

# SkillWorks:

## Partners for a Productive Workforce



### SkillWorks' mission is to:

- Help low-skill, low-income residents move to family-sustaining jobs, and
- Help employers find and retain skilled employees.

### How SkillWorks Works



SkillWorks convenes philanthropy, government, community organizations, and businesses to improve workforce development in Boston and across Massachusetts. SkillWorks supports skills training in partnership with employers and community organizations; capacity building; and policy advocacy aimed at long-term systems change.

### SkillWorks 3.0: Access for All & the Completion Agenda

SkillWorks will embark upon a new phase of work in 2014, aiming to improve the workforce system's effectiveness and efficiency and significantly improve economic outcomes for job and skill seekers, with a priority focus on those in Greater Boston who are low-income and low-skilled.



### Priorities (2014-2018)

- 1) Build a more efficient and effective pipeline that connects skilled workers to employers.**  
Assess, strengthen, and expand tested pathways to career advancement through education and training partnerships that make it easier for workers to gain skills and credentials needed by employers.
- 2) Increase access to training for hard-to-serve individuals.**  
Identify, develop, implement, and sustain system-level solutions to persistent barriers so that more individuals will clear the hurdles that stand in the way of self-sufficiency.
- 3) Achieve greater impact and scale by expanding the reach of SkillWorks' learnings.**  
Strengthen workforce training providers and practices, improve connections with and among employers, and drive change in key industries to benefit low-wage, lower-skilled workers.
- 4) Increase the level and flexibility of funding for workforce services.**  
Invest in research and advocacy, and increase funder collaboration to support a broader, stronger, and better aligned base of public and private investments in education and workforce systems in the Commonwealth.

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## The Work Ahead: Strategies for Impact

SkillWorks 3.0 investments are designed to achieve **high impact**, to have **potential for growth** and scalability, and to be **more nimble**, building on previous years' accomplishments and lessons learned.

### Scale Effective Approaches, Broaden Impact, and Reduce Barriers

- Invest in programs that help greater Boston residents find family-sustaining employment and help businesses meet workforce needs. Develop innovative strategies that address gaps in the skills training pipeline.
- Support and enhance college navigation and career coaching to so more working adults can complete post-secondary credentials and obtain middle-skill jobs.
- Address barriers to training and employment for under-served populations.
- Use technology to increase the number of working adults who can obtain education and training in a more flexible and accessible environment.

### Document and Promote Learning and Best Practices

- Launch and support a regional network of workforce providers and create opportunities for professional development and technical assistance to strengthen the field.
- Identify and promote standards of practices through peer to peer learning groups. Recognize and support providers that adopt standards, pilot new approaches, and implement effective practices.
- Convene employers to generate common understanding of critical workforce needs and promote adoption of best practices for hiring, training, retention, and advancement of entry-level workers.



## Improve Public Systems and Strengthen Advocacy for Workforce Development

- Advance system-wide change that enables skilled workers to better connect with employers and helps them advance to better-wage jobs.
- Improve workforce policies and sustained funding for training and education programs through proactively shaping and implementing strategic advocacy campaigns.
- Cultivate and strengthen advocacy capacity among a broader coalition of collaborative funders, staff, providers, and employers to mobilize around key workforce development policy priorities.
- Communicate the value of the workforce system to employers, workers, and the community, and identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.

## Maximize Funder Leadership and Public and Private Investments for Long-Term Results

- Share resources and coordinate funding and outcome metrics, with a focus on aligning philanthropic and public resources for workforce training.
- Convene a learning forum to build resources for and knowledge and capacity of workforce funders and other leaders.
- Facilitate alignment and collaboration by expanding SkillWorks' leadership to include more philanthropic and business members.

**SkillWorks**  
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