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GOVERNOR



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**Governor Baker Announces First Round of Workforce Skills Initiatives**

*New Policies Set to Align State Services, Education and Training Programs with Growing Industries*

**CAMBRIDGE** – Today, Governor Charlie Baker announced the first round of several new policy initiatives developed collaboratively by the Baker-Polito Administration's Workforce Skills Cabinet, aimed at addressing a gap between employers' needs for skilled workers and residents' ability to get training and education for jobs in growing industries in the Commonwealth. Amazon, Inc. hosted the announcement at their facility in Kendall Square after working with the Cabinet to increase the company's presence in Massachusetts.

"The successful model for a coordinated response across state agencies to recruit new investments from Amazon is one we look forward to replicating across the Commonwealth," **said Governor Charlie Baker**. "These new initiatives developed by our Workforce Skills Cabinet streamline efforts to meet business needs, employ our residents, and be demand-driven in spreading economic prosperity throughout Massachusetts."

Seattle-based internet retailer Amazon has worked with the Workforce Skills Cabinet to expand its presence in Massachusetts. The company recently opened new facilities in Stoughton and announced plans to build a new 1-million-square-foot fulfillment center in Fall River, as well as increased its office space in Kendall Square, and

purchased a warehouse robotics company in North Reading in 2012. The company expects to hire hundreds of new employees at its various locations.

“There’s a strong commitment from leaders in Massachusetts government to grow the economy and develop a top-tier workforce, which has attracted our continued investments in the state and increased our ability to recruit the world’s best software developers, engineers and scientists,” **said Braden Cox, director of U.S. Public Policy for Amazon.**

“We hear from employers all the time they have jobs to fill, but cannot find qualified, skilled workers to hire and these initiatives will change that dynamic for employers,” **said Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Ronald Walker, II, Chair of the Workforce Skills Cabinet.** “With alignment of money, planning and performance, we will make sure out state dollars support training programs that work and are focused on the skills gap.”

Aiming to change the way the state engages businesses, the Baker-Polito Administration’s Workforce Skills Cabinet policy initiatives include:

- **Governor’s BizWorks Team:** A team of executive-level staff across the three Secretariats will provide a coordinated point of contact and communication with companies large and small to meet their needs. Businesses can contact 1-800-252-1591 to speak with a member of the Governor’s BizWorks Team.
- **State Grants, Planning and Performance:** The Workforce Skills Cabinet will launch a regional planning process to coordinate education, workforce and economic development, focusing on regional strengths and business needs, share data and evaluations across state programming, and ensure state dollars are supporting programs that are working to address the skills gap.
- **Career and Technical Education Initiative:** The Workforce Skills Cabinet will work to significantly expand access to high-quality career education programs in STEM fields, manufacturing and trades, with a focus on underserved populations and communities.

“Employers from across the Commonwealth have consistently said that access to a skilled workforce is the top factor limiting their growth,” **said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash.** “By coordinating our efforts and deepening the state’s skilled workforce, the Workforce Skills Cabinet is connecting residents to economic opportunity.”

“Economic growth is directly tied to our ability to grow a high quality workforce at all

skill levels, and the Workforce Skill Cabinet helps to bring together education, economic and workforce development leaders to find solutions that align education and training with business demand,” **said Education Secretary James Peyser**. “We are pleased to be able to support proven career technical education programs, especially in our vocational schools and community colleges.”

After Governor Baker established the Workforce Skills Cabinet by Executive Order [in February](#), its Chair, Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Ronald Walker, II, Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash, and Education Secretary James Peyser have worked closely to create partnerships and pathways to respond to businesses’ demand for skilled workers and develop plans to help residents get the skills they need to fill jobs in the Commonwealth.

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