomy Tech, Medical Admin, Customer Service)</i>	<i>Healthcare, Retail, Transportation</i>	<i>Received</i>
<i>TRAIN Grant</i>	<i>QCC</i>	<i>Pharmacy tech</i>	<i>Healthcare</i>	<i>Received</i>
<i>STEM focused Internships (MA Exec. Office of Education)</i>	<i>NMRWB</i>	<i>STEM/Advanced manufacturing</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA Dept. of Transportation</i>	<i>MCRWB</i>	<i>Various – construction trades</i>	<i>Construction</i>	<i>Received</i>
<i>YouthWorks – Commonwealth Corporation (Pilot B)</i>	<i>MCRWB</i>	<i>IT Customer Support/Help Desk</i>	<i>IT</i>	<i>Received</i>
<i>MA-DESE Innovation Pathways Grant</i>	<i>Quabbin Regional School District</i>	<i>Robotics/manufacturing</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>Applied</i>

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<i>MA Skills Capital Grant Program</i>	<i>Worcester Public Schools – Night Life Adult CTE Program</i>	<i>Biomanufacturing , diesel tech</i>	<i>Manufacturing – lifesciences, transportation</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA Skills Capital Grant Program</i>	<i>MA Project Lead the Way</i>	<i>STEM fields</i>	<i>STEM</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA Skills Capital Grant Program</i>	<i>Quinsigamond Community College</i>	<i>Interactive Media Design</i>	<i>Communications</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>United Way of Central MA</i>	<i>Worcester Community Action Council</i>	<i>Youth Employment Readiness</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Received</i>
<i>MassDOT's Workforce Transportation Program,</i>	<i>Central MA Regional Planning Commission</i>	<i>Various – transportation assistance</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA Project Lead The Way</i>	<i>Worcester Public Schools – Forest Grove Middle School</i>	<i>STEM</i>	<i>STEM</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA DESE – Chapter 74 HS Vocational program</i>	<i>for Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School</i>	<i>Veterinary sciences</i>	<i>Veterinary</i>	<i>Applied</i>
<i>MA Skills Capital Grant Program</i>	<i>Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District</i>	<i>Veterinary science; manufacturing</i>	<i>Veterinary; manufacturing</i>	<i>Applied</i>



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APPENDIX E. PIPELINE CAPACITY TRACKER

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PROGRAM	PROVIDER	OCCUPATION	INDUSTRY	CAPACITY CHANGE
<i>WCTF Health Care Training for workers with disabilities</i>	<i>Polus Center</i>	<i>Pharmacy Technician</i>	<i>Health Care</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>EOHED Manufacturing Training Grant Yr. 2</i>	<i>Central Region Advanced manufacturing Consortium</i>	<i>Production worker, CNC Operator, CNC Technician</i>	<i>Manufacturing</i>	<i>110</i>
<i>WCTF Pharmacy Technician Training</i>	<i>MCRWB</i>	<i>Pharmacy Tech</i>	<i>Healthcare</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>TRAIN Grant</i>	<i>QCC</i>	<i>Pharmacy Tech</i>	<i>Healthcare</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Worcester Jobs Fund</i>	<i>City of Worcester</i>	<i>Commercial Drivers</i>	<i>Transportation</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>WCTF – CDL Training</i>	<i>MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board</i>	<i>Commercial Drivers</i>	<i>Transportation</i>	<i>8 (central MA)</i>

## APPENDIX F. 2020 PROGRESS REPORT

GOAL	STRATEGY	PROGRESS
<b>Goal 1: Align and coordinate regional Education, Workforce Development, and Economic Development systems.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convene Partnership leaders twice annually</li> </ul>	Successfully established – continued work in process
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interconnect existing workforce structures (including Workforce Development Boards &amp; committees, BizWorks regional team, WIOA Partners, School advisory groups, etc.</li> </ul>	Blueprint process integrated into existing WDB & Committees, as well as WIOA Partnerships and Regional BizWorks team integrated (with inclusion of Metro South/West); Blueprint/WDB's now integrated into school programming decisions and regional grant projects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect business service performance and outcome data from all stakeholders to create a comprehensive regional “dashboard” report</li> </ul>	Beta testing on data from career center system has begun; information by industry for business utilization, vacancy rate, supply/demand remains a challenge. Dashboard of WSC partner effort remains a challenge due to data sharing concerns and procedures.
<b>Goal 2: Provide industry with a training system responsive to workforce needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a real-time regional Mass BizWorks “response-team” to serve as the connection between businesses in need and system partners</li> </ul>	Regional online business services staff network established (via Slack platform) – utilization has been a challenge
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate business need feedback into regional Youth Council, Career Center, and partner program development processes</li> </ul>	WIOA Partners, area schools, and WDB's utilizing regional blueprint as guide to program development

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement MA EOLWD Recruitment Solutions Initiative (RSI) referral process at all of the region's MassHire Career Centers</li> </ul>	RSI successfully implemented in Central region, however, staff vacancies have limited its impact
<b>Goal 3: Improve the foundational and work readiness/soft skills of our region's labor force</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase exposure to soft skills in high schools, colleges, training programs and career centers through the creation and expanded access to career readiness training materials</li> </ul>	Working with Commonwealth Corporation on Signal Success WIOA Youth pilot; Increasing capacity for soft skills training through the regional manufacturing consortium
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase career awareness activities in the region's high schools</li> </ul>	Working with schools through Connecting Activities (including Worcester Public Schools – Opportunity Fairs; North Central Manufacturing education summit, North Central Youth Job Fair with the Leominster/Fitchburg Boys and Girls Club etc.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build stronger foundational computer skills for residents (both youth and adults)</li> </ul>	Establishing Coding for Elementary School working group; Conducted Apprenti employer outreach; expansion of high school IT programs in Milford & Worcester
<b>Goal 4: Close the skills gap for priority industries and occupations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish regional baseline measures for priority industries/ occupation goals and set target goals, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease vacancy rate</li> <li>Increase the number of CTE program placements</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Creation of baseline measures for CTE completion in manufacturing has been identified, however this has not yet been completed by the other two consortia; a source for vacancy rate, utilization rate, supply/demand ratio data has not been identified

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Improve the supply/demand ratio</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase the business utilization percentage rate for MassBizWorks-affiliated partner services</i></li> <li>• <i>Improve career center/WIOA Partner performance (number of businesses served, job orders, job referrals, and hiring)</i></li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Expand Career Technical Education (CTE), both day and evening, for priority industries/occupations</i></li> </ul>	<i>Expansion in all three fields (plus additional occupational priority areas) has been accomplished</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increase exposure in secondary education to high priority industries</i></li> </ul>	<i>Alignment through Connecting Activities is a work in progress</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Expand incumbent worker career advancement and Registered Apprenticeships for priority industries</i></li> </ul>	<i>Apprenticeship discussions begun in health and manufacturing, and established for diesel technicians; WTFP for incumbent workers continues</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increase contextualized ABE and ESOL programming that trains for high priority industries</i></li> </ul>	<i>Accomplished through DESE IET programming and manufacturing consortium</i>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Expand articulation agreements between education and training institutions for priority industries/occupations</i></li></ul>	<i>Articulation agreements mapped out but not yet established where gaps exist</i>
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## APPENDIX G. 2022 PROGRESS REPORT

GOAL	STRATEGY	PROGRESS
<b>Goal 1: Align and coordinate regional Education, Workforce Development, and Economic Development systems.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Convene Partnership leaders twice annually</i></li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Interconnect existing workforce structures (including Workforce Development Boards &amp; committees, BizWorks regional team, WIOA Partners, School advisory groups, etc.</i></li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Collect business service performance and outcome data from all stakeholders to create a comprehensive regional “dashboard” report</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Goal 2: Provide industry with a training system responsive to workforce needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Continue the regional real-time Mass BizWorks “response-team” to serve as the connection between businesses in need and system partners</i></li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Integrate business need feedback into regional Youth Council, Career Center, and partner program development processes</i></li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Continue use of the MA EOLWD Recruitment Solutions Initiative (RSI) referral process at all of the</i></li> </ul>	

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	<i>region's MassHire Career Centers</i>	
<b>Goal 3: Improve the foundational and work readiness/soft skills of our region's labor force</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increase exposure to soft skills in high schools, colleges, training programs and career centers through the creation and expanded access to career readiness training materials</i></li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increase career awareness activities in the region's high schools</i></li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Build stronger foundational computer skills for residents (both youth and adults)</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Goal 4: Close the skills gap for priority industries and occupations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Establish regional baseline measures for priority industries/ occupation goals and set target goals, including:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Decrease vacancy rate</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase the number of CTE program placements</i></li> <li>• <i>Improve the supply/demand ratio</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase the business utilization percentage rate for MassBizWorks-affiliated partner services</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Improve career center/WIOA Partner performance (number of businesses served, job orders, job referrals, and hiring)</i></li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Expand Career Technical Education (CTE), both day and evening, for priority industries/occupations</i></li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increase exposure in secondary education to high priority industries</i></li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Expand incumbent worker career advancement and Registered Apprenticeships for priority industries</i></li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increase contextualized ABE and ESOL programming that trains for high priority industries</i></li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Expand articulation agreements between education and training institutions for priority industries/occupations</i></li> </ul>	

## APPENDIX H: IMPACTS FROM COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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- i. How have your priority industries been impacted by COVID-19?
- Our manufacturing sector has largely stayed the same as many companies kept up production or switched to making needed supplies/equipment for the pandemic, however the onset of the pandemic and increased benefits has exacerbated the staffing shortage that existed before this crisis.
  - The need for frontline allied health staff (certified nurses, phlebotomy techs, home health aides) has worsened the staff shortage. Unfortunately, many training programs have also had to cease operations during the outbreak, decreasing potential new staff. This challenge is being addressed through the State's new long term care staffing policy (creation of new patient care technician role and bonus pay for new hires) and outreach portal.
  - The transportation/logistics/warehousing sector has likewise stayed active as an industry during the pandemic and has continued hiring logistics, warehousing, and commercial drivers.
- ii. At this time, what do you envision to be the top 3-5 priority occupations impacted by COVID 19?
- The five occupations with the most claimants are:
- 1) Food Preparation and Serving Related, (including hospitality workers)
  - 2) Construction
  - 3) Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance,
  - 4) Management – general office
  - 5) Office & Administrative Support.
- iii. What education/training programs in your region are still available and able to retrain the unemployed population for job openings in your region?
- The Career Centers are offering access to a variety of basic career preparation related classes available online through such organizations as Goodwill (LearnFree courses), as well as discounted educational courses through EdEx, Coursera, Worcester Night Life, Quinsigamond Community College (QCC), and Mount Wachusett Community College, as well as our region's two universities, Fitchburg State and Worcester State. These include the following free courses through QCC:
- Managing the Virtual Workplace – Tips & Strategies
  - Crisis Management
  - Employee Accountability
  - Microsoft Skype for Business
  - Creating Winning Webinars-Getting Your Message Out
  - Successfully Managing Change
  - Excel 2016 Part 1

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- Excel 2016 Part 2
- Excel 2016 Part 3
- Customer Service Training: Managing Customer Service
- Call Center Training
- Stress Management
- Office 365 Part 1
- Office 365 Part 2
- Microsoft Teams
- Social Selling for Small Business
- Building a Brand on Social Media
- Communications for Small Business
- Leadership Skills for Supervisors
- Effective Performance Reviews

Additionally, there are a number of career technical training related to our priority occupations that are still being offered, these include:

- EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIAN (EMT); training (Mount Wachusett Community College)
- PHARMACY TECHNICIAN: CVS PRE-APPRENTICE TRAINING; (MCRWB)
- QUALITY- LEAN SIX SIGMA YELLOW BELT TRAINING; (Mount Wachusett Community College)
- COMPUTER AUTOMATED DESIGN (CAD) Training; (Mount Wachusett Community College )
- MANUFACTURING ESSENTIALS SUPERVISOR CLASS; (Quinsigamond Community College)
- MANUFACTURING – BASIC MACHINE OPERATION; (Quinsigamond Community College)
- COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE TRAINING; (Worcester Jobs Fund)

- iv. What are the overall top 3 challenges you anticipate in FY21 facing in deploying training solutions?
- i. Large upheaval of front line staff that will not have a job to go back that are not job seeking in the short term and not sure where to go following the end of restrictions– what field to go into
  - ii. State resources for training may be significantly reduced due to the pandemic's drastic impact on state revenue
  - iii. Smaller training providers may no longer be operating – and many of the remaining programs may only be operating online, limiting accessibility for our higher need populations
- v. What are the largest challenges that you anticipate jobseekers in your region will face in attempting to return back to work?

- i. Emotional insecurity – fear of making career change in this uncertain time and the need for counseling support in making career direction decisions and referral for wrap-around services
- ii. Change in economy and shift away from in-person retail and service delivery, causing some jobs to no longer be available
- iii. Financial insecurity – limited resources available for training or for taking time away from work to go into training
- iv. Child care services being available as they look to re-enter the workplace – especially for single heads of households
- v. Transportation – this was already an area that was a challenge, especially in the less populated portions of our region, and it may be made worse with the potential for reduced availability of public transportation and ride-sharing services