



June 17, 2019

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz, Chair, House Ways and Means
The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues, Chair, Senate Ways and Means
The Honorable Denise C. Garlick, Vice Chair, House Ways and Means
The Honorable Cindy F. Friedman, Vice Chair, Senate Ways and Means
The Honorable Todd M. Smola, Ranking Member, House Ways and Means
The Honorable Viriato M. deMacedo, Ranking Member, Senate Ways and Means

Dear Chair Michlewitz, Chair Rodrigues, Vice Chair Garlick, Vice Chair Friedman, Ranking Member Smola, and Ranking Member deMacedo:

On behalf of the Commonwealth's regional workforce boards and career centers, we write to express our appreciation for the many investments in job training, adult education, skill development, career pathways, apprenticeship, and other industry based-sector partnerships in the FY20 budget.

The Massachusetts Workforce Association (MWA) is the voice for the Commonwealth's workforce development system, encompassing an array of partners and stakeholders, including the MassHire Career Centers and Workforce Boards. MWA provides a unified voice for the state's regionally-led workforce development system to ensure it is responsive to the dynamic demands of businesses, job seekers, incumbent workers, and youth throughout the Commonwealth.

The funding recommendations below will provide the strongest support for workforce development in the FY20 budget:

- **YouthWorks (7002-0012):** MWA supports the Senate appropriation of \$15.5 million for YouthWorks (\$15.6 million with earmarks). YouthWorks is a proven model to help teens and young adults get the skills and experience needed to find and keep jobs. By expanding job opportunities for young people, and supporting them in acquiring the skills they need in the workplace, YouthWorks helps to create a pipeline of skilled youth for employers throughout Massachusetts.
- **Learn to Earn (7002-1080):** MWA supports the House appropriation of \$950K for Learn to Earn. Learn to Earn, administered by the Commonwealth Corporation, provides individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs with the supports, skills, and credentials they need to gain and retain employment in occupations for which employers have persistent demand. This program also leverages the regional industry sector partnership model from the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund and adds cohort-based coaching, family-focused supports, and benefits counseling.
- **Advanced Manufacturing (7002-0020):** MWA supports the Senate appropriation of \$2.21 million for a precision manufacturing program administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (\$2.5 million with earmarks). This program supports four regional



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consortiums focused on meeting manufacturers needs through a fully coordinated manufacturing training system across the state. In addition, the training focuses on those who are unemployed, underemployed, and underrepresented populations including veterans, minorities, and women.

- **Pilot Program - Voc-Tech/District High School Partnerships (7035-0001):** MWA supports the House appropriation of \$500K to fund Voc-Tech/District High School Partnerships. This funding, along with a one time planning and implementation grant which has been secured from DESE, will ensure more students throughout the Commonwealth have access to quality career and technical education.

The Commonwealth's workforce boards and career centers are on the front lines in addressing the skills gap that persists in the Commonwealth. Every day they work with employers, community colleges, post-secondary institutions, high schools, nonprofits, and career and technical education programs, to ensure Massachusetts employers continue to grow and benefit from the state's number one resource, its talent.

Thank you for your partnership and support of the state's workforce development system. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tonja Mettlach', written in a cursive style.

Tonja Mettlach
Executive Director
Massachusetts Workforce Association