

WHAT IS A SECTORAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM?

An industry-specific workforce development program that prepares unemployed and under-employed individuals for skilled positions and places them with employers seeking to fill such vacancies.*

4 Key Features of Sectoral Employment Programs

- Sectoral employment programs are industry-driven. Employers are intimately involved from program design to hiring or promoting training graduates.
- Industry needs are the context for recruitment, screening and training, to find, train and place the best candidates for the jobs in-demand.
- Participants are offered a continuum of services – from preparation for initial job placement to support for continued movement along a career pathway.
- Ongoing support, such as career coaching and case management, ensures employment retention and advancement.

6 Concepts Underlying Massachusetts Sectoral Employment Programs

In Massachusetts, our competitive edge is our skilled workforce.

Given our low population growth and high cost of living, the best way to meet businesses' needs is to invest in the skills of our residents.

Occupations that offer sufficient wages and benefits to support a family require postsecondary education or training.

Nearly half of all jobs in MA require at least this level of education or training.

It takes a long time to grow a skilled worker.

Postsecondary level education and training require literacy, numeracy and English language proficiency. Most people cannot afford to engage in education and training over a long period without working.

Labor markets are primarily regional.

Most individuals seek employment and/or education and training resources within a specific geographic area. Most hiring decisions are made by local managers.

Labor markets rely heavily on relationships.

Hiring managers and HR staff use trusted, proven relationships to mitigate risk. Disconnected youth and low-income adults have difficulty accessing and benefiting from relationship networks.

Successful Sectoral Employment Programs bridge businesses' needs for skilled workers and residents' needs for good paying jobs.

This requires working in and across business, education, government and community cultures.

4 Core Elements of Massachusetts' Approach to Sectoral Employment Programs

Demonstrated Impact

- For participants - includes skill and credential acquisition, a job or a better job (higher wage or better benefits)
- For businesses - may include improving retention or reducing vacancy rates in key occupations
- For the labor market - new course capacity, new referral relationships, changed employer practice

Partnerships

- Bring together complementary expertise, resources, capacity and authority
- Include businesses, education and training providers, community-based organizations, workforce boards and career centers
- Each partner makes a specific commitment and communicates what they hope to gain

Targeted Sectors and Occupations

- Evidence of current or projected unmet business demand for skilled workers
- Potential to address needs of specific populations and opportunity for entry and advancement (increased pay for increased skills)
- Relevant to a region's workforce development and/or economic development priorities

Capacity Building

- For our grantees:
 - (1) One-on-one technical assistance
 - (2) Learning community
- For businesses and service providers in targeted sectors:
 - (1) Targeted program investments
 - (2) Publications
 - (3) Workshops
 - (4) Tools, resources and learning networks

4 Tips for Local Program Designers

1

Research potential sectors thoroughly. Look for sectors that (1) are adding workers or are large and have significant replacement needs due to turnover or retirement; (2) have advancement opportunities (increased pay for increased skills); and (3) have particular skill and workforce needs that are a potential match with your participant pool.

2

Identify target occupations. Look for (1) sufficient demand for workers to make it worthwhile; (2) skill and work experience requirements that are attainable by your participant pool within a reasonable period; and (3) no requirements that will present an insurmountable barrier for your participant pool.

3

Identify local employers in the sector. Target employers that (1) can articulate a workforce development strategy; (2) are willing to share information about hiring requirements and how they recruit, train and advance workers; (3) are aware they have workforce needs that they cannot meet with their current sourcing strategies; (4) have workforce needs that are aligned with your organization's mission; and (5) are willing to partner with you to develop program design, play a role in program delivery, and hire or find jobs for program graduates.

4

Inventory your own capacity. Determine whether your organization and your partners have: (1) expertise in preparing individuals for the target occupations; (2) cultural competence and expertise in providing work readiness services to the target population; (3) capacity to provide credentials or other certifications required for employment in the target occupations; (4) capacity to provide career coaching and case management services contextualized to the target sector and occupations; (5) capacity to design and conduct recruitment and screening for interest, abilities and other requirements of the target occupations; and (6) expertise in job development and job placement.

Massachusetts' primary Sectoral Employment Program is the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund. We have other Sectoral Initiatives focused on helping businesses maintain a competitive edge through skill enhancement for current employees including the Workforce Training Fund Program and the Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund. For more information, please visit our website: www.commcop.org