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Workforce Skills Cabinet Kicks Off New Regional Planning Initiative
Seven teams to develop regional plans to address skills gap, spur economic growth

BOSTON – The Baker-Polito Administration today announced a new regional planning initiative aimed at addressing the skills gap by bringing together regional teams of educators, workforce, and economic development professionals to create a statewide blueprint for growth strategies in every region of the Commonwealth.

The regional planning initiative, launched by the Governor’s Workforce Skills Cabinet, will better align work across different state and local agencies to fuel job growth and address employer demand for talent by region. The regional approach will help build strong regional economies to ensure all residents benefit from the state’s economic successes.

Seven regional teams will devise local strategies for a statewide plan used to inform policy-making and investments targeted at strengthening the Massachusetts economy.

“While the Massachusetts economy continues to thrive, these regional initiatives will help ensure the state is continuing our work to match skills with employer demand,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “The regional teams have an opportunity to
specifically tailor our regional economic strengths, needs, and investments in a way that will shape the entire Commonwealth.”

“We believe this work will be important for connecting local and state government to improve economic growth,” Lt. Governor Karyn Polito said. “These regional strategies will help inform our decision-making at the state level, so we can better help communities strengthen their local economies, and make strategic investments as a state to close the skills gap.”

Governor Baker and Lt. Governor Polito announced the new initiative at Worcester Technical High School, along with the Workforce Skills Cabinet - Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash, Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Ronald L. Walker, II and Education Secretary James Peyser.

The regional teams will use local labor market data to identify industries and occupations that are growing in their regions, and develop action steps to address gaps in talent and skills for those jobs. The regional planning initiative is aimed at helping more residents gain credentials, education and job skills in high-demand career pipelines.

“This is the first time the three sectors – education, economic development and workforce – have come together at a regional level to make joint decisions,” said Education Secretary James Peyser. “The goal for this state-regional planning process is to bring together multiple local organizations to create consensus on high-demand industries and occupations, and then identify strategies that regional partners can collectively advance.”

“The Regional Planning Initiative will provide a vital bridge between local and state policy makers on how to maximize our workforce development programs across Massachusetts,” said Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Ronald Walker. “We look forward to furthering these partnerships and helping to ensure that workers and employers have access to resources which fit their unique employment environments.”

“A deep dive into regional data will help us solve outstanding challenges in our workforce pipeline,” said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash. “We need fresh strategies to pull more residents into high-performing community college and training programs, ensure their completion and accelerate matching graduates and qualified workers with open job opportunities.”

Since Governor Baker established the Workforce Skills Cabinet by Executive Order in February, 2015 the three Cabinet Secretaries have worked closely to create
partnerships 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.

Through the Workforce Skills Cabinet, the Baker-Polito Administration has awarded more than $24 million in Workforce Skills Capital Grants to 63 different vocational technical schools, community colleges and traditional public high schools to upgrade vocational technical equipment and expand skills training programs for careers in growing industries, impacting more than 7,100 students per year.

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