

Boston Private Industry Council Talent Pathway Initiative

Through a strategic planning process conducted in 2002-2003 the PIC identified two critical trends in the Boston labor market:

- The share of jobs that require a college diploma are growing rapidly in the Greater Boston economy, and
- Labor supply is decreasing with the only growth among foreign immigrants, who tend to either be in the high end or the low end of the skill continuum;
- Outputs from post-secondary institutions in Boston and Massachusetts are not well-aligned with labor market demands.

From the strategic planning process, the PIC identified the development of talent pathways through post-secondary education as a priority for the organization over the next five to seven years. Through the talent pathway project, the PIC is working with business, community and education partners to create work and learning pathways through college that prepare Boston's youth and adults for well-paying, high demand occupations in Boston's knowledge-based industries. In addition, one of the policy and research priorities is to document a current baseline for post-secondary success for youth and adults in Boston and to track successful practices that lead to college and career success in high demand occupations. The third component of the project is the development of a career awareness campaign that will target 9th and 10th graders, adult career changers and incumbent workers, providing information about the top 50 careers in the Boston area and post-secondary programs to prepare for those careers.

The project builds on existing partnerships and civic investments being made by businesses to provide opportunities for low-income youth and adults, including school partnerships, summer jobs, school-to-career programs and adult skill development efforts. The talent pipeline will deepen and extend these programs with the goal of college enrollment and retention, along with a multi-year employment and work-based learning experience with a participating business.

The PIC is fifteen months into a college retention pilot with 24 students and two hospitals (MGH and Brigham and Women's Hospital) which we are expanding to 40 students and five hospitals (adding Beth Israel Deaconess, New England Baptist and Children's). This project was initially funded with a state grant and business commitments to hiring and access to scholarship and tuition reimbursement programs. We are continuing the program with Boston Foundation and other operating funds. We are launching a college retention program in financial services, starting with five businesses that are interested in leveraging their investments in school-year internships and summer jobs (Blue Cross Blue Shield, Federal Reserve Bank, State Street Financial Services, Sovereign Bank and Citizens Bank). This project is being funded through expanded state funding and business commitment to hiring and scholarships. In the area of research, we recently completed a study with the Center for Labor Market Studies looking at the alignment of the Boston job market with post-secondary outputs and we are starting a study using National Student Clearinghouse data to track the semester by semester college activities of graduates from the Boston Public Schools, classes of 1998-2006. We are funding the research projects through Carnegie and city dollars, with the possibility of Boston Foundation dollars as well.