



PRESS RELEASE
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**Statewide and Regional Business Associations Announce New
Skills Coalition and Policy Agenda**

Statewide and regional business associations from across the Commonwealth have launched the Massachusetts Business Coalition on Skills (MBCS). The new statewide coalition will [advocate for policies that develop the skills of our current and future workforce](#).

The MBCS formed because there are two sides to the skills gap and both can drag job and economic growth. On the employer side, it is difficult to find qualified talent: a 2019 survey by coalition member Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE) found that 73% of Massachusetts employers find it “somewhat difficult” or “very difficult” to find people with the right skills to fill open positions. For workers, new skills are the springboard to job opportunities and growth: a 2016 Pew Research Center survey found that 87% of working adults believe developing new skills throughout their work life will be “essential” or “important” to career success.

Over the last year, members of the Coalition’s steering committee researched, discussed, and refined policy proposals to address both the employer and employee side of the skills gap. The recommendations aim to leverage the state’s entire workforce, not just graduates with 4-year degrees, by creating a statewide standard of essential skills, expanding access to career and vocational technical education (CVTE), and incentivizing employers to provide ongoing skills training to employees.

“The Massachusetts Business Coalition on Skills is a robust, collaborative effort to close the state’s skills gaps, solidifying Massachusetts as the best place to learn, work, and do business. The state’s skills gaps are not only limiting the economic opportunity available to students and the workforce, skills gaps are also hindering the competitiveness of Massachusetts employers. To ensure an equitable economic recovery post-pandemic, the state’s talent and businesses require policy solutions that this new coalition is uniquely positioned to deliver,” said James E. Rooney, President & CEO of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce.

Closing the skills gaps in Massachusetts requires targeted solutions. As part of the coalition’s launch, the [MBCS releases its policy agenda](#) aimed at ensuring every resident can acquire the

in-demand skills needed to be successful in the workforce. The [MBCS's policy agenda](#) includes seven priority areas:

- Create a pathway toward essential skills development
- Modernize Career Vocational Technical Education (CVTE)
- Incentivize employer training initiatives
- Support Massachusetts' ongoing training initiatives
- Set statewide and regional training goals
- Simplify workforce development
- Increase employer engagement.

MBCS Members as of March 2021:

- 1Berkshire
- Amplify Latinx
- Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce
- Black Economic Council of Massachusetts
- Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
- Kendall Square Association
- MassTLC
- Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education
- Massachusetts Business Roundtable
- Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation
- Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Neponset River Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Newton-Needham Regional Chamber of Commerce
- North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce
- One SouthCoast Chamber of Commerce
- Quincy Chamber of Commerce
- Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Somerville Chamber of Commerce
- Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council
- Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce

About the Greater Boston Chamber

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