

# *Building a Better Workforce*



## *Closing the Skills Gap On the Road to Economic Resurgence*

### **Workforce Development Plan**

Approved by the City of Springfield, Massachusetts- June 2008

Prepared by the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc.

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>A Call to Action</i>	2
<i>The Challenge</i>	4
<i>Method: How the Plan Was Developed</i>	5
<i>At a Glance: The Draft Springfield Workforce Development Project Plan</i>	7
<b>I. Strategic Goal One: Establish Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>II. Strategic Goal Two: Improve Youth Education Proficiency and Career Awareness</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>III. Strategic Goal Three: Increase Adult Literacy Education Services</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>IV. Strategic Goal Four: Increase Technical Training in High Growth / High Demand Industry Sectors</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Support Services</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Investment Summary</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix A Investment Resources</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix B Research Document Listing</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Appendix C Demographic and Industry Charts for Springfield</b>	<b>25</b>

# **Executive Summary**

## ***A Call to Action***

Imagine a world where jobs hang like apples from a tree. The trouble is that too few workers can reach high enough to pick the apples, and eventually the fruit falls, but only to rot on the ground.

Such is the state of the third largest city in Massachusetts today. The City of Springfield is at a crossroads. As the City emerges from the oversight of a state financial control board, it needs a blueprint to build a better workforce if it hopes to move toward a stronger economic future. This blueprint cannot be a band-aid, or a quick-fix that would only satisfy the political exigencies of the moment. Springfield needs a detailed map to address the systemic issues that, left unheeded, will be signposts on the road to financial instability.

This plan provides a cradle to career approach that could not come at a more critical time. Employers such as Baystate Medical Center are poised to add hundreds of jobs via an aging workforce and their \$250M expansion along with a biomedical boom that is being promoted by Governor Deval Patrick<sup>1</sup>. But such jobs require an educated workforce in a City where a literacy gap looms large, beginning at birth and ending with long waits for adult education. The average worker in Springfield today is less educated, less proficient in the English language and less affluent than his counterparts across the state<sup>2</sup>. A significantly higher percentage of the potential workforce is younger and poorer than the rest of the state.

The workforce itself is comparatively smaller than the rest of the state, with eight fewer workers per 100 residents age 16 and over than statewide, and the workforce is getting smaller. Nearly half of high school students and as much as seventy-five (75) percent of community college students fail to graduate. More and more children are growing up under the clouds of poverty and lost opportunity<sup>3</sup>.

In August 2007 in the midst of such conditions the City of Springfield charged the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County, Inc. (REB) with leading a collaborative effort to the search for solutions. From community leaders to business CEO's, a consensus has been reached on a plan to address the continuum of issues that together has compromised the potential of the City's workforce.

To break the cycle of poverty and close the skills gap, this Workforce Development Plan will address four strategic goals:

1. Establishing a universal pre-kindergarten program and support family literacy,
2. Instituting extended learning time and career and college track programs to improve high school graduation rates and outcomes,
3. Closing the literacy and skills gaps by investing in the critically important efforts of adult education and language training, and
4. Target training and education toward filling jobs in key industries.

---

<sup>1</sup> Commonwealth of MA, Life Sciences Legislation July 2007, [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov)

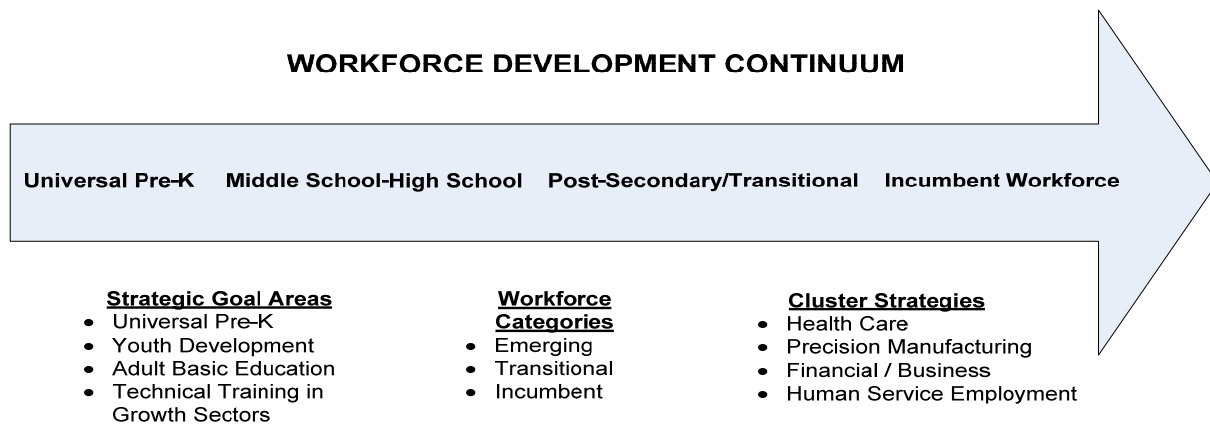
<sup>2</sup> Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, "A Demographic and Economic Analyses of the City of Springfield" Paul Foster, Stefanie M. Santiniello, Justine Calcina, Delania Barbee, Kinshasa Fowlkes, September 2006. [Http://www.pvpc.org/web-content/docs/info](http://www.pvpc.org/web-content/docs/info)

<sup>3</sup> The Republican, "Poverty soaring for area students" Stan Freeman, January 2008

This four-part strategy is more than a plan. It is a foundation for systemic change that will require new investments and resolve. Built with the input of key business and community leaders, it will also require their help to steer this process. Put simply, businesses cannot afford to be bystanders on the City’s road to economic resurgence. To implement this Plan, the REB recommends that Mayor Sarno appoint a Steering Committee which will address business and public interests.

In overseeing implementation of the Plan, the committee will work with local and state partners to identify new required investments and to establish clear measures of return on those investments including increased academic performance, reduced job vacancies, and the creation of new job opportunities through:

- Capitalizing on “Green Space” initiatives to create “green” jobs within the urban environment
- Aggressively exploring energy conservation and alternative energy projects and to structure training for local residents in new jobs created by such investments and projects
- Strengthening the alignment with minority businesses and Chambers of Commerce to increase economic growth opportunities in the City
- Structuring relationships with local and regional retail businesses in creating career pathway opportunities
- Taking advantage of state and federal Science-Technology-Engineering-Math (STEM) initiatives through alliances with the school system, colleges, and local employers
- Increased coordination and referral mechanisms with providers of support services such as transportation, child care, mentoring for youth, etc.



## The Challenge

Because any solution must be based on a thorough analysis of the problems, we begin with a look at the interrelated challenges of inadequate educational attainment and poverty:

<b>Workforce Development Skills Gap Challenges</b>			
	<u>Springfield %</u>	<u>Worcester %</u>	<u>MA %</u>
<b>MCAS 2007 Proficiency Levels</b>			
- 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade reading	40	33	59
-10 <sup>th</sup> Grade English	36	52	71
-10 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	31	48	69
<b>High School Graduation Rate</b>	54	70	80
<b>Age 25+ Without a High School Diploma</b>	25	17	15
<b>With a Bachelors Degree or Higher</b>	17	29	33
<b>Age 16+ in Labor Force</b>	59	64	67

*Source: US Census Bureau-American Fact Finder; Massachusetts Department of Education*

The education gap feeds a cycle of poverty that is increasingly limiting the potential of Springfield. There is a direct correlation between the skills gap and the poverty rate in Springfield<sup>4</sup>. Because low income residents tend to have higher dropout rates and lower levels of academic achievement, education and job training is all the more critical to closing the skills gap and building a better workforce. The chart below cites a few poverty indicators:

<b>People and Families Below the Poverty Level</b>			
	<u>Springfield %</u>	<u>Worcester %</u>	<u>MA %</u>
<b>All People</b>	28	18	10
<b>Children less than 18</b>	45	24	12
<b>All Families</b>	25	15	7
<b>Married with Children less than 18</b>	7	6	3
<b>Single Female with Children less than 18</b>	52	39	33

*Source: US Census Bureau 2006 American Community Survey*

### Unfilled Jobs

Last year, nearly 21,000 Hampden County residents, half from Springfield, looked for a job through the county's One-Stop Career Centers, Future-Works in Springfield and Career Point in Holyoke, yet, less than half were able to find employment. At the same time, a skills and education gap continues to leave many good-paying jobs unfilled, particularly in the high growth industry sectors of health care, human services, precision manufacturing, and financial and business services<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid endnote #1

<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, "Massachusetts Job Vacancy Survey: Hiring Trends by Industry and Occupation." 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2006.

Aging baby boomers retiring in large numbers are putting further strains on employers who are trying to remain competitive in a global marketplace<sup>6</sup>. Older workers (+55) want to work longer, but need more flexible schedules to contribute<sup>7</sup>.

## ***Method: How the Plan Was Developed***

This Three Year Plan will implement four strategic goals:

1. Strategic Goal 1: Establish Universal Pre-K
2. Strategic Goal 2: Improve Youth Education Proficiency and Career Awareness
3. Strategic Goal 3: Increase Adult Literacy Education Services
4. Strategic Goal 4: Increase Technical Training in High Growth / High Demand Industry Sectors

The methods utilized to create these strategic goals, including collaborative processes to identify workforce development priorities, included:

- Inventoried and examined existing workforce development programs in Springfield to identify unmet needs
- Identified successful initiatives that must be expanded and brought to scale
- Held a community forum, which included a follow-up process, of key stakeholders including community based agencies, educators, workforce development professionals, and city agencies to craft components of the plan
- Defined the need for structured career pathways along the workforce development continuum of life-long learning
- Researched new programs and funding models to address unmet needs
- Identified job vacancy rates and projected hiring needs of area businesses to ensure the Plan would be driven by employer demand
- Coordinated information with the Mayors' Education and Economic Development Transition Teams
- Gathered initial labor market data and engaged the Northeastern University Center for Labor Market Studies for further detailed analysis

The continuum of strategies in this proposal addresses all segments of the workforce:

- ***The Emerging workforce*** of in-school and out-of-school, particularly Pre-K and at-risk youth aged 14-21, who are or will be the newest entrants into the workplace, and who need education, career guidance, job readiness skills, and support services.
- ***The Transitional workforce*** of unemployed or underemployed workers who need retraining and job search assistance to move into new jobs, including ex-offenders, and disconnected older youth.
- ***The Incumbent workforce*** of employed workers who need additional education and training to retain or advance in their jobs.

---

<sup>6</sup> Resource Partnership, "Baby Boomers: Employment Trends and Outlooks". December 2007, [www.resourcepartnership.org](http://www.resourcepartnership.org)

<sup>7</sup> Center for Labor Market Studies Northeastern University, "The Projected Population and Labor Force Outlook for the 55 and Older Population in Massachusetts, 2005-2015." Paul Harrington, Neeta P. Fogg, Michael Reid, May 2007.

By focusing on **transitional** and **incumbent workers**, the Plan addresses the “here and now” needs of business, while attending to the **emerging workforce** the Plans achieves long-term success. This four-part strategy to build a better workforce begins with the youngest members of the potential workforce while addressing the pivotal role of older workers and the critical needs of key industries. This Plan was designed to address the continuum of needs that together have limited the potential workforce in Springfield and led to lost economic opportunities.

*It is imperative that the City of Springfield accelerate the process of building and enhancing its’ workforce now, if we are to meet our region’s workforce demands.*

With Governor Deval Patrick’s launch of the “Springfield Partnership,” a revitalization effort to improve the local business environment and use state investments to leverage local economic development, the time is right and the time is now for a cradle to career plan that builds a better workforce for Springfield. While this blueprint is ambitious, anything less will leave Springfield stalled on the road to economic resurgence.

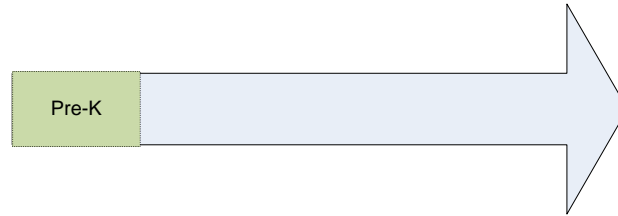
## ***At a Glance: The Draft Springfield Workforce Development Project Plan***

Building Springfield a better workforce requires a sustained strategy that lays the foundation for success and provides support for the future. This draft workforce development plan is based on the input of dozens of stakeholders, community leaders and educators. It establishes the following four strategic goals and objectives through 2010:

- I. Establish Universal Pre-Kindergarten.....\$2,770,000**
  - *Objective 1:* Implement a High Quality City-Wide UPK Pilot Program, with Streamlined Funding, in Springfield.
  - *Objective 2:* Implement Programs to Improve the Skills for the Pre-K Educators.
  - *Objective 3:* Implement Family-Centered Literacy Programs for Parents and Children in Pre-K Programs.
  
- II. Improve Youth Education Proficiency and Career Awareness.....\$6,605,400**
  - *Objective 1:* Implement Extended Learning Time (ELT) and other Programs to Increase High School Graduation and MCAS Proficiency.
  - *Objective 2:* Expand Opportunities that Link Students with Internships and Summer Work Experiences.
  - *Objective 3:* Increase Post-Secondary Education and Training Enrollment and Retention through Strengthened Transitional Programs.
  
- III. Increase Adult Literacy Education Services.....\$2,250,000**
  - *Objective 1:* Secure New and Flexible Funds for Adult Literacy Programs Tailored to Targeted Populations
  - *Objective 2:* Increase Program Capacity of Adult Literacy Providers to Reduce Wait Lists.
  - *Objective 3:* Increase the Number of Learners Transitioning to One-Stop Career Centers, Post-Secondary Education and other Workforce Programs.
  
- IV. Increase Technical Training in High Growth / High Demand Industry Sectors.....\$1,950,000**
  - *Objective 1:* Align and Expand Current Sectoral Training Initiatives to Obtain Greater Efficiencies.
  - *Objective 2:* Increase Training Opportunities through New and Creative Funding Mechanisms.
  - *Objective 3:* Initiate New Employer-Education-Training Alliances to Implement Programs that Address Critical Job Vacancies.

***Total Three-Year Investments: \$13,575,400***

# I. Strategic Goal One: Establish Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK)



## ***Rationale***

Research across the disciplines of neuroscience, early childhood development and economics consistently demonstrates that quality early childhood programs have an overwhelmingly positive impact on learning and preparing children for school - and for life. In addition, there is much evidence that universal early education is the surest way to eliminate the kind of achievement gap that often is firmly established by age 5 among low-income children.

Participation in high-quality early education programs has been demonstrated to enhance child cognitive and social development, especially among low-income children. Nobel Laureate in Economics Dr. James Heckman stated in “Building a Better Workforce: A Business Conference for Western Massachusetts”, held in Springfield (November 19, 2007), that “early interventions promote schooling, reduce crime, promote workforce productivity and reduce teenage pregnancy.” Springfield’s very young children live in the city with the 6<sup>th</sup> highest rate of child poverty in the nation and current data indicates that:

- The approximately 990 Pre-K students being served by the Springfield Public Schools represents only 14 percent of the over 7,000 eligible children that could be served.
- The licensed capacity for ALL Pre-K programs is approximately 5,000 spaces, significantly fewer than the need. There is only space for approximately 1 out of every 4 pre-school aged children in accredited programs.

## ***Objective 1: Implement a High Quality City-Wide UPK Pilot, with Streamlined Funding, in Springfield.***

It is urgent that the City of Springfield take the first steps in establishing a high-quality, voluntary UPK program for the City’s children. This program should build on, accelerate, and invest in the collaborative work that has already been done by the organizations working in early education and care in the city through the Cherish Every Child Initiative, as funded by the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation. This collaboration has produced a comprehensive UPK plan titled “A Solid Foundation for all Springfield’s Children: A Plan to Ensure Access to High-Quality Pre-Kindergarten” at an estimated cost for the plan’s first year implementation of \$2.2 million. The Springfield UPK Plan, which encompasses 12 strategies to implement a community-wide pilot program, was created in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, and aligns with the Department’s UPK criteria. The Plan integrates the work of the Springfield Public Schools, the for-profit and not-for profit, public and private early education providers in a mixed delivery system, as called for by the Department of Early Education and Care.

This Objective calls for:

- A community infrastructure such as an Early Learning Council to oversee the implementation of a UPK pilot program, with infused investment from the state and support from the local business and philanthropic community
- Grant waivers from the Department of Early Education and Care in order to enable the Springfield collaborative to do community capacity-building in UPK

***Estimated Implementation Cost:*** \$2,160,000 for the first year of implementation of the strategies developed by Cherish Every Child / Springfield Public Schools / Springfield Early Care and Education Partnership collaborative.

***Anticipated Results:*** All children who participate will develop better language skills, score higher in school-readiness tests and have better social skills and fewer behavioral problems once they enter school. We expect they will perform better at each grade level and thereby improve the rate of Springfield's third-graders who meet state standards for reading proficiency on the MCAS.

### ***Objective 2: Implement Programs to Improve the Skills of the Pre-K Educator***

One of the twelve (12) strategies of the Cherish every Child UPK Plan, as called for Objective #1, is aimed at improving the skills of the Pre-K workforce. Because of its direct relation to workforce development, we have made this strategy a separate objective. There is an absolute correlation between the educational levels of the Pre-K workforce and the quality of instruction provided to Pre-K students. Presently only eighteen (18) percent of the Springfield early childhood work force have attained bachelor's degrees compared to forty (40) percent statewide, and twenty-five (25) percent have attained associate's degrees, higher than the state average of twenty-one (21) percent. New employment requirements are being proposed by the Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) that by the year 2010 will require all new teachers and lead teachers to have a minimum of an associate's degree with at least twelve (12) college credits in early childhood education and nine months of work experience.

Currently, the Quality Enhancement for Springfield Teachers (QUEST) program, funded by the Cherish Every Child initiative of the/ Davis Foundation and several other local funders, and managed by the Preschool Enrichment Team (PET), is the only local program that assists the early childhood workforce in attaining their degrees. QUEST is currently funded for three years and can only serve fifty (50) participants at a time, adding new participants as others graduate.

This Objective calls for:

- Funding of new programs to provide and promote education and training, including literacy (ESOL, ABE), professional development credentialing and degree attainment, to current and new workers
- Increased funds to PET for the Quest program to expand its capacity by 50-75 students

***Estimated Implementation Cost:*** \$250,000, through the Massachusetts Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund.

**Anticipated Results:** A better educated Pre-K workforce, providing higher-quality instruction to students in Pre-K programs.

### **Objective 3: Implement Family-Centered Literacy Programs for Parents and Children in Pre-K Programs**

Long-term research verifies that family literacy programs produce significant results:

- Adults obtain and keep employment, a higher percentage of adults achieve GED equivalency, and *the amount of literacy activity in the home increases by 80 percent.*<sup>8</sup>
- Adults who participate in family literacy often pursue educational and job-related goals, such as earning a high school diploma or GED, learning English, and gaining computer skills.
- Uniquely, they also have opportunities to learn how to create a learning environment at home, regardless of their current literacy level. Children receive age-appropriate instruction that prepares them for school and starts them on a path of lifelong learning.<sup>9</sup>
- By age four, children who live in poor families will have heard 32 million fewer words than children living in professional families.<sup>10</sup>

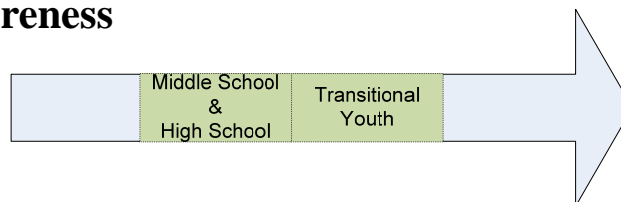
This Objective calls for:

- Increasing the number of Family Literacy programs in Springfield
- Replicating successful school-based Family Literacy program models already operating in Hampden County and/or other parts of the state in Springfield’s schools

**Estimated Implementation Cost:** \$120,000 per year x 3 years = \$360,000

**Anticipated Results:** More educated parents, increased levels of parental engagement in their children’s schooling, and improved educational levels for children.

## **II. Strategic Goal Two: Improve Youth Education Proficiency and Career Awareness**



### **Rationale**

The youth of Springfield, particularly those considered “at-risk,” are clearly facing serious challenges to acquiring the skills needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In a labor market where two-thirds of the jobs require, at minimum, an associate’s degree, only one-quarter of community college

<sup>8</sup> National Center for Family Literacy [www.famlit.org](http://www.famlit.org)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

students are graduating and nearly half of Springfield's students are dropping out of high school<sup>11</sup>.

While in school, they must decide which courses to take and think about their career paths. Curricular choices made at the middle and high school level will, in large measure, determine the array of potential major fields of study graduating high school seniors can qualify for at the college level. Basic skills development courses, especially in mathematics, will substantially influence their ability to enroll in and complete a college degree program later on. The combination of education, occupationally specific skills, and job readiness and “soft skills” are key criteria to employers making hiring decisions<sup>12</sup>.

### ***Objective 1: Implement Extended Learning Time (ELT) and other Programs to Increase High School Graduation Rates and MCAS Proficiency***

Clearly, the first step in improving youth education proficiency is to ensure they graduate from high school.

This Objective calls for:

- Implementing Extended Learning Time (ELT) In-School and Summer Programs, which would increase MCAS student proficiency levels of students; targeting a pilot program in one elementary and one middle school that have the highest concentrations of low income and “at risk” youth should show the greatest impact of this initiative<sup>13</sup>
- Implementing Springfield’s proposed “Drop-Out Prevention Collaboration,” which fully integrates the activities of the School Department’s School-to-Career, Support Services and Parent & Community Engagement offices
- Continuing the work of the region’s “High School Graduation Rate” and “Pathways to Success by 21” (P-21) initiatives to build community partnerships and align services for at-risk middle school and high school students
- Implementing an early warning system to identify 6<sup>th</sup> grade students with dropout predictive risk factors such as poor attendance, failing grades and low achievement tests
- Engaging parents/guardians to take active roles in their children’s education<sup>14</sup>
- Expanding the number of mentors and tutors matched with at-risk 9<sup>th</sup> graders in the Springfield schools through such programs as the Governor’s “Volunteers in the Commonwealth Corps” initiative<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education, Statistical Reports. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/>

<sup>12</sup> Springfield Technical Community College, Industry Sector Forum Reports:  
a. Financial Services, Dr. Ira Rubenzahl, Dr. Leona Ittleman, April 2005  
b. Healthcare (Hospital Sector) Dr. Ira Rubenzahl, Micheal C. Foss, March 2005  
c. Manufacturing, Dr. Ira Rubenzahl, Julian Tenczar, March 2005

<sup>13</sup> Extended Learning Time Initiative, “Time for a New Day: Broadening Opportunities for Massachusetts School Children.” 2006-2007, Annual Report. <http://www.mass2020.org/Final%20ELT%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> National Center for Family Literacy, Research Data. ([www.familit.org](http://www.familit.org))

<sup>15</sup> Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Department, “Governors Commonwealth Corps and Student Corps Volunteer Initiative.” [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov)

**Estimated Implementation Cost:** \$2,035,400 in Year 1 (includes ELT Planning Grants) + \$2,000,000 for years 2 and 3 = \$6,035,400

**Anticipated Results:** Measured increases in MCAS Proficiency Levels with eventual increases in high school graduation rates.

## **Objective 2: Expand Opportunities that Link Students with Internships and Summer Work Experiences**

In a labor market that favors knowledge and experience, choices about summer jobs, part-time work, and formal work-based learning, such as cooperative education and apprenticeships, have a strong connection to future employability, lifestyle and quality of life. They also help young people develop the work behavior traits, job readiness and “soft skills” that are highly valued by today’s employers<sup>16</sup>. However, even with state and federal programs in place and good work occurring at community-based organizations across the City, we don’t have enough resources to serve *all students* who could benefit.

This Objective calls for:

- Developing and implementing a comprehensive community-wide plan to expand School-to-Career and additional work-based learning opportunities. Examples of current business-led pilot projects that could be implemented with private sector investment include:
  - Big Y pilot program, which is based on the Wegman Supermarket model in New York State, where selected high school students would work at the supermarkets while receiving case management support to transition to post-secondary education<sup>17</sup>
  - Baystate Health Systems Youth Internship Program: Students are placed in various departments within the hospital and are offered permanent employment positions post-graduation
- Expanding programs that combine work and learning activities such as through the:
  - Department of Education funded “Summer of Work and Learning”
  - Science-Technology-Engineering-Math (STEM) camps for 14- and 15-year-old high-performing students<sup>18</sup>
  - Newly proposed Health Career Opportunities Program (HCOP), to be launched by the UMass Donahue Institute and Baystate Health Systems; if funded, it will provide summer work and learning opportunities in the healthcare field, targeted particularly to minority youth

**Estimated Implementation Cost:** \$90,000 per year x 3 = \$270,000, to be matched by \$800,000 in private investment.

---

<sup>16</sup> The Robert Bowne Foundation, “After School Matters: How Did You Spend Your Summer Vacation” Spring 2007

<sup>17</sup> Wegman’s Supermarkets, “Wegmans Youth Programs”. [www.wegmans.com](http://www.wegmans.com)

<sup>18</sup> PV Stemnet, Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) Initiative-Collaboration of Colleges in the Knowledge Corridor. [www.umassk12.net/pvnet/](http://www.umassk12.net/pvnet/)

***Anticipated Results:*** Young adults who are better armed with the information they need to make decisions about education and career planning and are better equipped with the work ethic and soft skill traits, such as teamwork and communication, valued by employers.

***Objective 3: Increase Post-Secondary Education and Training Enrollment and Retention through Strengthened Transitional Programs***

To be college and career ready, students need the ability to pursue postsecondary educational opportunities successfully without the need for basic developmental courses. Estimates are that up to 25 percent of incoming students need such remediation. Even with remedial courses, too many students do not graduate<sup>19</sup>. For our young people to be successful in the labor market, an associate’s degree at minimum is required. Finally, innovative approaches to increase the number of qualified STEM-related teachers must accompany these programs.

This Objective calls for:

- Strengthening existing secondary and postsecondary transition programs, which focus on college/training readiness and retention
- Increasing the number of articulation agreements between high schools and public and private postsecondary institutions
- Expanding “Two-Plus-Two/Dual Enrollment” programs that offer students career "pathways" linking their high school classes to advanced technical education in colleges or apprenticeship programs (spanning the last two years of high school and the first two years of college)<sup>20</sup>
- Strengthening school guidance programs such as the Middle School Portfolio Process to prepare students to make informed decisions about required coursework consistent with career goals

***Estimated Implementation Cost:*** \$100,000 per year x 3 = \$300,000

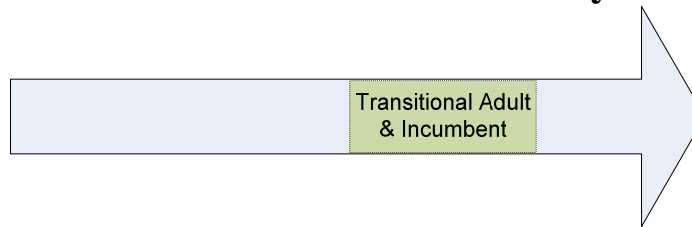
***Anticipated Results:*** Improved alignment between high schools and college programs, resulting in increased college readiness and retention, thus increasing the number of students graduating and entering the workforce.

---

<sup>19</sup> Achieving the Dream, Community College Student Success Initiative. [www.achievingthedream.org](http://www.achievingthedream.org)

<sup>20</sup> Commonwealth of Ma Executive Office “Readiness Project” [www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov)

### III. Strategic Goal Three: Increase Adult Literacy Education Services



#### ***Rationale***

Adult literacy programs are a critical element in Springfield’s overall plan for economic development, but their current capacity is insufficient to meet the needs of the workforce. MassInc. and the Brookings Institution have reported that nearly 20 percent of Springfield residents are foreign born or natives of Puerto Rico, less than 15 percent of immigrants in all gateway cities possess a college degree, and only a little more than 50 percent have high school diplomas.<sup>21</sup> Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) are vital programs as the city’s population continues to shift. So too are General Equivalency Diplomas (GED) for those who have dropped out of high school and can’t move on to postsecondary education<sup>22</sup>.

#### ***Objective 1: Secure New and Flexible Funds for Adult Literacy Programs Tailored to Targeted Populations***

In addition to supporting existing literacy programs, new programs are needed that are more flexible, not constrained by Department of Education requirements, and better able to meet the needs of incumbent workers, families, ex-offenders, homeless individuals and other learners who can’t be satisfactorily served through traditional programming.

This Objective calls for:

- Obtaining flexible funding that will support the development of an *Adult Literacy Pilot Program* that focuses on learners whose primary goal is a transition to post-secondary education and training and/or employment; such learners include homeless individuals and ex-offenders re-entering the workforce<sup>23</sup> (Also impacts on Objective #3)
- Aggressively pursuing funds for Workplace Education Programs through the Workforce Training Fund and other sources for incumbent workers
- Implementing an Adult Basic Education (ABE) proposal at Springfield Technical Community College to address a 177-applicant waiting list for various stages of ABE training and that will incorporate a college preparation model to move successful students to the next stage of training (Also impacts on Objective #3)
- Establishing new Family Literacy programs that will support life-long learning and replicate successful school-based Family Literacy program models already operating in

---

<sup>21</sup> Reconnecting Massachusetts Gateway Cities: Lessons Learned and an Agenda for Renewal, Brookings Institute February 2007

<sup>22</sup> The Working Poor Families Project, “Strengthening State Adult Education Policies for Low-Skilled Workers” Policy Brief. Summer 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Massachusetts Department of Correction / Hampden County Sheriff’s Department, “GED and Recidivism: 1998 Releases from the Massachusetts Department of Correction.” June 2007.

Hampden County and/or other parts of the state<sup>24</sup> (Also impacts on Goal #1, Objective #3)

- Providing technical assistance on “promising practices” and implementing new models for Adult Literacy

***Estimated Implementation Cost:*** \$400,000 per year x 3 = \$1,200,000

***Anticipated Results:*** New flexible options for ABE, GED and ESOL educational programming and services, and a more job-ready workforce.

### ***Objective 2: Increase Program Capacity of Adult Literacy Providers to Reduce Wait Lists***

There are nearly 600 people on waiting lists for publicly funded adult education in Hampden County and 300 of those are in Springfield. State funded programs need to be expanded.

This Objective calls for:

- Pursuing additional DOE funding for the existing adult literacy providers to add more ABE/GED/ESOL slots and/or increase hours per week for existing slots
- Expanding the capacity of adult literacy providers to provide case management and counseling services that will increase the number of learners transitioning to post-secondary education and training, thereby opening up more slots for learners on the waiting list (also impacts on Objective #3)
- Using the Literacy Works model<sup>25</sup>, coordinate the activities of Springfield’s various learning providers to produce a more integrated alignment of educational programs and services, and ensure a maximum return on investment

***Estimated Implementation Cost:*** \$300,000 per year x 3 = \$900,000.

***Anticipated Results:*** A reduction in the wait list, an increased level of ABE, GED and ESOL services, and a more job-ready workforce.

### ***Objective 3: Increase the Number of Learners Transitioning to One-Stop Career Centers, Post-Secondary Education and other Workforce Programs***

The city of Springfield needs a more integrated delivery system to “connect the dots” and ensure that adult literacy learners have the information and tools to transition to other workforce development programs and services, such as those provided by One-Stop Career Centers and/or post-secondary education and training providers.

---

<sup>24</sup> Massachusetts Family Literacy Consortium (MFLC), “Even Start Family Literacy Program” [www.doe.mass.edu/familylit/mflc.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/familylit/mflc.html)

<sup>25</sup> Cherish Every Child/Davis Foundation, “Literacy Works of Hampden County” [www.cherishspringfield.org](http://www.cherishspringfield.org)

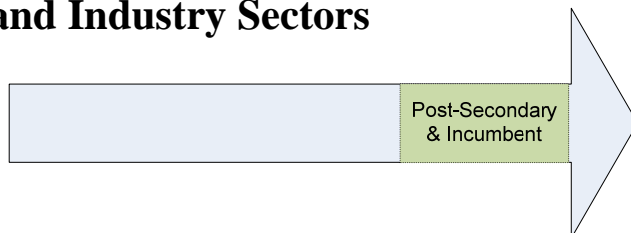
This Objective calls for a full-time Career-Financial Aid Coordinator to:

- Expand capacity of existing college-based transition programs to serve more learners
- Provide training to counselors from One-Stop Career Centers and literacy providers that will connect learners with a variety of service providers to insure that the learners achieve their goals
- Develop an integrated system to transition learners seeking post-secondary education or training to the Career Centers to receive post-secondary guidance and financial aid assistance
- Expand existing and/or create alternate financial aid sources for students who enroll in certificate or career training programs that are less than a semester in duration
- Develop systems whereby learners who attain their GED or high school diploma, and have an interest in post-secondary education or training, are referred to one of the Career Centers where specially trained staff will provide post-secondary advice and financial aid assistance
- Expand existing and/or identify alternate financial aid sources for adult students who enroll in certificate or career training programs that are non-credit and/or less than a semester in duration and therefore not eligible for a PELL grant<sup>26</sup>

***Estimated Implementation Cost:*** \$50,000 per year x 3 = \$150,000

***Anticipated Results:*** Increase transition of learners from literacy programs to further education, training, job search and other workforce development services. This will open up seats for other adult literacy learners and increase the quality and quantity of skilled workers.

#### **IV. Strategic Goal Four: Increase Technical Training in High Growth / High Demand Industry Sectors**



##### ***Rationale***

A new approach is needed to align, support, and expand training efforts to address critical job vacancies in Springfield. Available jobs go begging because of a lack of trained, qualified applicants in key industry sectors. The four sectors that are targeted based on job vacancy data, MA identification as a “critical industry” and the ability to provide large-scale employment opportunities in a broad range of occupational categories, from service to technical<sup>27</sup>, are:

- Health Care
- Precision Manufacturing
- Financial / Business Services
- Human Services Employment

<sup>26</sup> The Working Poor Families Project, “Strengthening State Financial-Aid Policies for Low-Income Working Adults,” Policy Brief. Fall 2007.

<sup>27</sup> Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, “Regional LMI Profile: Annual Profile for Hampden County Workforce Area.” March 2007.

Further, these high growth, high demand sectors lend themselves to working collaboratively in sectoral partnerships between employers and education partners. In addition to these sector strategies, we will also work with employers in other sectors, such as retail and hospitality which as the third largest employer sector in the region not only offer “first job” opportunities, but many also offer career tracks to management training programs for youth and others re-entering the workforce. Additionally, the City will develop strategic and collaborative entrepreneurial initiatives and entrepreneurship education activities that create opportunities for new business formations. PVPC research indicates that Springfield’s economy is continuing to shift to small and very small orientation. The most recent data from 2003-2004 indicates the total number of private sector establishments grew by 5.4%. This suggests a vibrant entrepreneurial environment in the City and supporting and cultivating emerging business may be a source of significant employment growth over time.

Many retail businesses across the city are also actively involved with internship, literacy, and volunteer programs as well as introducing retail as a career option at the high school level. As mentioned previously, the city also needs to capitalize on “Green Space” initiatives to create “green” jobs within the urban environment while also aggressively exploring energy conservation and alternative energy projects to structure training for local residents in new jobs created by such investments and projects.

This plan focuses on these key industry sectors while providing access to training in other projected growth industry sectors such as transportation, construction, etc., to increase higher wage jobs and a technically competent workforce. A focus on business partnerships with the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts, Chambers of Commerce, individual employers, and education and training institutions is vital to effective implementation of the following objectives.

### ***Objective 1: Align and Expand Current Sectoral Training Initiatives to Obtain Greater Efficiencies***

Successful industry-driven training initiatives and pilot programs addressing key workforce needs in health care and precision machining need to be institutionalized and expanded.

This Objective calls for:

- Expanding and connecting existing partnerships in health care that have formed under the CAN DO (Collaborating for the Advancement of Nurses: Developing Opportunities) Initiative, Bay State Health’s Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund grant, Extended Care Career Ladder Initiative (ECCLI), and others
- Increasing the capacity of regional nursing programs to accept additional students by expanding a current CAN DO pilot program aimed at increasing nursing faculty<sup>28</sup>
- Expanding and connecting existing partnerships that have formed related to precision machining under the Regional NetWorks (RENEW) initiative

---

<sup>28</sup> Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development / Commonwealth Corporation, Massachusetts Health Care Chart Book, Fall 2007.

- Increasing funds to build the capacity of RENEW’s current Precision Manufacturing Training Project to train an additional 75 new pipeline workers and 150 incumbent workers
- Developing “Market Manager” expertise within the One Stop Career Centers to better match job seekers to employers within key industry sectors

**Implementation Cost:** \$350,000 per year; for a total of \$1,050,000 over three years.

**Anticipated Results:** The realignment of workforce training priorities, and the development of a more seamless system to address workforce training needs, will increase training and employment opportunities for Springfield residents to fill critical job vacancies.

**Objective 2: Increase Training Opportunities through New and Creative Funding Mechanisms**

New additional training opportunities must be created to harness the expertise of our region’s community and four-year colleges, as well as the niches filled by local community-based organizations to train those not suited for, or able to, participate in college-based education. Additionally, more free tuition training opportunities must be made available to Springfield residents. Public funds are limited and typically run out halfway through a fiscal year; unless state level reforms are considered, many will continue to face obstacles meeting the requirements of traditional financial aid packages<sup>29</sup>. Training programs, such as the regional Westover Job Corps, are underutilized; particularly by Springfield residents aged 16 to 24.

This Objective calls for:

- Creating and funding a *pilot initiative* for a *free tuition training voucher program* to be managed by the One-Stop Career Centers that enables 100 more Springfield residents to be trained in high growth careers
- Creating a new free tuition “*loan forgiveness*” program and/or expanding on the current state Access Grant, Tuition Waiver, MASSGRANT and/or MASSGRANT Performance Bonus Programs to make financial help specifically available to any Springfield resident who wants further education and training
- Supporting the recommendations made by the Working Poor Families Project, which asks states to consider such policy changes as expanding access and eligibility and making other reforms to existing aid programs.
- Developing strategic and collaborative entrepreneurial initiatives and entrepreneurship education activities that will support the expansion of new business formations for Springfield residents.
- Increasing utilization of the regional Job Corps’ technical training by Springfield residents aged 16 to 24.

**Implementation Cost:** \$100,000 per year; for a total of \$300,000 over three years.

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid end note # 35

**Anticipated Results:** Additional new training opportunities will result in Springfield residents obtaining career-directed employment positions in growth sectors, and employers having a skilled workforce to grow their businesses in an innovation economy.

### **Objective 3: Initiate New Employer-Education-Training Alliances to Implement Programs that Address Critical Job Vacancies**

In addition to the initiatives being implemented in the health care and manufacturing sectors, strategies need to be developed to forge new partnerships between businesses and education and training providers; these partnerships would implement training initiatives that address critical job vacancies and current and emerging workforce training needs in the business and financial services, education, and non-profit-human service sectors.

This Objective calls for:

- Developing and funding a new Customer Service Training Program to address the need for an estimated 200-300 call center workers per year in the financial and business services sectors; many of these workers need to have bilingual capabilities
- Developing and funding new incumbent and pipeline training for the Early Childhood Education and Care workforce through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (also reflected in Strategy #1) that supports education and non-profit human service sectors
- Creating and funding a credentialing program that provides a common set of professional career pathway certifications for workers in the non-profit human service sector<sup>30</sup>
- Funding for an already developed proposal to address the emerging need for trained technicians in Echocardiography & Vascular Technology
- Developing “Green Jobs” through local, state, and federal initiatives

**Implementation Cost:** \$200,000 per year; for a total of \$600,000 over three years.

**Anticipated Results:** New training will give major employers the ability to upgrade worker skills, provide smaller and non-profit, human service employers’ access to a larger and more qualified labor pool and position the region for emerging trends in new job opportunities such as through “Green Space” initiatives.

### **Support Services**

This plan should also address transitional barriers that can impede career success, including affordable housing, child care, transportation, and substance abuse issues. These issues must be addressed through effective case management during the educational process, a delineation of the public and private resources available to deal with these barriers, and increased collaboration and referral procedures among support services providers<sup>31</sup>.

---

<sup>30</sup> Providers Council for Caring Communities / The Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers, Inc., “Recruiting and Retaining the Next Generation of Human Service Workers in Massachusetts.” April 2007.

<sup>31</sup> Center for Law And Social Policy (CLASP), “Transitional Jobs: Helping TANF Recipients with Barriers to Employment Succeed in the Labor Market” Allegra Baider and Abbey Frank May 2006 [www.clasp.org](http://www.clasp.org)

## Project Implementation

To be effective, the implementation of this plan will need to be overseen by a Steering Committee which we recommend is appointed by Mayor Domenic J. Sarno to reflect public, community-based and most importantly, private sector representation. This committee will:

1. Set priorities and timelines for plan activities
2. Identify staffing needs
3. Establish a procurement process and allocate resources
4. Report progress to elected officials and funding sources
5. Identify Return on Investment (ROI) measures

## Investment Summary

The following chart summarizes the investments needed for each strategic goal, and components of the workforce that will benefit from implementation of this plan.

<b>TOTAL INVESTMENT*:</b>	Investment Costs	Impacted Workforce Component		
		<i>Emerging</i>	<i>Transitional</i>	<i>Incumbent</i>
<b>\$13,575,400</b>	<i>3 Year Period</i>			
Strategy Goal # 1 <i>Establish Universal Pre-Kindergarten</i>	\$2,770,000	✓		✓
Strategy Goal #2 <i>Improve Youth Education Proficiency and Career Awareness</i>	\$6,605,400	✓	✓	
Strategy Goal #3 <i>Increase Adult Literacy Education Services</i>	\$2,250,000		✓	✓
Strategy Goal #4 <i>Increase Technical Training in High Growth / High Demand Industry Sectors</i>	\$1,950,000	✓	✓	✓

\*Reference Appendix A for Initial Sources of Potential Investments

These strategic goals have emerged from the strong consensus of key business, government and community stakeholders. These goals represent bold thinking on what “ought to be done” rather than “what we can simply afford.” Their success will require leadership and collaboration between the public and private sectors and must be tied to continuous innovation and regular performance measurement. The time is now to accelerate progress in “*closing the skills gap to put Springfield on the Road to Economic Resurgence.*”

## Appendix A Investment Resources

- 1. Establish Universal Pre-Kindergarten.....\$2,770,000**  
*Objective 1:* Implement a High Quality City-Wide UPK Pilot Program, with Streamlined Funding, in Springfield.  
➤ *Source:* MA Department of Early Education and Care  
Line Item 3000-5075.....\$2,160,000
- Objective 2:* Implement Programs to Improve the Skills for the Pre-K Educators.  
➤ *Source:* MA Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund  
REB submitted proposal, March 2008.....\$250,000
- Objective 3:* Implement Family-Centered Literacy Programs for Parents and Children in Pre-K Programs.  
➤ *Source:* MA Department of Education,  
Line Item 7035-0002.....\$360,000
- 2. Improve Youth Education Proficiency and Career Awareness.....\$6,605,400**  
*Objective 1:* Implement Extended Learning Time (ELT) and other Programs to Increase High School Graduation and MCAS Proficiency.  
➤ *Source:* ELT School Community Grants; MA Department of Education Drop-out Prevention Grants.....\$6,035,400
- Objective 2:* Expand Opportunities that Link Students with Internships and Summer Work Experiences.  
➤ *Source:* Private Sector Match of \$800,000 to be combined with sources to be determined.....\$270,000
- Objective 3:* Increase Post-Secondary Education and Training Enrollment and Retention through Strengthened Transitional Programs.  
➤ *Source:* To be determined.....\$300,000
- 3. Increase Adult Literacy Education Services.....\$2,250,000**  
*Objective 1:* Secure New and Flexible Funds for Adult Literacy Programs Tailored to Targeted Populations  
➤ *Source:* MA Department of Education  
Line Item 7035-0002.....\$1,200,000
- Objective 2:* Increase Program Capacity of Adult Literacy Providers to Reduce Wait Lists.  
➤ *Source:* MA Department of Education  
Line Item 7035-0002.....\$900,000
- Objective 3:* Increase the Number of Learners Transitioning to One-Stop Career Centers, Post-Secondary Education and other Workforce Programs.  
➤ *Source:* To be determined.....\$150,000

**4. Increase Technical Training in High Growth/High Demand Industry Sectors...\$1,950,000**

*Objective 1:* Align and Expand Current Sectoral Training Initiatives to Obtain Greater Efficiencies.

- Source: MA Workforce Competiveness Trust Fund.....\$1,050,000  
BayState Health proposal for \$500,000 pending final approval

*Objective 2:* Increase Training Opportunities through New and Creative Funding Mechanisms.

- Source: To be determined.....\$300,000

*Objective 3:* Initiate New Employer-Education-Training Alliances to Implement Programs that Address Critical Job Vacancies.

- Source: To be determined.....\$600,000

## Appendix B      Research Document Listing

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Journal of General Internal Medicine Supplement: “*Journal Supplement Examines Healthcare Consequences of Language Barriers.*” November 2007

<http://www.rwjf.org/pr/product.jsp?id=23381>

State House News Service, “*Report: STATE NEEDS ‘GREATER SENSE OF URGENCY’ TO ADDRESS LAG IN JOB GROWTH.*” Kyle Cheney, November 2007.

Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, “*Demographic Characteristics and Labor Force Attachment of the 55 Years and Older Population in Western Massachusetts.*” Paul Harrington, Neeta P. Fogg, Kevin R. McCabe, May 2007.

Annie E. Casey Foundation, “*States Ranked on the Basis of Child Well-Being for Children in Low-Income Families.*” Sharon Vandivere, William P. O’Hare, Astrid Atienza, and Kerri L. Rivers, November 2007

Committee for Economic Development, “*The Economic Promise of Investing in High-Quality Preschool: Using Early Education to Improve Economic Growth and the Fiscal Sustainability of States and the Nation.*” 2006. [www.ced.org](http://www.ced.org)

Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, “*A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy.*” August 2007.

Wall Street Journal, “*Catch ‘em Young,*” James J. Heckman, January 2006.

The Republican, “*Head Start Struggles to Serve,*” Jo-Ann Moriarity, January 2008.

Center for Labor Market Studies Northeastern University, “*Dropping Out In Springfield and its’ Labor Market Consequences.*” Paul Harrington, November 2007

Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, “*FY 08 and 09, Massachusetts’ State Plan / Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Funding.*” November 2007.

Boston Globe, “*Longer School Day Appears to Boost MCAS Scores.*” Tracy Jan, November 2007.

The Republican, “*Reaching Children Early is Key to Success.*” Craig Moore, November 2007.

The National Economic Development and Law Center (NEDLC): “*THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE CHILD CARE AND EARLY EDUCATION INDUSTRY IN MASSACHUSETTS.*” 2004.

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, “*Families Learn and Grow Together*” Report.

The Working Poor Families Project, “*Strengthening State Financial-Aid Policies for Low-Income Working Adults,*” Policy Brief. Fall 2007. [www.workingpoorfamilies.org](http://www.workingpoorfamilies.org)

## Appendix B      Research Document Listing Cont'd

The Republican,” Stars Align to End Literacy Gap.” Marie Grady, January 2008.  
Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, “*A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy.*”

Early Education for All, *High Quality Pre-kindergarten: An Economic Development Strategy.*  
[www.earlyeducationforall.org](http://www.earlyeducationforall.org)

National Center for Family Literacy, *Research Data.* ([www.famlit.org](http://www.famlit.org))

Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care      , “*Families Learn and Grow Together.*”

Thinkfinity Literacy Network / Verizon Foundation Literacy Program, *Research Data.*  
<http://literacynetwork.verizon.org/Verizon-Literacy-Network-Home.10.0.html>

Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, *NEW REPORT LOOKS AT COST OF "READINESS PROJECT" PROPOSALS AND STATE SPENDING ON EDUCATION.* [www.massbudget.org](http://www.massbudget.org)

Federal Reserve Bank of Boston / New England Public Policy Center, “*Is New England Experiencing a Brain Drain?: Facts about Demographic Change and Young Professionals*”, Discussion Paper 07-3. Heather Brome, November 2007.

US Census Bureau, *American Community Survey Reports for Springfield and Hampden County 2006* <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/index.html>

Providers Council for Caring Communities / The Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers, Inc., “*Recruiting and Retaining the Next Generation of Human Service Workers in Massachusetts.*” April 2007.

Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, “*Regional LMI Profile: Annual Profile for Hampden County Workforce Area.*” March 2007.  
Springfield Technical Community College, *Pell Eligible Student Research Data,*      Fall 2006 to Spring 2007.

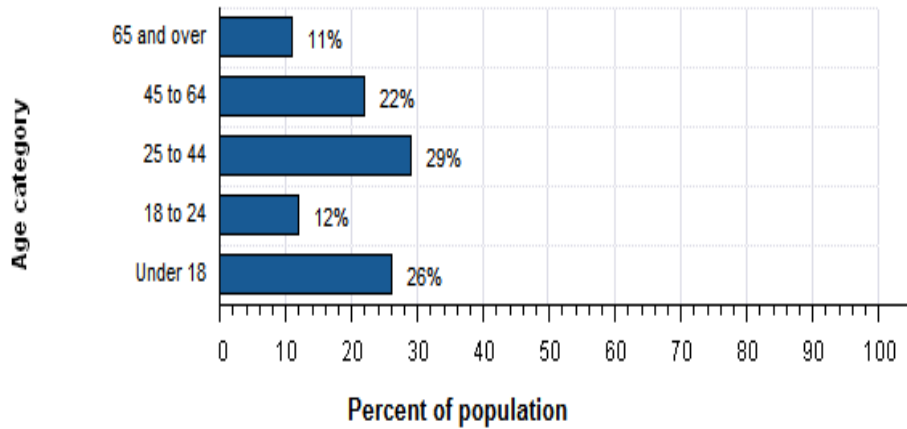
Springfield Technical Community College, Industry Sector Forum Reports:

- Financial Services, Dr. Ira Rubenzahl, Dr. Leona Ittleman, April 2005
- Healthcare (Hospital Sector) Dr. Ira Rubenzahl, Micheal C. Foss, March 2005
- Manufacturing, Dr. Ira Rubenzahl, Julian Tenczar, March 2005

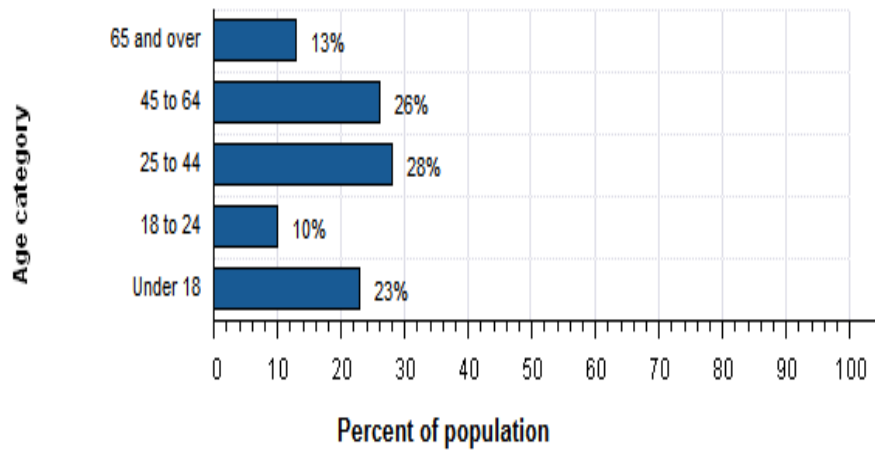
University of Massachusetts, “*Greater Springfield and UMass Amherst: The Power of Connection.*” October 2007.

## Appendix C Demographic and Industry Charts for Springfield

The Age Distribution of People in Springfield city, MA; Springfield, MA-CT Metropolitan NECTA in 2006

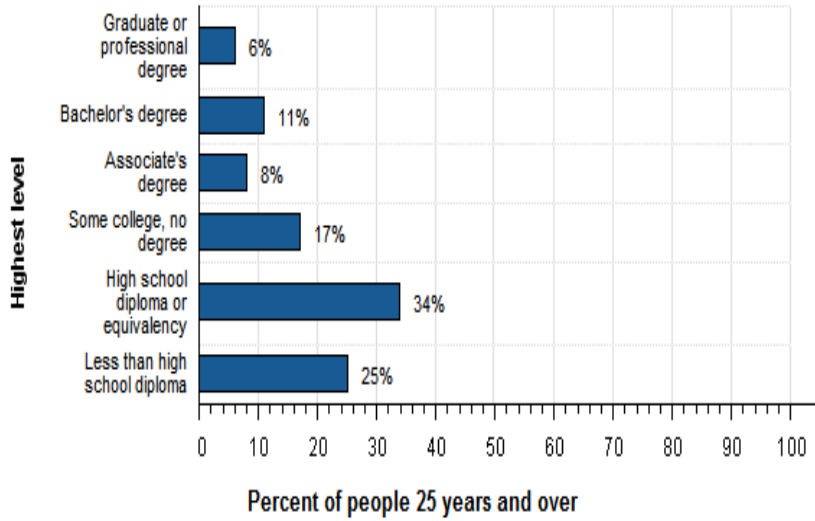


The Age Distribution of People in Massachusetts in 2006



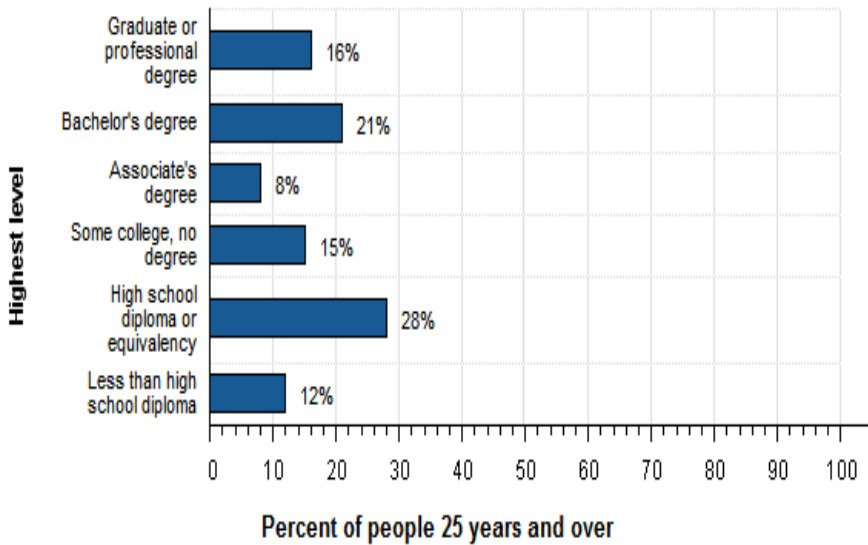
Source: American Community Survey, 2006

The Educational Attainment of People in Springfield city, MA; Springfield, MA-CT Metropolitan NECTA in 2006



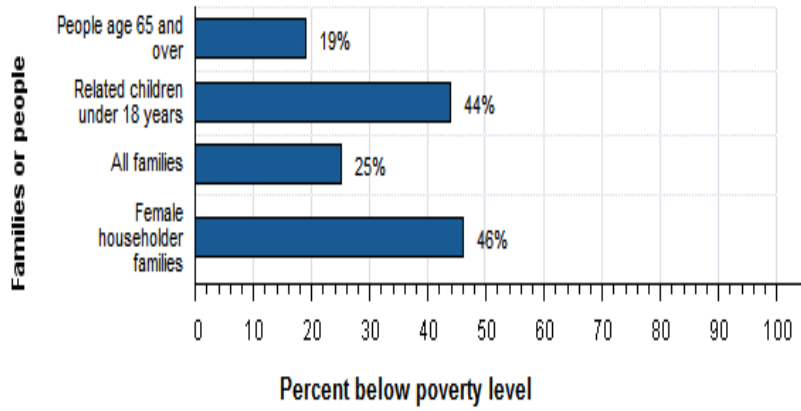
Source: American Community Survey, 2006

The Educational Attainment of People in Massachusetts in 2006



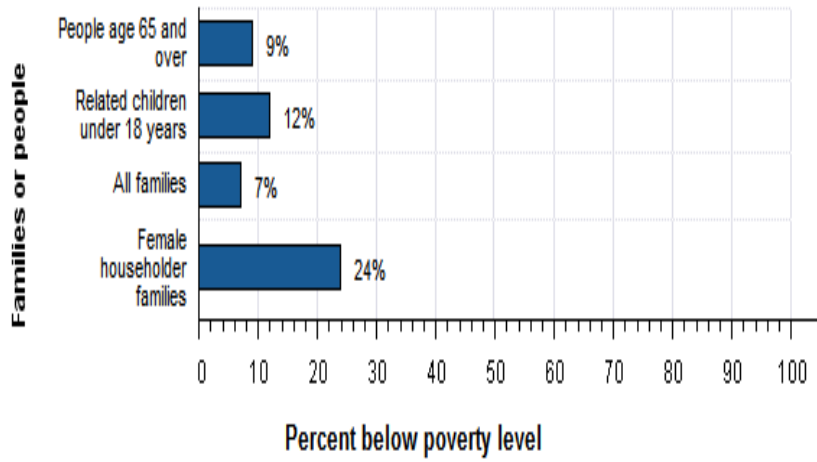
Source: American Community Survey, 2006

Poverty Rates in Springfield city, MA; Springfield, MA-CT Metropolitan NECTA in 2006



Source: American Community Survey, 2006

Poverty Rates in Massachusetts in 2006



Source: American Community Survey, 2006

### Language Spoken At Home

