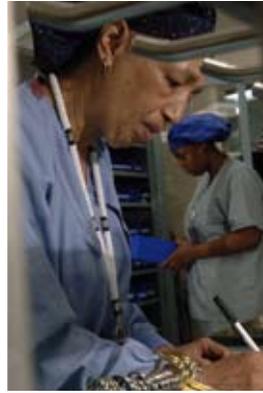


THE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS GROUP



Profiles in Workforce Development

Living in Massachusetts is expensive. The cost of housing, childcare, food, transportation, and health care add up. Many families struggle to support themselves.

Helping families reach economic self-sufficiency—the financial minimum which allows families to live and work independently, without public or private assistance—is central to the fight against poverty.

In Boston, the minimum required to support a basic standard of living for a two-parent family with two children is \$54,612. In Springfield, the minimum for that same family is \$42,844.

Without training and education, many workers will never reach these income levels. Workforce development programs are a way to help.

The impact of workforce training and education is considerable. Increased income and professional advancement are discrete outcomes of successful workforce development systems.

Other significant benefits of workforce development include: providing low-wage workers access to professional networks, postsecondary education, and knowledge about career paths; and building individuals' self-confidence and drive to succeed.

The snapshots that follow illustrate the profound effect of workforce development on employers, workers, and their families.

The Workforce Solutions Group advocates for an effective workforce development system that increases workers' skills, advances families to self-sufficiency, and promotes job creation and economic growth.

As part of this work WSG convened eight regional hearings that brought together more than 700 workers, employers, educators and activists to discuss their experiences with the workforce development system.

The result was the Workforce Solutions Act of 2005, a package of targeted investments and systemic reforms, many of which were incorporated into the 2006 Economic Stimulus Bill. The legislation gives workers the skills required to get well-paying jobs and business the skilled employees they need in order to grow and prosper in Massachusetts.

THE WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS GROUP is led by

MCAN





Corinne Desimone

Hometown: Lynn

Job: Billing Specialist, Mt. Auburn Hospital

Salary: \$34,000 per year

Training: Medical Professional Services, Inc. Medical Assistant Program

"Training and employment have changed every aspect of my life. What I do now is not just work; I enjoy it and feel confident in my skills on the job."

Keisha Mimms

Hometown: Salem

Job: Customer service representative for North Shore Medical Center

Salary: \$14.15 per hour

Training: MediClerk Program; currently taking prerequisites for nursing program at North Shore Community College

"MediClerk allowed me to get a stable job (\$10 per hour). The additional training I have received on the job has increased my pay to \$14.15 in only two years."



Kim Morgan

Hometown: Sudbury

Job: Registered Nurse

Salary: \$22.50-\$23.50 per hour

Training: RN Associate's degree from Becker College

RN Refresher Course – Boston College through Department of Employment and Training

"I am a single parent, and my new income is incredible, along with a huge future filled with many opportunities."



Teresa Aiello

Teresa Aiello earns \$12 per hour as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at St. Joseph Nursing Home in Brockton. To make ends meet, she works three jobs. Yet, recognizing the importance of training, education, and organizing to improve her job prospects and her salary, she makes the time to advocate for workforce development programs.

Teresa testified at a regional forum on workforce development last year and expressed the importance of establishing health care career ladders, training, ESOL, and education to help people in her position advance and to help meet the state's need for more health care workers. She also testified at a State House hearing on workforce training funding and legislation.

As part of the Brockton Interfaith Community and co-chair of its Jobs Committee, Teresa has organized for more ESOL classes, created career ladder programs for nursing assistants, and created opportunities for workers to get into union apprenticeship programs. She helped organize her nursing home to participate in the state's Extended Care Career Ladder Initiative that helps CNAs obtain more training and wage increases. She also helped develop a job training proposal with the Brockton Workforce Investment Board that trained immigrants to move forward in health care occupations.

Teresa recognizes the need for more training and ESOL for health care workers to help immigrant nurses become certified to work here in the U.S. and to help nursing assistants move up. Teresa has completed CNA I and CNA II certifications in addition to HIV case management and a certificate in human services and health management, yet she is still paid only \$12/hour. Teresa believes more can be done.

"I love my nursing assistant job, but I want to move up the ladder in my career, and I'm looking to better my situation."

"I would like to encourage the state to establish a health care job training program to help more immigrants become nurses and contribute their skills and knowledge to our diverse community. I invite the next governor to help make this dream come true."

Toddy Anderson

When Toddy Anderson found Partners in Career and Workforce Development (PCWD) in November 2004, she had been homeless for nearly a year.

Medical issues, both her own and her family's, had caused her to lose her job and her apartment, and she was living in a shelter in Boston with her nephew and niece, of whom she had legal custody.

Toddy wasn't about to give up, though, despite the odds stacked against her. She knew she wanted to go back to school. She knew that she needed to find a good job. And while she knew she had to rely on herself, she also knew she would need help. So she started looking. A referral from Project Hope led Toddy to PCWD, a program operated by Partners HealthCare to help low-income Boston residents enter jobs in three of its hospitals (Brigham and Women's, Massachusetts General, and Spaulding Rehabilitation hospital), advance up the health care career ladder, and address shortages in nursing, radiology technology, and other allied health fields. Toddy hasn't looked back since.

The PCWD program gave Toddy what she hadn't been able to get for herself—an open door to training, job placement, and access to a health care career path. PCWD provided an internship at the hospital and career coaching to help Toddy define and attain her goals.



Before Toddye lost her job and her apartment, she had been in medical billing and worked in administrative positions in health care. She was barely making ends meet. Today, she has a full-time, permanent position with benefits in the pediatric neurology department at Massachusetts General Hospital. Her supervisor supports her ambitions, and Toddye has a flexible schedule that allows her to attend college. She recently finished her first semester at Bunker Hill Community College, where she is taking pre-requisite courses to enter nursing training. Toddye has also moved into her own apartment in Dorchester. She continues to receive support from Project Hope and was nominated by the shelter to receive a college scholarship through the One Family Scholars program.

"Through PCWD, I was able to get the support I needed to succeed. Everywhere I went, there were people who were willing to take the time to help me and provide information and resources that I might not have seen and didn't have time to look for.

"There were five people at my homeless shelter who also tried to pursue education and training, but all of them have dropped out except for me. I worked hard, of course, but the support and resources I received also helped me overcome the many obstacles in my way. Today, I am a board member for Homes for Families, and I encourage others not to give up on their dreams and tell them to pursue education and training. I think I am an example that it can be done.

"If I could say anything to the next governor, I would ask him or her to help people understand that education really is the only road out of poverty, and then provide people with the assistance and support they need to access this road."

Edward Nixon

Two years ago, Edward Nixon was sitting at home in his office in Roxbury when he received a fax asking if he would be interested in participating in an automotive training program. "It must have been divine intervention," says Nixon. "That was exactly what I needed." Nixon called immediately to sign up. He was told that PACE, the SkillWorks-funded Partnership for Automotive Career Education, would be starting in about a year and that he would be called.



About 12 months later, he received a call to register for the training program. He went down to the Urban League, filled out an application, interviewed, took a few tests, and was eventually accepted into the PACE program.

Nixon was not new to the automotive field. He had previously worked at a shop in Roslindale, but he did not feel like he was going anywhere, and he did not feel like he was learning.

The PACE program appealed to him because he could build his skills and eventually get a better job. Nixon completed two semesters of automotive training at Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology over the next year and was hired by Sullivan Tire before he even finished the training.

According to Nixon, the PACE program has expanded his horizons.

"The PACE program motivated me and helped me learn. The PACE program helped me make connections between the classroom and the workplace and apply what I was learning in class on the job. I got to be more skilled and more knowledgeable, and I developed the drive to learn more. At my old job, I never thought about becoming ASE certified or continuing my education. My boss wouldn't support me to do those things, either. At PACE and at Sullivan Tire, they really support and push me to go to class and help me think about an automotive career path."

These days, Nixon aims high.

"I want to go back to school and get my Associate's and my Bachelor's degree in automotive technology. I want to earn all eight ASE certifications and become a master technician. Maybe I'll teach automotive classes one day. I think I have a real talent for explaining things to people.

Adriana Cristina Morales



Hometown: Holyoke

Job: CNA, Heritage Hall South

Salary: As a CNA \$9.00/hr; as an LPN, 21.85/hr

Training: CNA certification, ESOL classes, GED, LPN; also, classes through Holyoke Community College, including writing/reading English, psychology, English 101, English composition, biology, human development

"Not only has this education benefited me professionally but in all of my life as well. My husband and I are about to purchase our first home."



Christine Tower

Hometown: North Adams

Job: Secretary

Salary: \$8.50 per hour

Training: GED program, resume writing

"It has allowed me to have a better lifestyle and to have a good job!"

"It has also helped me do the things I wasn't able to do, such as pay to take the GED."

Jackson Derolus



Hometown: Roslindale

Job: Taxi driver

Salary: \$400-\$500 per week

Training: Partnership in Automotive Career Education (PACE), a SkillWorks training partnership; currently, seeking a placement with a Volvo dealership.

"It has made me more curious about the automotive repair industry."



Betsy Ackerman

Hometown:
Easthampton

Job: Restorative CNA,
SunBridge Healthcare

Salary: \$12.79 per hour

Training: CNA II training including an in-depth focus on the aging process, death and dying, and restorative care

"Now I really look forward to each day at work. I could not have qualified for my new position if I hadn't become more educated and learned how to conduct myself differently and more positively."

Jim Schaefer



Hometown:
Sunderland

Job: Waste and surplus manager, UMass Amherst

Training: Labor/management workplace education courses, communication courses, courses on managing workplace diversity

"I would not be a surplus manager now without the support of supervisors and head janitors who allowed me to take classes. These courses made all the difference."



Samuel Valle

Hometown: Revere

Job: Janitor/
Housekeeping

Salary: \$560 per week
from two jobs

Training: ESOL, computers, and literacy classes with the SEIU 615 and Voice and Future Fund, political activism and steward training

"It has given me more confidence and credibility. I understand better the problems and challenges of the union and the nation. I feel better about myself. I can communicate better in English."

"If I could talk to the next governor, I would say, 'Fund this program. It teaches people and supports them and helps them access training that they wouldn't be able to afford on their own. The PACE program helps you with the basics and then supports you as you advance.' And that's what I want to do—advance."

Amos Wanjiru



Amos Wanjiru, a native of Kenya now living in Lynn, is a recent graduate of the E-team Machinist Job Training Program in Essex County sponsored by ECCO and the IUE/CWA Local 201. This program trains and prepares students to get jobs as entry level machinists.

Amos heard about this program while he was working as a resident care associate helping to care for people with Alzheimer's, dementia, and other memory impairments. Amos wanted to explore other career options and improve his family's standard of living. He learned that an E-Team graduate could start at \$12 an hour and earn increases from there.

Motivated by the opportunity to learn a new skill and earn a better wage, Amos applied himself to the training program four days a week while working full time and caring for his family. Recognizing that adult students have multiple responsibilities, the E-Team curriculum also focuses on time management, money management and other life skills. A counselor is always available to work with students.

"I feel like this training has been extremely valuable for me. I learned a lot about the machining industry as well as about basic skills for daily life. Skills like conflict resolution, public speaking and attitude adjustment have proven not only useful at work, but at home and in my community. Successfully completing the machinist training program has inspired me to challenge myself even more."

"At the same time, I feel that there is still room to improve the training that future classes of E-Team machinist trainees will receive. We had excellent learning materials and resources, but the program needs to constantly update our training and curriculum to reflect the rapidly changing industry. We need to adapt to our competitors in China and elsewhere. We need to learn the latest technologies and learn to use high tech equipment."

"All of this requires even greater investment in training like this that helps workers compete in the job market and helps businesses compete in the global economy."

"I urge the next governor and the state legislature to increase funding for this program and others like it and to invest more resources in making the industry and its people competitive."

The Workforce Solutions Group is a SkillWorks-funded coalition. **SkillWorks**, the largest public/private investment in workforce development in Boston's history, is an effort to create a workforce development system that helps low to moderate income residents move to family-sustaining jobs and helps employers find and retain skilled employees.

To connect with **SkillWorks: Partners for a Productive Workforce**, please visit www.skill-works.org or

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