

PRESS RELEASE

Baker-Polito Administration Awards Learn To Earn Program Design Grants

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Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

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BOSTON, MA – *Funding will help organizations based in Worcester, Holyoke, Lawrence, Boston, and Lowell design programs that connect unemployed or underemployed individuals receiving public assistance to high demand career pathways that support increased income and economic stability*

Boston, MA – Today, the Baker-Polito administration awarded initial Program Design funding to five organizations as part of the Learn To Earn (LTE) initiative. LTE seeks to build career pathways models that also support individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs to secure and keep employment in occupations for which employers have persistent demand.

“These flexible workforce grants can get at the core issues creating barriers to employment for many families in our state such as child care, transportation, and housing,” said **Governor Charlie Baker**. “Not only do they have the potential to be life changing for those who participate and their families, but they will also fill pressing skills gaps in high demand occupations and help fuel economic expansion.”

“The organizations chosen for this work have a proven track record of connecting at-risk populations to sustainable career opportunities,” said **Lieutenant Governor Karen Polito**. “We’re really looking forward to working with them on innovative solutions to some of the most intractable problems in workforce development and examining how to scale those which are most effective.”

The Learn To Earn grant program was designed by the Secretariats of Education, Labor and Workforce Development, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Economic Development with support from agencies such as the Department of Transitional Assistance to align education, economic development, and workforce policies, and to strategize around how to meet employers’ demand for skilled workers in each region of the Commonwealth. The program leverages a regional industry sector partnership model and adds cohort-based coaching, family-focused supports, and benefits counseling.

Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Rosalin Acosta noted “Learn To Earn is a cross secretariat initiative which will help participants increase their income, increase their families’ stability, and meet employer needs for talent. It aligns the employment priorities of the Workforce Skills Cabinet, the resources and expertise of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Housing and Economic Development, and regional workforce stakeholders across the Commonwealth.”

“The Learn to Earn initiative bridges the gap between work and education while providing individuals with employment opportunities in high-demand occupations,” said **Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders**. “This initiative continues to develop a stable, well-trained workforce for individuals across the Commonwealth.”

According to **Secretary of Education Jim Peyser**, “The goal of these grants is to give Massachusetts residents educational opportunities that will lead to family-sustaining careers by building up their skill sets through targeted education and training programs that will set them up for success in good-paying jobs with a future.”

“These awards are the result of close, cross-secretariat collaboration to increase coordination and will have positive impact on the talent pipeline in Massachusetts,” said **Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash**. “We are pleased to support programs that will train unemployed and underemployed residents in high-growth sectors, including the culinary arts, healthcare and advanced manufacturing across the Commonwealth.”

The grant program is administered by Commonwealth Corporation, Massachusetts’ quasi-public agency focused on workforce development, on behalf of the Learn-to-Earn Interagency team and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). “Learn To Earn holds the potential to correct perverse policy incentives that prevent people who want to work more from doing so,” said **Commonwealth Corporation President and CEO Dr. J.D. LaRock**.”

The Learn to Earn Interagency Team received 30 proposals for this initiative and is awarding Program Design grants to 5 partnerships totaling \$111,748.00. Program Design grants will be awarded for three months, to be followed by Program Implementation grants of up to 2 years for an additional total of \$1,538,252; they are not re-occurring.

The following is a complete list of the grant recipients awarded Learn-To-Earn grants today:

Boston

New England Center for Arts & Technology (NECAT) was awarded \$21,572.28 to help design a program that will provide training to prepare participants for Prep Cook, Line Cook, and Baker positions in the culinary industry. NECAT will be incorporating financial coaching and soft skills training into their program and will look into cliff effect issues like wage progression as well as regional coordination issues within the food industry.

Holyoke

Holyoke Community College was awarded \$20,432.00 in program design funding to prepare participants for Medical Assistant positions in Health Care fields. They will focus on strategies for recruitment, basic skills remediation, and expansion of capacity to deliver their curriculum through non-traditional modalities.

Lawrence

Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) was awarded \$25,000.00 in program design funding to prepare Head Start and Early Start parents for CNC Machinist positions in manufacturing. MVWIB is looking to build upon the success of the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium and are proposing to add on subsidized work experience and basic welding components to their advanced manufacturing program.

Lowell

UTEC, Inc. was awarded \$25,000 in program design funding to provide training to prepare incarcerated populations in culinary training. UTEC will be examining ways in which they can help young adults with histories of criminal and or gang involvement to secure sustainable employment through a case management system as well as through strong local business partnerships.

Worcester

City of Worcester and Central MA Workforce Investment Board were awarded \$19,743.58 to provide training to prepare participants for Pharmacy Technician positions, and will be developing a registered pre-apprenticeship program which will connect individuals with significant social barriers to these high priority regional occupations.

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EOLWD manages the Commonwealth’s workforce development and labor departments to ensure that workers, employers, and the unemployed have the tools and training needed to succeed in the Massachusetts economy.

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