



“Creating strong regional economies by designing programs that meet the demands of workers and businesses in each region is important to driving economic growth and new job opportunities for our residents.”

— GOVERNOR CHARLES D. BAKER  
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

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Massachusetts leads the nation in generating new jobs. At Commonwealth Corporation, we invest in the skill development of unemployed adults and youth who are entering the labor force so that they are ready to fill those jobs and be a part of our growing economy. In addition, we invest in the skill development of incumbent workers to ensure that Massachusetts businesses remain competitive.

In fiscal year 2015, we awarded more than \$16 million in grants involving 270 unique businesses to train 13,608 incumbent workers through the Workforce Training Fund Program (WTFP). This represents the highest level of funding awarded in a single year since the WTFP was created. We also granted over \$12 million from the Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund (HCWTF) to 55 workforce training projects that will help reduce costs and raise quality of care for patients. With support from our foundation partners we launched a new soft skills curriculum called Signal Success to train over 5,000 youth participating in the YouthWorks program so low-income youth can better find and keep unsubsidized jobs. Because youth wanted more soft skills training, we piloted a school year version of the curriculum which is quickly growing in demand.

We are working with the new administration of Governor Charles Baker and Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, under the leadership of Secretary Ronald L. Walker II, to invest in strategies and programs that have demonstrated success in finding solutions to persistent challenges in the labor market. We appreciate the support and partnership of the many organizations that we have had the pleasure to work with in the past year and look forward to our continued partnership in the future.

**Nancy Snyder**  
President & CEO

**“Commonwealth Corporation has mastered the ability to change people’s lives through skill development and connections to employers. The Baker-Polito administration believes in serving communities and people that have historically not been served. We hope to leverage CommCorp’s expertise with millions of dollars in new grants to help people, who face chronically higher rates of unemployment, find and keep jobs.”**

—SECRETARY RONALD L. WALKER II  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



**“Commonwealth Corporation is a vital resource when it comes to workforce development. The training programs they support produce life-changing career opportunities for employees. In health care, this has an important impact on raising the quality of patient care, along with attention to lowering costs. They are leaders in supporting essential programming for the unemployed and underemployed, and addressing long term skill needs across the state.”**

—LISA KELLY-CROSWELL  
VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN RESOURCES, BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER

## About Us

Our mission is to strengthen the skills of Massachusetts youth and adults by investing in innovative partnerships with industry, education and workforce organizations. We seek to meet the immediate and emerging needs of businesses and workers so both can thrive in a dynamic, demanding economy. We support the development of education and skills training that connect individuals – especially those who are having the most difficulty in this competitive labor market – to real job opportunities.

We are facing two major challenges: (1) Nearly one-third of the labor force is over the age of 55 and will be retiring, leaving a significant talent and succession gap; and (2) by 2018 more than two-thirds of all jobs in Massachusetts will require some post-secondary training beyond high school (The Georgetown University Center on Education and Workforce). Our work helps to ensure that Massachusetts businesses have access to a pipeline of skilled workers and that our state’s residents have pathways to good jobs in our economy.

## Year in Review

The various programs at Commonwealth Corporation work with youth and adults to build skills and secure pathways to a career, and with businesses to up-skill current workers and build a pipeline for future employees. In this year’s annual report we focus on programming in four categories: (1) youth jobs; (2) services for youth at risk; (3) unemployed adults training; and (4) workforce training for businesses.



youth jobs



services for youth at risk



workforce training for businesses



unemployed adults training



## Youth Jobs



### YouthWorks

YouthWorks is a state-funded youth employment program that helps teens and young adults get the skills and experience needed to find and keep jobs. Participants take part in paid short-term work placements during the summer and/or

school year at public, private and nonprofit worksites. As part of the program, they receive training in core soft skills so they can practice professional behaviors and learn how to relate to supervisors and co-workers at their worksites. They also learn how to take the next steps in their education and career pathways. Over the past five years, more than 26,000 teens and young adults from low-income communities in 31 cities have taken part in YouthWorks; in the summer of 2015, 4,489 young people had summer employment through the program.



### Signal Success

[www.SignalSuccess.org](http://www.SignalSuccess.org)

Signal Success is a comprehensive curriculum designed and tested by education and workforce development partners to help young people develop essential skills for future success. Commonwealth Corporation debuted the curriculum in 2013 in response to research conducted with employers, and as a result over 17,000 young people have received systematic instruction in core soft skills while engaging in meaningful future planning. Thanks to foundation support, Commonwealth Corporation has piloted Signal Success in high schools in Boston, Malden and Lowell and developed a capacity-building model that provides assistance and staff training to partner organizations and schools. With school adoption of Signal Success expanding, Commonwealth Corporation is working to strengthen the role of career readiness instruction in helping Massachusetts teens and young adults become future ready.



# Services for Youth At Risk

## Safe and Successful Youth Initiative

Massachusetts implemented the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) in 2011, awarding grants to 11 communities that demonstrated the highest rates of youth violence: Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Springfield, and Worcester. The initiative's core strategy is to reduce recidivism and youth violence by providing intervention and prevention services as well as employment and education services for young men who have a history of violent behavior.

As the technical assistance provider for this initiative, Commonwealth Corporation works to reduce youth violence in SSYI cities by better preparing, educating, and training young men and connecting them to the job market. Providing proven-risk young people with meaningful employment pathways enables them to develop a sense of self-worth, build their confidence and get them on a positive trajectory.

## Partnership with the Department of Youth Services

Commonwealth Corporation partners with the state's Department of Youth Services (DYS) and the Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) to ensure that youth and teens committed to the Massachusetts juvenile justice system have access to high-quality education and employment opportunities.

### We partner on the following programs:

#### Bridging the Opportunity Gap

The Bridging the Opportunity Gap Initiative (BOG) is a set of re-entry programs designed to increase employability for young people committed to DYS. The BOG initiative is comprised of five program options – work-based learning, vocational, arts and cultural, GED/HiSET, and mentoring. Programs occur in the summer and year-round. This past year 312 youth participated in programming. Sixty-two percent of youth completed certification training in the year-round programming, and 54% of participants completed all goal requirements of their participation in the year-round program. Many youth will continue on into the next year of programming in order to meet their goals.

#### Arts InFusion

Arts InFusion is working to expand and integrate the arts into the academic and extracurricular programs for all youth in DYS residential facilities, and build a network of arts-related placements available to DYS youth as they transition back into their home communities. Arts InFusion seeks to place artist-educators in "residencies" within DYS classrooms as well as residential and community-

based program settings. Resident artists collaborate with DYS staff to implement project-based arts programming linked to academic and/or career readiness curriculum goals and standards. In FY15, 16 artists in residence were implemented across the state. A culminating arts event, the "2015 Youth Showcase: Share Your Art, Share Your Voice" was held in May 2015. The Showcase featured 23 youth performers, and 320 pieces of youth-developed artwork for display and sale.

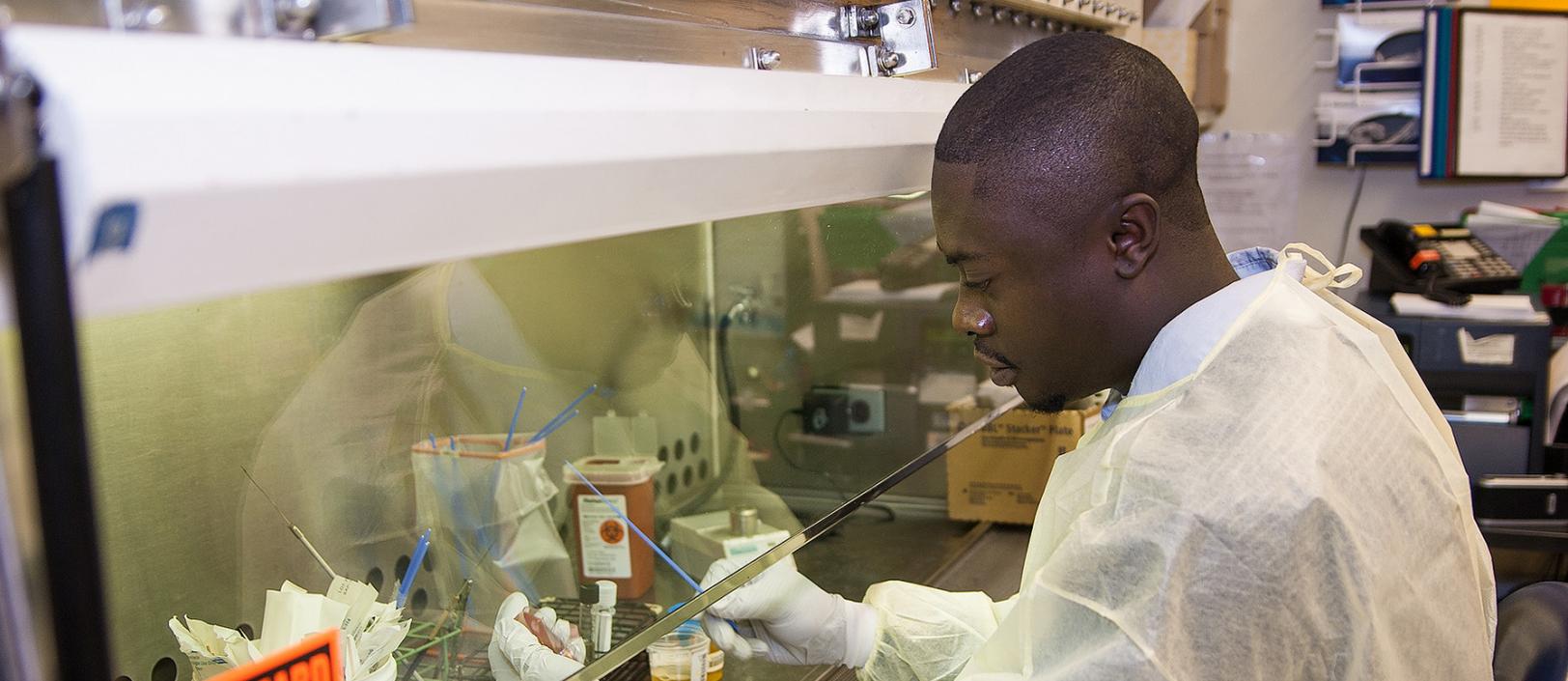


EXCLUSIVE TEES

#### Exclusive Tees

[www.commcorp.org/exclusivetees](http://www.commcorp.org/exclusivetees)

Exclusive Tees is a social enterprise that aims to make a difference in the lives of youth at risk by employing them in a fully operational silk screening business. With instruction from a local silk screening company, youth work as a team to fulfill custom orders. Youth develop skills, build self-confidence, and set goals for success in transitioning to mainstream employment. Exclusive Tees experienced a 1,439% increase in net sales from FY14 (\$1,110.50) to FY15 (\$17,089.76). The implementation of programming like Exclusive Tees promotes positive change in youth at risk by actively engaging and supporting them.



## Workforce Training for Businesses

### **WORKFORCE** TRAINING FUND

### Workforce Training Fund Program (WTFP)

[www.commcorp.org/wtfp](http://www.commcorp.org/wtfp)

The Workforce Training Fund provides grants to Massachusetts businesses to build their employees' skills, improving their ability to succeed in a global economy.

- **The General Program** (grants of up to \$250,000 for customized training) awarded **\$16.2 million** in grants, involving **249 businesses** with more than **13,400** planned trainees.
- **The Express Program** (grants of up to \$30,000 to small businesses to pay 50% of the cost of courses they select from a training directory) granted **\$1.5 million** to **238 businesses** planning to train more than **2,230 employees**.
- **The Regional Training Capacity Pilot Program** (in December 2014 began offering tuition-free seats in ten training programs across the state) trained more than **1,160 participants** from more than **127 businesses**, at a cost of **\$610,000**.

### Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund (HCWTF)

The Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund was established in Massachusetts' health care cost containment law (Chapter 224), which was designed to improve the quality of health care and reduce costs. In the fall of FY2014, we awarded **55 training grants totaling over \$12 million** to organizations across the state to support training efforts that address workforce challenges related to health care reform. The grantees include health care providers as well as workforce investment boards, education and training providers and health care professional/provider associations. Grantees are expected to complete all training, and subsequent evaluation of learning and business impact in the winter of 2017.



# Unemployed Adults Training

## Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF)

In FY14 we awarded **\$4.5 million** in grants to **15 industry sector partnerships** across the state. These grants were designed to build capacity to address the gap between the skills held by unemployed and underemployed workers and the skills needed by employers. Over the three-year grant period the programs planned to train and place 772 job seekers in jobs with employers in targeted industry sectors. In FY15 the state's Department of Transportation contracted with Commonwealth Corporation to serve additional job seekers in pre-apprenticeship programs.

### BY THE END OF FY15:

825

JOB SEEKERS HAD BEEN ENROLLED (96% OF THE CUMULATIVE GOAL OF 860)

726

JOB SEEKERS HAD COMPLETED TRAINING

559

HAD BEEN PLACED IN JOBS WITH AVERAGE WAGES OF \$14.76 PER HOUR.

Placement activities will continue through the spring of 2016.

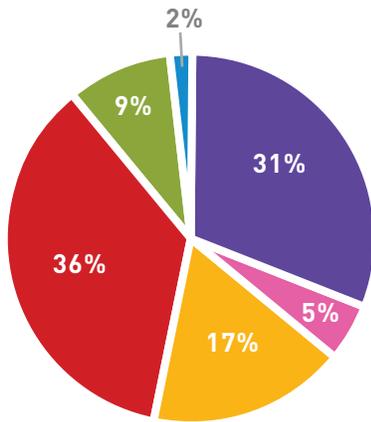


# Research

This year we produced two briefs to inform workforce development professionals, businesses and leaders in the Commonwealth. The Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund Brief focused on trends in workforce challenges we observed through our planning grantees. Health care employers are focusing training plans on several areas including primary care practice transformation, community health workers, residencies and fellowships for clinicians/advanced practitioners, behavioral/mental health integration, and certified nursing assistants. We also produced a summary of the youth employment crisis and findings from our Signaling Success study to further engage employers in helping to prepare young people for work.

In addition, we were awarded several research related grants. We began work on a contract with the Massachusetts Office of the State Auditor to study how health care cost containment efforts are affecting the state's health care workforce. We also received a multi-year contract to evaluate the outcomes and implementation of the Guided Pathways to Success in STEM project for the state's 15 community colleges. This is a U.S. Department of Labor TAACCCT grant funded program.

# Financials



## FY 2015 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Services for Youth At Risk	\$17,857,427
Unemployed Adults Training	\$3,157,046
Youth Jobs	\$9,705,009
Workforce Training for Businesses	\$20,397,698
Program Management	\$4,962,399
General and Administrative	\$1,236,169
Miscellaneous*	\$36,183
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 57,351,931</b>

\* NOT REPRESENTED IN CHART

# Thanks to Partners & Supporters

Commonwealth Corporation is committed to creating private-public partnerships to leverage government funding and broaden our impact. We appreciate the support of the following corporations, foundations, and government agencies.



Frank Reed & Margaret Jane  
Peters Memorial Fund I  
Bank of America, N.A., Trustee



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