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Governor Baker Signs Executive Order to Address Workforce Skills Gap

Workforce Skills Cabinet will coordinate between Labor, Education and Economic Development

BOSTON – Governor Charlie Baker signed an Executive Order today to begin the process of bridging the workforce skills gap in Massachusetts, establishing a Workforce Skills Cabinet chaired by the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development, Ron Walker, and comprised of the Secretaries of Education, Housing and Economic Development and others as required. The cabinet is charged with creating and implementing a strategy to develop workforce skills to meet the varying needs of employers in the Commonwealth’s regions, today and in the future.

“A talented workforce and growing economy are inseparable and Massachusetts has an opportunity to capitalize on both by ensuring our workers have the skills to meet the needs of employers in the 21st century economy,” said Governor Baker. “The different regions that make up Massachusetts will require dynamic strategies to address the workforce skills gap, but by increasing our communication and coordination, we can prepare individuals across the Commonwealth for the family-sustaining jobs of the future.”

The Workforce Skills Cabinet will develop goals, objectives and metrics with the input of individuals, businesses, government agencies and community-based organizations and advocacy groups, identifying, recommending and ultimately implementing by region, suggestions to improve alignment amongst state policies, programs, resources to improve workforce skills, job readiness and vocational and educational opportunities, reporting their progress back to the Governor.
“One of the most challenging problems facing the Commonwealth is a skills gap that makes it difficult for employers to fill job openings,” said Lt. Governor Polito. “I am confident this effort will help us identify these obstacles so we can make progress to get people into good-paying jobs so they can support their families and our local economy.”

The Director of Education and Workforce Development, a jointly funded position in the Executive Office of Education, will be elevated to the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and coordinate with the Governor’s Office, the Workforce Skills Cabinet, and with external groups.

“Governor Baker and I know we need to better connect business to the entire workforce development system which includes workforce investment boards, career centers, community colleges and vo-tech schools,” said Secretary Walker. “The Workforce Skills Cabinet will be the vehicle to drive the conversation and action across the three Secretariats to analyze labor needs and expand talent pipelines for the jobs employers need to fill.”

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