

**COMMONWEALTH**  
 **CORPORATION**

**Workforce  
Competitiveness  
Trust Fund**



**WCTF** **FY**  
**24**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

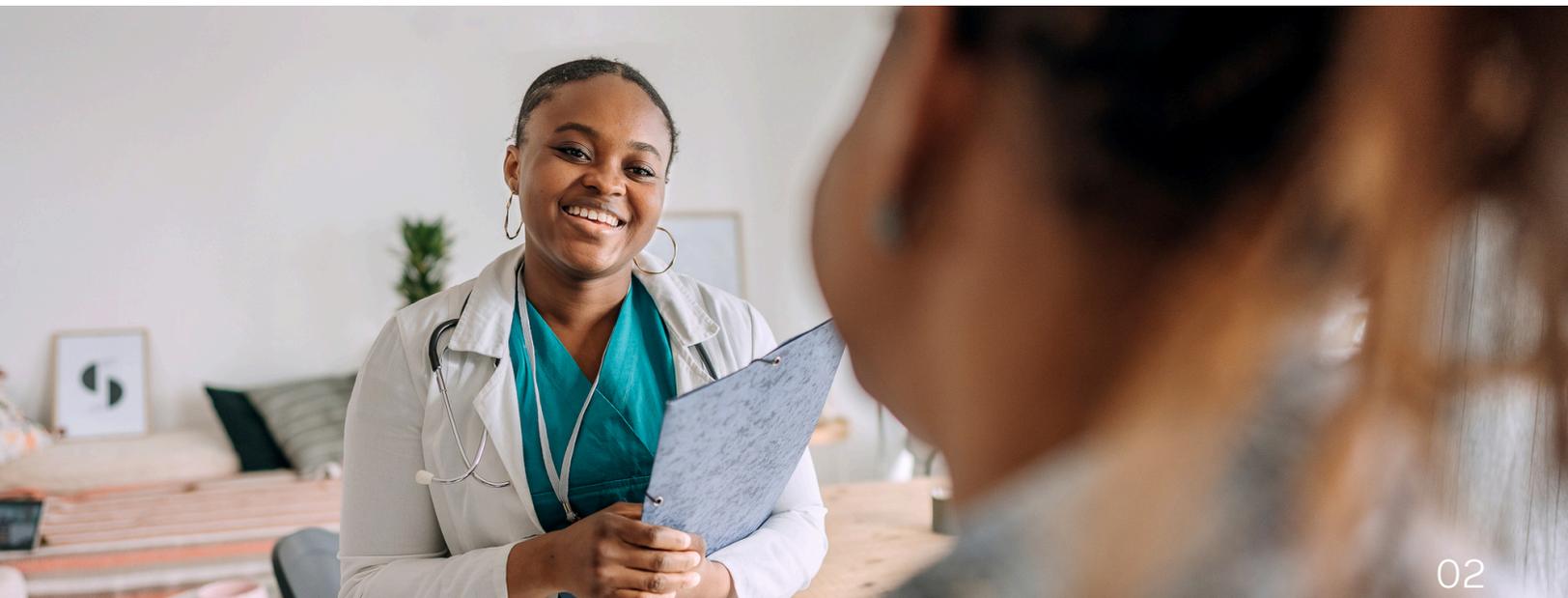


MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF  
**LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>03</b>	INTRODUCTION
<b>04</b>	2024 HIGHLIGHTS: AMPLIFYING TRAINING AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH
<b>07</b>	WCTF GRANT PROGRAMS
<b>12</b>	PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUPS 2024
<b>14</b>	INNOVATION THROUGH QUALITY GRANTMAKING
<b>17</b>	GRANTS CLOSED IN 2024
<b>19</b>	INNOVATIVE EMERGING PROGRAMS
<b>25</b>	THE BIG PICTURE: WCTF AND ESOL IN 2024
<b>27</b>	HEALTHCARE/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH HUBS-DATA IN ACTION
<b>30</b>	RENEW: TRANSFORMING THE WORKFORCE
<b>33</b>	HIGHLIGHT STORIES



# INTRODUCTION



# ANNUAL ADDRESS

The Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF) was established by the Massachusetts Legislature in 2006 to invest in demand-driven programs designed by industry sector partnerships that train and place unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. The fund supports the development and implementation of employer and worker-responsive programs to enhance worker skills, incomes, productivity, and retention, and in turn, it increases the quality and competitiveness of the workforce, companies, organizations in Massachusetts.

WCTF grants expand training capacity to upskill new workers and address employers' hiring needs across a broad range of occupations within industries such as Healthcare, Hospitality, Information Technology, Transportation, Life Sciences, Early Childhood Education, and Construction.

In 2018, the Massachusetts Legislature voted to rename grant awards from the WCTF in memory of the late Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly, who was a steadfast champion of promoting workforce opportunities in the Commonwealth, especially for people who might otherwise lack a pathway to economic stability. In this spirit, Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grants seek to foster sector partnerships that are powered by local organizations that possess deep expertise and aim to uplift untapped talent. This model enables education and community organizations to build and sustain effective partnerships with employers and the public workforce system while striving to incorporate more equitable and innovative practices that lead to increased economic mobility for more people in the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Corporation administers WCTF on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). Commonwealth Corporation also works closely with the Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC), which aligns EOLWD plus the Executive Offices of Education, Economic Development, and Health and Human Services to work collaboratively towards closing workforce skills gaps in Massachusetts.

The enabling legislation for WCTF (WCTF-Section 2WWW) calls for a report to be filed annually with the Secretary of Administration and Finance; the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means; and the Joint Committees on Community Development and Small Business, Education, Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, Labor and Workforce Development, and Public Health. WCTF services are delivered with a focus on prioritizing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as well as accessibility for all Massachusetts residents, especially those most underrepresented. The report must include the number of educational and eligible service providers receiving grants and participants receiving services and placed in employment, as well as the salary and benefits that participants receive after placement, the cost per participant, and job retention or promotion rates for the year after training ends.

# 2024 HIGHLIGHTS:

## AMPLIFYING TRAINING AND EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH



# 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

## Amplifying Training and Education Opportunities in Massachusetts

WCTF programs serve underemployed and unemployed individuals across Massachusetts, especially individuals whose life experiences and circumstances make it difficult for them to succeed in employment without targeted support. Examples of participant populations includes residents who are underemployed and rely on aid from public benefits, people who have been disconnected from the workforce for a long period, individuals who have not been able to obtain a credential or complete formal schooling, and individuals whose first language is not English, many of whom are recent newcomers to this country. Other participants may face barriers to work due to past involvement with the criminal justice system, health conditions such as a disability, or a substance use history. WCTF aims to assist in revitalizing this segment of the workforce by developing talent pipelines for demand-driven opportunities in regions throughout Massachusetts.

In 2024, WCTF grants funded programs from all regions, representing a multitude of sectors in Massachusetts. Programs were led by community colleges, community-based organizations, MassHire Regional Workforce Development Boards, MassHire career centers and all in partnership with employers.

### All WCTF-funded programs support a training strategy that would:

- Offer training and placement services to unemployed or underemployed individuals from outside the target industry, helping them secure full-time, unsubsidized jobs in the target occupation after completing the program.
- Provide training to current employees in the target sector to help them advance into higher-level roles within their organization.



# WCTF UMBRELLA OF GRANTS PROGRAMS OVERVIEW



# WORKFORCE COMPETITIVENESS TRUST FUND PROGRAMS

Below includes an overview of each program within the WCTF followed by a breakdown by industry/sector and region.



## DONNELLY WORKFORCE SUCCESS GRANTS

The Donnelly Workforce Success Grants are the main program of the WCTF, supporting demand-driven programs developed through industry sector partnerships that provide training and placement for unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers. Through the Donnelly Workforce Success Grants, the WCTF goal of creating and implementing programs responsive to both employers' needs and workers' challenges is fulfilled while also aiming to improve skills, increase wages, boost productivity, and enhance worker retention. This, in turn, strengthens the quality and competitiveness of Massachusetts businesses. Donnelly Workforce Success Grant programs especially serve individuals across the Commonwealth who face unique challenges in securing employment without targeted support such as those who are underemployed and depend on public benefits to support their families, individuals who have been out of the workforce for extended periods, and those who have not completed formal education. In 2024, \$70 million was awarded to 126 grants projecting to train 8,800 for employment opportunities for in-demand occupations.

## HEALTHCARE/BEHAVIORAL WORKFORCE HUB INITIATIVE

The Healthcare Workforce Hub Initiative was funded in 2024 by federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding previously awarded by the Massachusetts Legislature to the WCTF to train unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers in health care and behavioral health roles. In 2024, the Healthcare Workforce Hub Initiative of the WCTF awarded over \$16 million dollars to nine regional partnerships, each led by a MassHire Workforce Board. This involved a six-month planning process followed by an implementation grant. The grant initiative also works with over 20 Healthcare training programs. These awards support regional capacity-building efforts that result in training and placement/advancement programs for healthcare pathways across the Commonwealth with over 75 partners from colleges to community-based organizations, with employers as a key partner.



# WORKFORCE COMPETITIVENESS TRUST FUND PROGRAMS CONTINUED



## SCALE

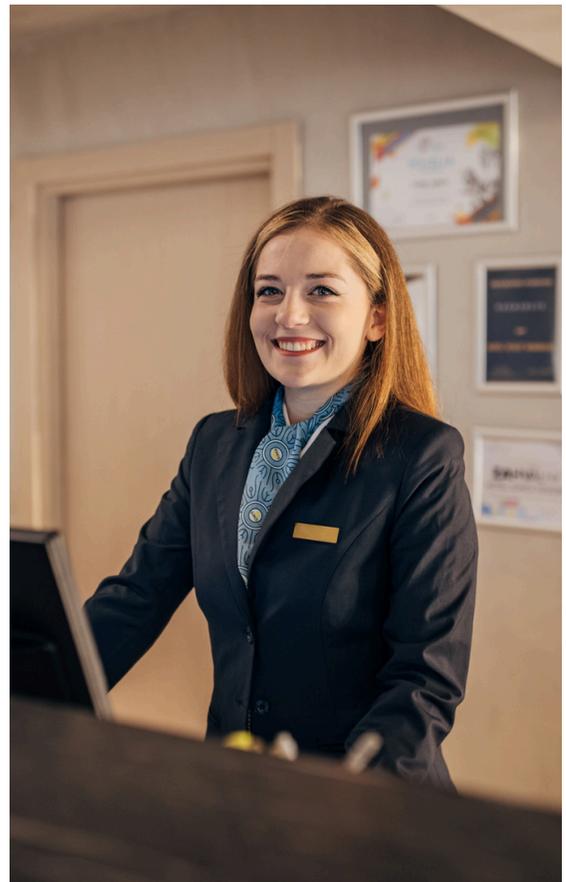
Through WCTF, SCALE grants enabled three-months of planning to operationalize partnerships through direct engagement from the business community to solve training, education, and talent needs. Grantees used this planning time to scale up an existing training program by increasing seat capacity, achieving cost efficiencies per student, and enhancing employer engagement and student support to facilitate scalability. In 2023, four new grants were awarded.

## WCTF PROGRAM DESIGN

The WCTF Program Design grant is a redesigned version of the SCALE grant, following valuable feedback from grantees and related stakeholders to Commonwealth Corporation. The WCTF Program Design grant program aims to fund planning and program design activities that lead to an implementation proposal for the WCTF-Donnelly Success Grant. This grant program offers funding to provide training and placement programs for unemployed and/or underemployed individuals, as well as training and advancement programs for incumbent workers. Grant awards can be up to \$50,000, and work with other Program Design grantees with 6-month cohorts. The main differences between the Program Design grant and the SCALE grant are 1) a higher funding cap, 2) a longer grant cycle, and 3) more intensive Technical Assistance support from Commonwealth Corporation staff.

## RENEW

RENEW, another WCTF program funded by ARPA, was a piloted funding model to help individuals access high-quality training and placement programs for in-demand jobs. The model's concept was to invest public resources in a way that encourages employers to contribute funding back to the program, ensuring the model's longevity. Since its launch, RENEW supported education and training programs that retrain the unemployed, with a focus on partnerships with employers who commit to repaying training costs upon successful placements. Employers benefitted from a consistent talent pipeline, while workers gain industry-relevant skills for sustainable employment. One grant was funded in 2021 and is scheduled to conclude in 2024. One grant was funded in 2023 and scheduled to conclude in 2025.



# WORKFORCE COMPETITIVENESS TRUST FUND PROGRAMS CONTINUED



## RISE

The RISE program was established following the Supplemental Budget passed by the Legislature in April 2024, aimed to provide specific workforce development resources to support residents of the emergency shelter system. Commonwealth Corporation utilized these supplemental funds to develop two Request for Proposals for ESOL training, job placement programs, and career wrap-around services. Eligible applicants, including community-based organizations, training providers, employers, community colleges, and industry associations, have submitted proposals. WCTF Enhancements RFP is designed specifically for the current WCTF Donnelly Success Grant and ESOL grantees to add additional cohorts or slots to benefit individuals experiencing homelessness. ESOL for Employment RFP is designed to serve new grantee proposals with the goal of developing job and career-focused ESOL training programs. The goal of this initiative is a job in any field or occupation.

## ESOL CONTINUATION

The WCTF leveraged the design and re-design of sector-based training and placement programs that incorporated an additional feature: contextualized ESOL services to better serve individuals for whom English is not their first language and/or have limited English proficiency. Awardees conducted a four-month planning phase followed by two years of program implementation. To date, \$1.8 million in allocations were made to five organizations. Grant activity that began in 2021 was scheduled to conclude by October 31, 2023. In 2023, three programs received continuation funding totaling \$2.2 million to continue implementation for an additional three years.

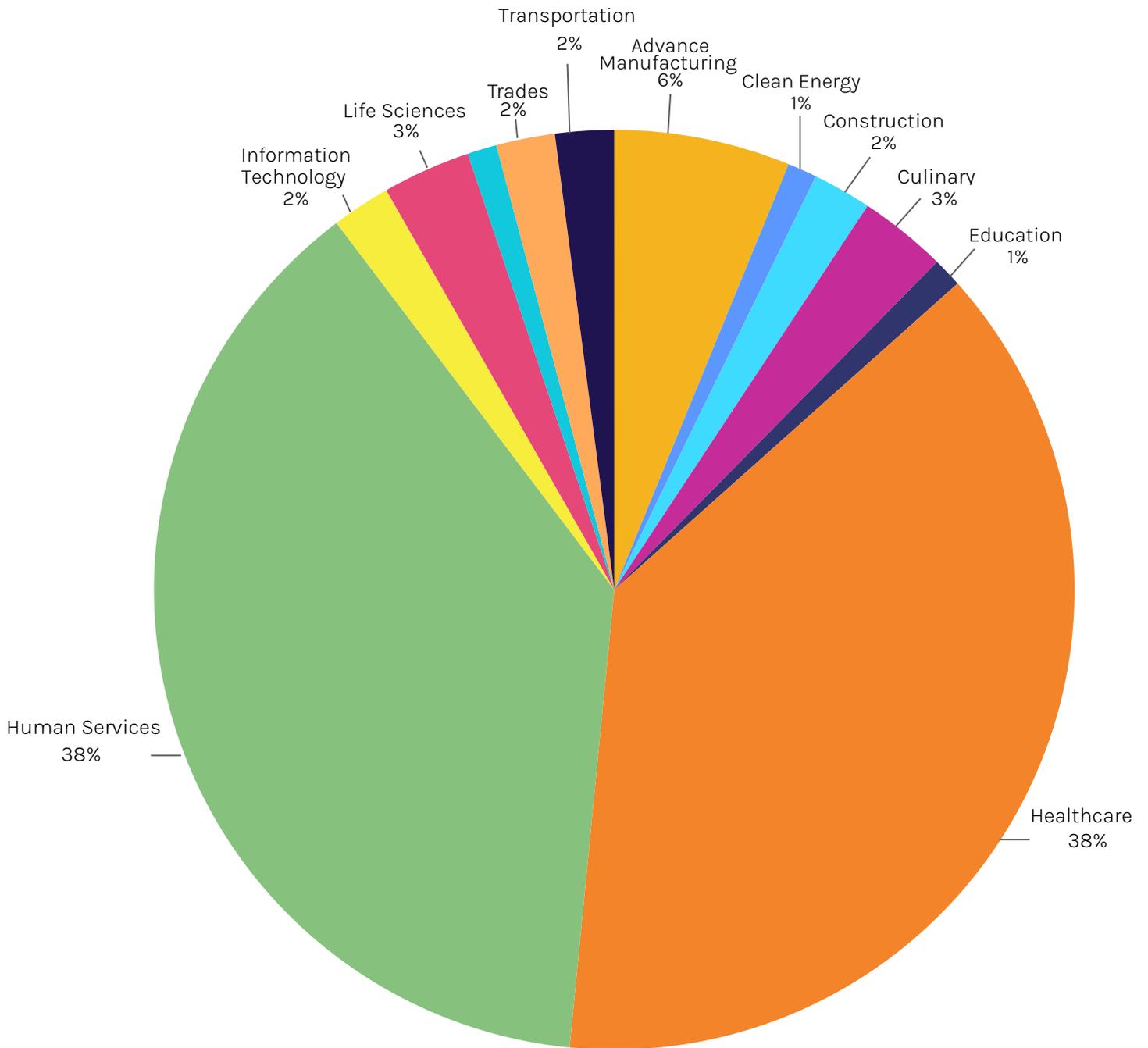
## MASSACHUSETTS WORKFORCE SKILLS FUND

The Massachusetts Workforce Skills Fund, also funded by ARPA, is a pilot initiative launched in September 2024 by EOLWD in partnership with Commonwealth Corporation. The program provides stipends to unemployed and underemployed individuals enrolled in eligible Career Technical Initiative or WCTF training programs, helping to cover living expenses during training and supporting participant retention.

While the Massachusetts Workforce Skills Fund is not a program of WCTF, it has a direct impact on eligible participants able to receive stipends of \$3,000 for programs lasting less than 90 days and \$5,000 for programs over 90 days, with payments made in three installments tied to key milestones: enrollment, program completion, and employment. Backed by \$6.1 million in federal ARPA funding and administered by the Public Consulting Group as the fiscal vendor, this pilot aims to meet workforce demands while helping participants reach their career goals.

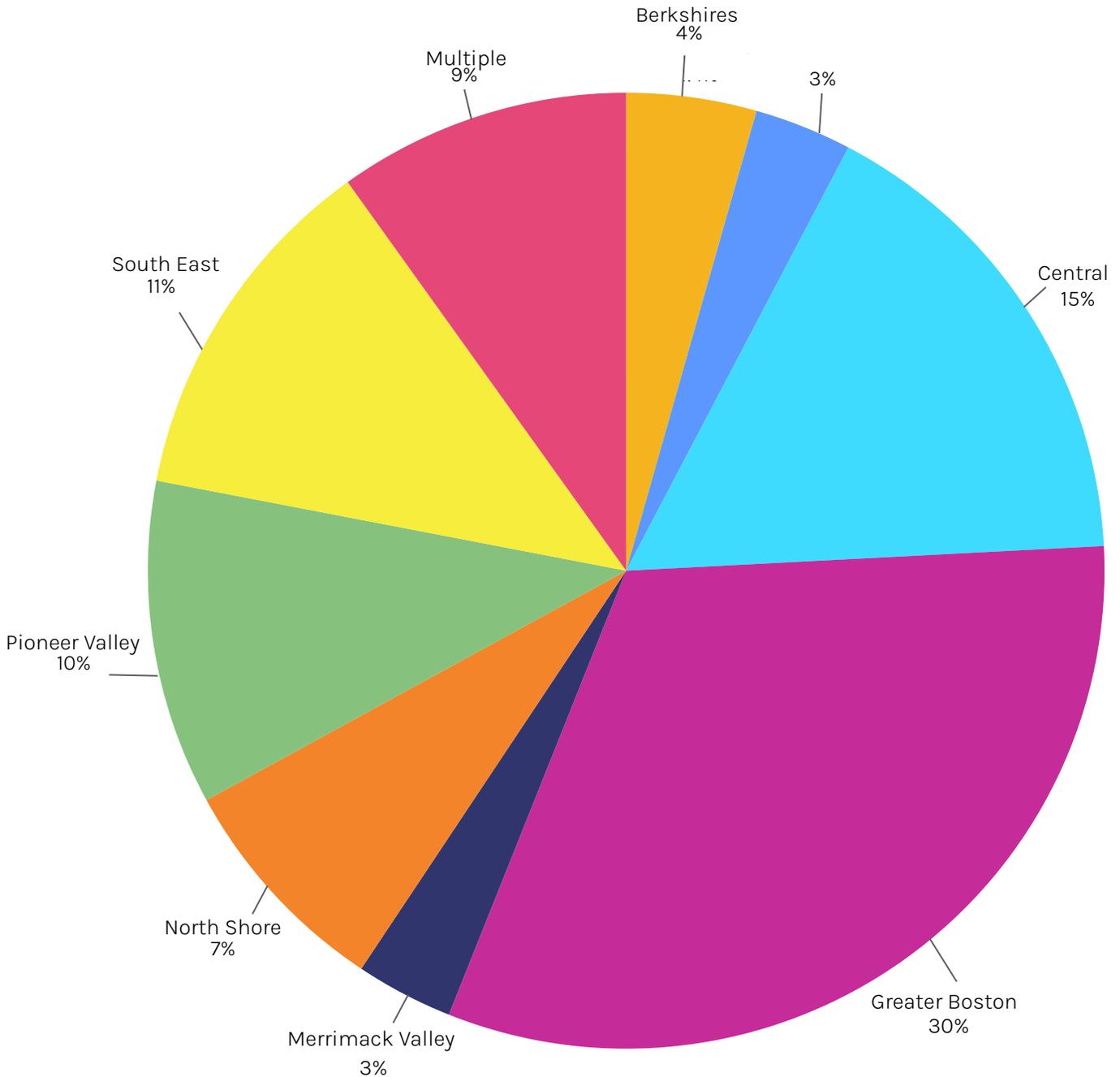
# WORKFORCE COMPETITIVENESS TRUST BY INDUSTRY/SECTOR

The descriptions below highlight WCTF programs funds operating in 2024, by industry.



# WORKFORCE COMPETITIVENESS TRUST GRANTEES BY REGION

The descriptions below highlight WCTF programs funds operating in 2024, by region:



# PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUPS



# PARTICIPANTS FOCUS GROUPS

## Develop, Implement, Enhance & Empower

Commonwealth Corporation conducted focus groups in the summer of 2024 to learn more about participant perspectives on whether programs met the WCTF mission of promoting meaningful employment and upward mobility. While WCTF has previously conducted focus groups with its grantee partners, this marks the first time they were conducted with training programs participants. 39 participants from seven WCTF - funded training programs provided a range of perspectives incorporating regional and sector diversity.

### KEY FINDINGS INCLUDED:

#### Career Advancement and Opportunities:

Participants sought training programs to switch careers, overcome barriers, or seek better job opportunities. The programs exceeded their expectations, offering new skills, industry connections, and practical experiences that were directly applicable to job roles.

#### Workforce Readiness and Personal Growth:

Participants reported increased self-confidence and felt better prepared to advance their careers. Many expressed satisfaction with the quality of training and support received, highlighting the development of both professional and socio-emotional skills.

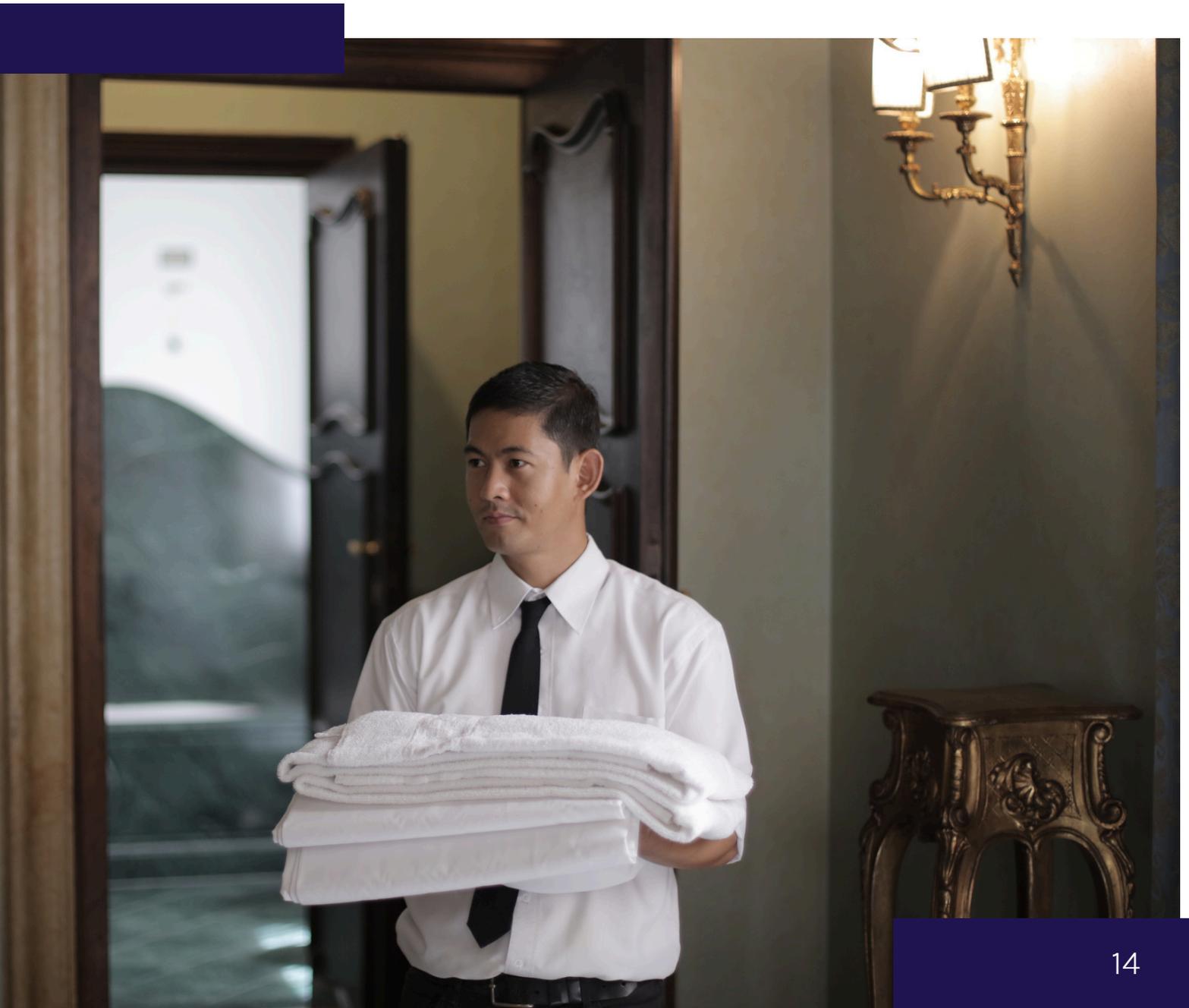
#### Support Services:

Many participants appreciated the comprehensive support services, which included assistance with childcare, transportation, and career development resources. These services were critical in enabling them to balance personal and professional obligations while completing their training.



WCTF team conducts focus group at El Centro- Catholic Charities

# INNOVATION THROUGH QUALITY GRANTMAKING



# INNOVATIVE EMERGING PROGRAMS

## Innovation, Achievement, Amplify & Empower

With the strong support of policymakers and advocates in economic and workforce development, the WCTF has been able to award over \$100 million in grants since 2013. Grant awards have continued to grow at significant rates this year due, in part, to substantial ARPA investments. WCTF staff has continued to support and provide quality technical assistance to help programs develop and implement superior employer and worker-responsive programs. These programs have enhanced worker skills, incomes, productivity, and retention. This ultimately leads to the empowerment of thousands of individuals to enter quality jobs with family-sustaining wages as well as a strong economic state for the Commonwealth.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Massachusetts continues to experience steady economic recovery. However, while the state is experiencing low unemployment, the state is also experiencing record high job openings in many sectors and a skills gap among available talent. WCTF programs help to fill skills gaps by training, preparing, and employing highly skilled workers with industry-recognized credentials and certifications. Commonwealth Corporation in collaboration with the Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC) and stakeholders, worked on strategies to increase the capacity and productivity of WCTF grantees, scaling up workforce organizations to support more employer partnership engagement, including but not limited to increased and more intricate partnerships with community colleges, MassHire Regional Workforce Development Boards, and community-based organizations.

The Legislature allocated \$37.5 million in funding appropriated in 2021 through the ARPA to support scaling WCTF grant awards. This funding, in addition to the state appropriations, allows partnerships to plan and deliver larger-scale training, placement, and advancement programs. WCTF is also funded from the state budget at \$10 million for FY 21, \$17 million for FY22, \$17 million for FY 23, \$8 million for FY 24, and \$14.7 million for FY 25 (including funding in the supplemental budget). Commonwealth Corporation and the WSC are investing these resources to fully support workforce development and economic growth in Massachusetts.



# GRANTS CLOSED IN 2024 BY THE NUMBERS



## GRANTS CLOSED IN 2024

GRANT	# OF GRANTS	PARTICIPANTS	COMPLETED TRAINING	JOB PLACEMENTS
Completed Grant Cycles	10	788	689	633

GRANT NAME	AWARD AMOUNT	PROGRAM NAME	INDUSTRY	PARTICIPANTS
Center for Community Health Education Research and Service	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	42
Minuteman RVTHS	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Facilities	70
Polus Center for SED	\$581,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	90
Hebrew Senior Life	\$632,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	110
Operation ABLE of Greater Boston	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	60
Boston Children's Hospital	\$499,996.00	WCTF	Healthcare	60
Gloucester Marine Genomics Institute	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Life Sciences	80
WTIA Workforce Institute	\$1,000,000.00	WCTF	Information Technology	46
Quinsigamond Community College	\$499,473.80	WCTF	Information Technology	66
Catholic Charities AB	\$1,000,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	164

The Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund has been a consistent force that has contributed to the economic innovations and progress of a plethora of businesses and organizations over the last ten years. Additionally, the fund has provided a valuable resource to provide sustaining wages and jobs that support career advancement to nearly 6,000 individuals. The data below outlines this tremendous progress and efforts of Commonwealth Corporation and its many partner grantees. Moreover, while this publication is being prepared, there is no shortage of quality proposals which will result in thousands of dollars more in grant awards to assist even more business and thousands more individuals.

# GRANTS OPERATING IN 2024 BY THE NUMBERS



## GRANTS OPERATING IN 2024

\*Closed grants not included in the chart below as information is available in the previous section.

GRANT	ORIGINAL AWARD AMOUNT	PROGRAM NAME	INDUSTRY	REGION
Boston Children’s Hospital	\$499,996.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Gloucester Marine Genomics Institute	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Life Sciences	North Shore
WTIA Workforce Institute	\$1,000,000.00	WCTF	Information Technology	Greater Boston
Quinsigamond Community College	\$499,473.80	WCTF	Information Technology	Central
Catholic Charities AB	\$1,000,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Action for Boston Community Development	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
MassHire Greater Brockton WIB	\$326,715.00	WCTF	Transportation	South Shore
HHCTNE	\$350,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Benjamin Franklin	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Metro North Regional Employment Board	\$870,592.79	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Jewish Vocational Service, Inc	\$630,469.04	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Asian American Civic Center	\$344,200.00	WCTF	Finance	Greater Boston
1199SEIU	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Southeast
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Foundation	\$250,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Berkshires
MassBio	\$1,000,000.00	WCTF	Life Sciences	Greater Boston
Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc.	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Berkshires

## GRANTS OPERATING IN 2024 CONTINUED

\*Closed grants not included in the chart below as information is available in the previous section.

GRANT	ORIGINAL AWARD AMOUNT	PROGRAM NAME	INDUSTRY	REGION
Building Pathways	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Construction	Greater Boston
Holyoke Community College	\$1,000,000.00	WCTF	Education	Pioneer Valley
Asian Women for Health Inc.	\$401,854.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Imaginal Group	\$597,651.00	WCTF	Education	Greater Boston
Boston Children's Hospital	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Per Scholas	\$326,600.00	WCTF	Information Technology	Greater Boston
Mass Restaurant Association	\$239,984.93	WCTF	Hospitality	Statewide
Cape Cod Regional Technical High School	\$276,474.00	WCTF	Construction	Cape & Islands
Montachusett Reg Voc Tech	\$351,887.50	WCTF	Automotive	Central
Center for Community Health Education Research and Service	\$311,487.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Morgan Memorial Goodwill Industries, Inc	\$462,729.57	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Community Servings	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Hospitality	Greater Boston
MassHire North Shore Workforce Boar	\$319,880.00	WCTF	Healthcare	North Shore
MassHire Greater Brockton WIB	\$350,000.00	WCTF	Transportation	South Shore
Mass Restaurant Association EF	\$159,850.00	WCTF	Hospitality	Statewide
Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board	\$400,000.00	WCTF	Education	South East

## GRANTS OPERATING IN 2024 CONTINUED

\*Closed grants not included in the chart below as information is available in the previous section.

GRANT	ORIGINAL AWARD AMOUNT	PROGRAM NAME	INDUSTRY	REGION
African Bridge Network	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Polus Center	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Central
Polus Center	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Central
International Institute of New England	\$512,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Merrimack Valley
Mass General Brigham	\$511,500.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Bioversity Inc	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Life Sciences	Greater Boston
Seacoast Rehabilitation and Nursing Center	\$235,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	North Shore
Greater Lawrence Technical School	\$456,135.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Merrimack Valley
Boston Education Skills & Training Corp	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Hospitality	Greater Boston
Open Sky Community Services, Inc.	\$3,506,900.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Central
1199SEIU	\$717,220.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Statewide
Justice Resource Institute, Inc.	\$402,980.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
SnapChef	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Culinary	Statewide
Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Transportation	Cape & Islands
El Centro del Cardenal	\$799,855.29	ESOL	Hospitality	Greater Boston
Merrimack Valley Workforce Board	\$849,587.00	ESOL	Manufacturing	Merrimack Valley
UMASS Amherst	\$1,400,000.00	ESOL	Hospitality	Pioneer Valley

## GRANTS OPERATING IN 2024 CONTINUED

\*Closed grants not included in the chart below as information is available in the previous section.

GRANT	ORIGINAL AWARD AMOUNT	PROGRAM NAME	INDUSTRY	REGION
Holyoke Health Center	\$850,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Pioneer Valley
Cape Cod Regional Technical High School	\$225,425.00	WCTF	Construction	Cape & Islands
Holyoke Community College	\$1,014,468.23	WCTF	Healthcare	Pioneer Valley
Emerge Career	\$1,350,000.00	WCTF	Transportation	Statewide
Entrepreneurial & Business Collaborative	\$498,655.00	WCTF	Hospitality	Pioneer Valley
STEMMatch	\$1,245,291.30	WCTF	Information Technology	North Shore
Bay Path College	\$1,768,036.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Pioneer Valley
Stack Education Partners	\$450,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Action Ambulance, Inc.	\$1,298,547.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Statewide
Quinsigamond Community College	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Central
Quincy College	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Culinary	Greater Boston
Holyoke Community College	\$442,674.39	WCTF	Healthcare	Pioneer Valley
Greenfield Community College	\$24,838.00	SCALE	Healthcare	Berkshires
Cultivate Pathways /NOPI INC	\$10,129.55	SCALE	Information Technology	Greater Boston
Franklin Hampshire Employment and Training Consortium	\$29,996.81	SCALE	Hospitality	Pioneer Valley
Berkshire Medical Center	\$25,000.00	SCALE	Healthcare	Berkshires
Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce	\$27,864.00	SCALE	Transportation	Cape & Islands

## GRANTS OPERATING IN 2024 CONTINUED

\*Closed grants not included in the chart below as information is available in the previous section.

GRANT	ORIGINAL AWARD AMOUNT	PROGRAM NAME	INDUSTRY	REGION
WeReach	\$25,000.00	SCALE	Information Technology	Greater Boston
Imaginal Group	\$29,975.00	SCALE	Education	Merrimack Valley
Collins Center for Public Management at University of Massachusetts Boston	\$29,645.00	SCALE	Municipal Government	Greater Boston
MassMEP	\$29,966.00	SCALE	Manufacturing	Central
Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI)	\$29,913.12	SCALE	Life Sciences	Central
Boston Engineering	\$28,072.67	SCALE	Manufacturing	Greater Boston
MassMEP	\$29,370.00	SCALE	Manufacturing	Central
Entrepreneurial and Business Collaborative, LLC	\$29,992.20	SCALE	Hospitality	Pioneer Valley
Operation ABLE of Greater Boston	\$29,977.50	SCALE	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Regis College	\$260,150.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston
Polus Center for Social & Economic Development, Inc.	\$29,988.00	SCALE	Healthcare	Central
National Grid	\$1,794,131.00	WCTF	Trades	Statewide
Operation ABLE of Greater Boston	\$286,080.00	WCTF	Healthcare	Greater Boston

## GRANTS OPERATING IN 2024 CONTINUED

\*Closed grants not included in the chart below as information is available in the previous section.

GRANT	ORIGINAL AWARD AMOUNT	PROGRAM NAME	INDUSTRY	REGION
Aspire	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Culinary	Berkshires
Forge Team Inc	\$384,250.00	WCTF	Trades	Greater Boston
1199SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund	\$500,000.00	WCTF	Healthcares	South East
Benjamin Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology	\$333,663.00	WCTF	Healthcare	South East
MassHire Central Workforce Development Board	\$870,592.79	WCTF	Transportation	Central

# WCTF FY 2024 **PROGRESS TO DATE**



ANNUAL UPDATE

# WCTF FY 2024 PROGRESS TO DATE

As of October 2024, 2,973 participants enrolled in WCTF training programs that were active in FY 2024. The average wage for job placements is \$22/hour. To date, WCTF funded programs have experienced a 70% average job placement rate for program completers. The data is a cumulative calculation of all active grants in FY 24. These data points speak to the particular emphasis on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging that Commonwealth Corporation and WCTF place on training programs, recruitment, and selection approaches, such as the data on participants' income levels, demographics, and education attainment levels.

**Demographics**

	Number	Percentage
Hispanic or Latino	1016	35%
American Indian/Alaska Native/ Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	48	1%
Asian	208	9%
Black/African American	962	42%
Multi-Racial/Other Race	99	7%
Not Disclosed/Missing	150	5%
White	706	34%

**Gender**

	Number	Percentage
Female	1817	61%
Male	1076	36%
Non-Binary/Other	41	1%
Not Disclosed/ Missing	39	1%

**Age**

	Number	Percentage
16 - 21 Years Old	462	16%
22 - 24 Years Old	374	13%
25 - 34 Years Old	965	32%
35 - 44 Years Old	702	24%
45 - 54 Years Old	315	11%
55 Years & Older	155	16%
<b>Average Age</b>	<b>33</b>	

**69 Languages Represented**

<b>Language:</b>		
English	2012	68%
Haitian Creole	347	12%
Spanish	310	10%
Portuguese	63	2%
Arabic	56	2%
French	45	1%
Cape Verdean Creole	24	1%
Mandarin Chinese	24	1%

**Disability**

	Number	Percentage
Yes	188	6%
No	n/a	n/a
Not Disclosed/Missing	n/a	n/a

**Employment Status**

	Number	Percentage
Unemployed	1474	47%
Underemployed	1499	50%
Incumbent	93	3%

**Educational Attainment Level**

	Number	Percentage
Less than HS equivalency	126	4%
HS or state mandated equivalency	1205	41%
Some College, No Degree	805	27%
Associate's Degree	187	6%

**Other Characteristics**

	Number	Percentage
Disability	188	6%
Single Parent	709	24%
Born in the U.S.A.	1711	58%
Veteran	51	2%

HEALTHCARE/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
HUBS CONTINUATION GRANTS:  
**DATA IN ACTION**



## HEALTHCARE/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH HUBS CONTINUATION GRANTS: DATA IN ACTION

As of October 2024, 584 participants have enrolled in Healthcare/Behavioral Health Hub-funded training programs. The average wage for job placements is \$20/hour. The WCTF funded Healthcare/Behavioral Health Hub grants reflect nine regional partnerships that include approximately 75 healthcare employees across the state representing acute care, long-term care, community-based care, home care, pharmacies, and emergency services. The following data has been compiled through a detailed analysis of information that funded participants and grantee partners have provided.

GRANT NAME	AWARD AMOUNT
Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc.	\$2,227,173.06
Boston Private Industry Council	\$972,673.80
MassHire Cape and Islands Workforce Board	\$1,921,783.60
MassHire Central Region Workforce Board	\$1,110,478.37
MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board	\$2,251,556.16
MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board	\$2,660,220.09
MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board, Inc.	\$1,271,342.79
MASSHIRE North Shore Workforce Board	\$2,413,205.70
Quinsigamond Community College	\$499,473.80
Metro Southwest Workforce Board	\$1,000,000.00

# HEALTHCARE/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH HUBS CONTINUATION GRANTS: DATA IN ACTION

Applications included in WCTF and Healthcare/Behavioral Health Hubs training programs:

	TRAINING PROGRAMS
1	Acute Care Nurse Assistant
2	Cardiovascular Technologist & Technician
3	Certified Addiction Recovery Coach
4	Certified Nurse Assistant Preceptor
5	Certified Nurse's Assistant
6	Clinical Medical Administrative Assistant
7	Community Health Worker
8	Direct Service Associate
9	Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor
10	Licensed Practical Nurse
11	Medical Assistant
12	Mental Health Peer Support Specialist
13	Pharmacy Technician
14	Phlebotomist
15	Registered Behavioral Technician
16	Surgical Technician
17	Home Health Aide
18	Radiologic Technician
19	Research Administrator
20	Clinical Research Coordinator
21	Healthcare Program Coordinator
22	Customer Service Roles in Healthcare

# RENEW: TRANSFORMING THE WORKFORCE



## RENEW: TRANSFORMING THE WORKFORCE

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As of October 2024, 172 participants have enrolled in RENEW-funded education and training programs. The average wage for job placements is \$22.46/hour. The following data has been compiled through a detailed analysis of information that funded participants and grantee partners have provided. The data is a cumulative calculation of all active RENEW grants in FY 24.

GRANT	ORIGINAL AWARD AMOUNT	PROGRAM NAME	INDUSTRY	REGION
Mount Wachusett Community College	\$300,000.00	RENEW	Life Sciences	Central
Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges	\$2,612,718	Renew	Retail	Greater Boston



# Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund

- **Develop & Implement**  
employer and worker responsive programs
- **Enhance**  
worker skills, incomes, productivity, and retention
- **Empower**  
Massachusetts firms to increase quality and competitiveness

# FY 2024 IMPACT SUCCESS STORIES



*Pictured here: Grantee organization representatives exchange success stories and ideas during a WCTF convening at UMass Amherst.*



## **EMPOWERING FUTURES:** HOW MASSHIRE GREATER BROCKTON WORKFORCE BOARD'S CDL PROGRAM DRIVES CHANGE IN SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

*By Jai Freeman*

Mass Hire Greater Brockton Workforce Board (MassHireGBWB) is transforming lives through its CDL Driver Training Program, offering southeastern Massachusetts residents a chance to secure stable, well-paying jobs in the commercial driving industry. Funded by the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF), the CDL program provides unemployed and underemployed individuals with the skills they need to thrive in a growing job market, empowering them to build a more secure future.

In partnership with CMSC Parker Professional Driving School, the program was designed to train 32 residents from the South East region. By June 2024, the program saw 18 participants secure employment, with an average hourly wage of \$32.47. This outcome exceeded the initial expectations and highlights the program's success in preparing participants for high-paying jobs within the commercial driving industry.

Matt Kilday, a recent graduate of the program, shared his success story. "I landed two jobs after completing the program. My first was with Amazon, driving overnight from city to city; it gave me valuable experience. I am now working for a small company hauling construction waste, making over \$30 an hour."

The program's impact goes beyond job placement; it also builds confidence and skills for long-term success. "The program taught me how to pass the road test, and the real-world experience came from my first job." Kilday said, reflecting on his experience, "It is a steppingstone. I'm 22 and making decent money, so I'm definitely grateful for it."

The CDL Driver Training Program also stands out for its commitment to inclusivity. Lorraine Albert, Director of Regional Planning at MassHireGBWB, shared her pride in the program's diversity. "We have females, males, veterans—people from all over Southeastern Mass in the program. Seeing them succeed and find good jobs with strong wages makes us so proud. Knowing we have helped underemployed individuals get to a better place in their lives brings us real joy."

The program's influence reaches far beyond individual participants, helping to uplift the entire community. Kilday highlighted its potential, "This program can help people get out of low-paying jobs. The CDL program gives people a real career and a chance to better their lives."

The CDL Driver Training Program is a powerful example of how strategic partnerships, community engagement, and workforce development initiatives can drive meaningful change. By providing comprehensive training and support, MassHireGBWB is empowering individuals to take control of their futures. As the demand for CDL drivers grows, the program will continue to help southeastern Massachusetts residents build brighter, more secure futures, one successful graduate at a time.

*Matt Kilday proudly receives his WCTF CDL Incentive Check at MassHire Greater Brockton Workforce Board after completing CDL training and successfully meeting the program's employment requirement of at least 30 days of continuous employment.*  
- Submitted Photo





# BUILDING A STRONGER WORKFORCE THROUGH HUMAN SERVICES TRAINING

By *Stephanie Gutierrez*

In today's competitive job market, building a strong and resilient workforce is more important than ever. The Polus Center for Social & Economic Development, located in Athol, MA, is playing a crucial role in this effort by providing training for unemployed and underemployed individuals in the field of Human Services across Massachusetts. Roberta Richards, Program Coordinator at the Polus Center, shared some insights into the meaningful work they are doing to prepare participants for careers that make a difference.

"The Human Services industry is about helping people," explains Roberta. "The program encompasses roles in autism support, senior caregiving, and even working in retirement homes. We have people who may not have had the education in substance abuse or homelessness, but they have lived experience, so we let them dig down deep with the stuff they've learned and make it into a resume so that this way they can get an entry-level job," she adds.

The Polus Center, supported by a Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund grant, offers a six-week training program currently serving 72 participants. The program runs from Tuesday through Friday, covering a wide range of topics relevant to Human Services. "We go over various subjects, from substance abuse and autism to professionalism and problem-solving in the workplace," says Roberta. The program also includes practical skills like resume writing, crafting cover letters, and preparing for interviews, which Roberta notes "is something everyone really loves."

A highlight of the program is the job fair that takes place at the end of the six-week training. "We've built strong relationships with employers who come back every year," Roberta proudly shares. She emphasizes the importance of close partnerships with their local MassHire, the Commission for the Blind, Viability, and other organizations, who consistently refer participants to the program. These connections are essential to ensuring that the Polus Center reaches as many people as possible and provides them with the support they need.

The need for jobs in the Human Services field, particularly for those who are unemployed or underemployed, led the Polus Center to develop this program. "We saw an opportunity to educate people about career options in this field," Roberta explains. The training focuses on empowering participants with the knowledge and skills they need to thrive in Human Services roles.

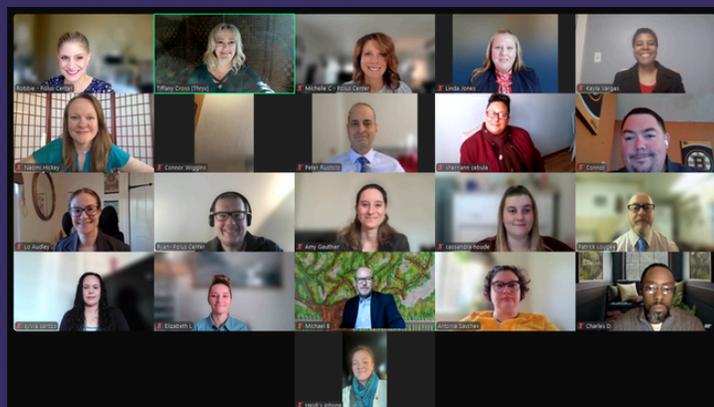
One key aspect of the curriculum is social role valorization, a concept based on renowned educational psychologist Dr. Wolf Wolfersberger's work on treating marginalized individuals with dignity. Program participants also receive training in trauma-informed care and mental health services. Guest speakers, like Darcy Elks, contribute to the training by addressing topics such as respecting the autonomy of elderly or marginalized individuals in care settings. "We want our students to leave with the skills and confidence they need, whether it's in writing a professional resume, acing an interview, or even something as simple as sending a thank-you note," Roberta shares.

Graduates of the program receive a certificate of completion, but the relationship with the Polus Center doesn't end there. The Polus Center ensures that every student secures a job or receives substantial training to feel confident in what they do. "Upon graduation, the only thing we ask is that they get a first pay stub and a 30 day pay stub," shares Roberta, but that does not mean that their contact ends there. "I still have students reaching out to me from the first session," she shares. Roberta also adds that "if something happens after the 30 days, say six months, seven months, we had one person reach out to us and say, you know, I'm not happy with my job, I want to get back in the market, can you help me with my resume?," she responds enthusiastically with "of course I will and she just got another job."

One of Roberta's favorite success stories is about a mother who joined the program during a difficult time in her life. "She came to us with no confidence, going through a tough divorce, but she wanted to better herself. Over the course of six weeks, we saw an incredible transformation," Roberta recalls. The participant was partnered with Dress for Success, which provided her with professional attire, boosting her self-esteem. "She secured a job as a teacher's assistant just a week after our job fair, and she was so proud and happy."

The passion for Human Services is evident in many of the program's participants, Roberta notes. "It's not just that they need a job—they genuinely want to make a difference in the world. Many are in their 40s, 50s, and 60s, making significant career changes to do something meaningful. Others are in their 20s and 30s, just starting out, but they need that extra support to open doors that weren't accessible to them before.

Participants from a recent Human Services Training Program. - Submitted photo





## A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS: HOW UMASS AMHERST'S CULINARY PROGRAM EMPOWERS NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING EMPLOYEES

*By Jai Freeman*

In an increasingly diverse workplace, effective communication is essential for employee success. At UMass Amherst, the culinary training program, part of The Partnership for Worker Education and the Office of Human Resources, is transforming how non-English-speaking employees in dining services grow and thrive through targeted education and support.

Since its inception in 2018, the program has significantly evolved to better serve its workforce. In 2018, the program offered training in six languages; today, it proudly provides instruction in an impressive 22 languages—a testament to UMass Amherst's commitment to inclusivity and adaptability. This expansion ensures that all employees, regardless of their linguistic background, can access the tools and resources they need to succeed. As Larissa Checkmareva, the Career Ladders Project Coordinator with the Partnership for Worker Education program at UMass Amherst, explains, “Offering training in multiple languages has allowed us to connect with employees on a much deeper level. It’s not just about language; it’s about creating a pathway for growth and helping them feel part of the larger institution.”

The program's innovative integration of AI-driven learning tools further enhances its effectiveness. By leveraging technology, staff can provide personalized learning experiences, allowing employees to master culinary terminology and workplace communication at their own pace. As Jacob Carter, Director of the Partnership for Worker Education at UMass Amherst, explains, “It’s a highly sophisticated program that’s data-driven and incorporates ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and learning from that as they go.” This adaptability ensures that training is not only comprehensive but also relevant to the specific needs of each employee.

The Culinary Career Ladder (CCL) is at the heart of the program, offering a clear and supportive pathway for career development within the dining services. The CCL is designed to provide a structured and supportive pathway for career development. By focusing on skill development and personal growth, participants progress from entry level positions to more specialized and leadership roles. Checkmareva emphasizes this, noting, “As part of the culinary Career Ladder, we want to ensure that new employees understand that their roles are not just jobs; they are steppingstones for growth within their organizations. Each training module is customized for the specific needs of the dining workplace.” Carter adds, The English classes are designed very specifically for culinary at both the beginner and intermediate levels.”

The program is not just about skills training—it is about creating a supportive environment where employees feel welcomed from the start. One of the standout features is that training and orientation are provided in employees' native languages. This approach ensures that they feel comfortable, confident, and able to focus on their work without the stress of navigating new systems in an unfamiliar language. Carter highlights the importance of this: "This approach allows employees to show up to work and focus on their responsibilities without worrying about how to check their paycheck, where to park, or what uniform to wear. It provides a strong foundation for job satisfaction and retention."

The program's results speak for themselves. Since the beginning of this 2024 funding cycle, 158 new employees have been hired across UMass Amherst and Lawrence Public Schools, with 105 identified as ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages). The real impact of this program can be seen in the personal stories of the employees it supports, like the touching story of a Nepali-speaking employee who had worked for years without access to email or IT systems. Through the program, the employee was finally able to connect to the university's network in their native language. "The reaction was personal; people laughed, cried, and hugged us. It was a moment that showed how truly transformative our training could be," Checkmareva recalls.

The program has also made a difference in job fairs, where non-English-speaking applicants who once felt disconnected now find a supportive environment where they are greeted in their own languages. As Checkmareva explains, "[W]hen we tell them that we provide onboarding in different languages, people are often surprised and thrilled. It connects our program with the employees and helps them feel more comfortable entering the workplace."

And at the core of this program's success is the strong collaboration between UMass Amherst Human Resources, dining services, and the Partnership for Worker Education. Checkmareva notes that, "Without our partners, there would be no program. Their support from day one has been crucial in helping us understand the needs of our participants and the context of the training we offer." This partnership also plays a key role in the program's ability to evolve. By continuously sharing data, insights, and feedback, UMass Amherst Human Resources, dining services, and the Partnership for Worker Education can adapt the program as the workforce changes or new challenges arise. As Checkmareva mentions, "Their support has helped us from day one, not only in terms of resources but also in shaping the strategic direction of the program." Through these partnerships, the program has expanded, innovated, and, most importantly, empowered its participants to succeed in their roles and grow within the organization.

The success of UMass Amherst's culinary program is perhaps best captured through the words of its participants. Monique, a dining services employee, reflects on the challenge she faced: "I can do all the work in the kitchen, but English is the language I can't speak yet." Through Culinary classes, Monique\* gained the vocabulary needed to understand and perform her tasks with confidence. "Now I know the names of things, and I can put them together while cooking," she explained. This new knowledge proved valuable in real situations. "When I was asked to work in the salad area, and the person who was supposed to help me was really busy, I was able to put things in place as I was asked."

The culinary program at UMass Amherst is an example of how tailored workforce training education can create meaningful opportunities for employees, fostering both professional growth and a sense of belonging. ESOL training should continue to be prioritized in the workplace, as it not only helps employee job performance but fosters inclusivity and promotes long-term career advancement. As the program continues to grow, the commitment remains clear: to expand its reach, support more employees, and help them thrive both in their jobs and for long-term success. The results so far show that this blend of personalized learning, career pathways, and community support is a recipe for success.

\*Participant's last name has been omitted at their discretion.



**We thank you for your  
continued support.**

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*Pictured here: Grantee organization representatives and WCTF team gather for a convening at HCC.*