

#WSGSummit2026

17TH ANNUAL

MA JOBS AND WORKFORCE SUMMIT

*The Promise of Work:
AI, Talent, and Opportunity in Massachusetts*



OCTOBER 1, 2026



9 AM - 3 PM



NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE,
HAVERHILL, MA



THE WORKFORCE **SOLUTIONS** GROUP

EMPath (Economic Mobility Pathways)
I Have a Future
Massachusetts Action for Justice
Massachusetts AFL-CIO
Massachusetts Association for Community Action

Massachusetts Business Roundtable
Massachusetts Workforce Association
SkillWorks: Partners for a Productive Workforce
United Way of Mass Bay

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Schedule

9:00 AM Registration & Networking

Light breakfast sponsored by Commonwealth Corporation

10:00 AM Summit Welcome

Tim Sullivan, Project Director, Workforce Solutions Group

10:05 AM Opening Fireside Chat

Speakers:

- Dr. Lane Glenn, President, Northern Essex Community College
- Dr. Aisha Francis, President, Franklin Cummings Tech

10:35 AM What Workforce Policy Should Deliver in a Changing Economy

Keynote Speaker:

- Brooke DeRenzis, President and CEO, National Skills Coalition

11:20 AM Growing Massachusetts: Finding Talent in a Shrinking Labor Market

Moderator:

Secretary Lauren Jones, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Panelists:

- Chiderah Okoye, Managing Director, Transform Power Systems
- Emmanuel Owusu, Executive Director, ABN
- Pablo Suarez, Senior Researcher, Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation
- Jerry Rubin, Author, Fellow, Eastern Bank Foundation

Massachusetts' competitive strength has always been its talent, yet employers statewide continue to face challenges in hiring. An aging population, slowing labor force growth, outmigration, and federal immigration uncertainty are making it increasingly difficult for employers to find the talent they need to grow. At the same time, employers have significant opportunities to tap new and underutilized talent pools while rethinking how they recruit, develop, and retain workers. This conversation will explore what Massachusetts must do to expand its workforce, strengthen talent pipelines, and remain economically competitive over the next decade.

12:15 PM Lunch, Networking and Awards

Kathie Mainzer Award

Jerry Rubin

Legacy of Legislative Leadership Award

Senator Pat Jehlen

Employer of the Year Award

Beth Israel Lahey Health

Schedule

1:10 PM **Preparing the Next Generation: Building Pathways from Education to Employment**

Moderator:

Cole Angley, Executive Director, MWA

Panelists:

- Heather Boulger, Executive Director, MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board
- Adam Siedel, Senior Associate Commissioner of High School and Beyond, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Matt Hartman, Assistant Secretary for Workforce Innovation, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development
- Josh Bruno, Director of Employer Engagement, Boston Private Industry Council

Preparing the Next Generation: Building Pathways from Education to Employment will explore how Massachusetts is strengthening connections between education, workforce development, and employment opportunities for young people. The panel will feature perspectives from the Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development, Dept. of Elementary & Secondary Education and two regional workforce boards, where they will discuss current approaches to youth employment and career-connected learning, emerging opportunities and challenges, and the partnerships needed to build stronger pathways from education into the workforce. The conversation will offer both a statewide and regional perspective on efforts to connect young people with career exploration, work-based learning, skills development, and meaningful employment, while considering how state and local partners can continue to strengthen and expand these opportunities for the next generation.

2:05 PM **The Workplace of Tomorrow: How AI, Automation, and People Are Changing Work**

Moderator:

Molly Jacobson, President & CEO, Commonwealth Corporation

Panelists:

- Hanna Adeyema, Director, Immersive Program Innovation at MIT Open Learning
- Tricia Canavan, CEO, Tech Foundry
- Mark Rembert, Chief Economist, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development
- Lauren Robar, Senior Director of AI Transformation, Liberty Mutual

AI is transforming the workplace, but technology is only part of the story. Employers are also navigating automation, shifting workforce demographics, evolving employee expectations, and the need for continuous learning models. As these forces converge, organizations are rethinking how work gets done, the skills employees need to succeed, and what the workplace of the future will look like. This panel will explore how Massachusetts is adapting to these changes, how AI can augment rather than replace workers, and what Massachusetts must do to prepare its workforce for the next generation of jobs while remaining a globally competitive.

2:55 PM **Summit Closing**

Tim Sullivan, Project Director, Workforce Solutions Group

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CAREER BUILDERS



JOB DEVELOPERS



COLLEGE NAVIGATORS



Keynote Speaker



Brooke DeRenzis

CEO

National Skills Coalition

Brooke DeRenzis is CEO of National Skills Coalition. With over 20 years of experience as a coalition-builder, advocate, and policy expert, Brooke has championed policies that expand economic opportunity and equity for working families and amplified the voices of workers, students, and communities to drive policy innovation and lasting change.

Her expertise spans the arenas of federal, state, and local workforce, postsecondary education, economic development, and safety net policy.

Since joining National Skills Coalition in 2014, Brooke has held several critical roles including Chief Strategy Officer and Director of the State Strategies Team.

Prior to NSC, Brooke served as Project Director at the DC Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, where she led advocacy efforts on a broad range of public policy challenges affecting working people and families in the District of Columbia.

She has also held research roles at the Brookings Institution's Metropolitan Policy Program. Brooke holds a master's in Public Policy from the University of Michigan and a bachelor's from Sarah Lawrence College. She is based in Washington, DC.

Summit Speakers



Adam Seidel
Senior Associate Commissioner
High School and Beyond
Dept of Elementary and Secondary Ed



Chiderah Okoye
CEO
Transform Power Systems



Emmanuel Owusu
Founder and Executive Director
African Bridge Network



Hanna Adeyema
Head of Immersive Programs
MIT RAISE



Heather Boulger
Executive Director
MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board



Jerry Rubin
Senior Advisor
Harvard Project On The Workforce



Josh Bruno
Director of Employer Engagement
Boston Private Industry Council



Secretary Lauren Jones
Executive Office of Labor and
Workforce Development



Lauren Robar
Senior Director of AI Transformation
Liberty Mutual



Mark Rembert, Ph.D.
Chief Economist
Massachusetts Executive Office of
Labor and Workforce Development



Matt Hartman
Assistant Secretary for Workforce
Innovation
Executive Office of Labor and
Workforce Development



Molly Jacobson
President and CEO
Commonwealth Corporation



Pablo Suarez
Senior Researcher
Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation



Tricia Canavan
CEO
Tech Foundry



Mass General Brigham

Mass General Brigham Workforce Development

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Workforce Summit**



Grow with Google

At Grow with Google, we set out to address an urgent societal challenge: expanding access to great jobs and fostering economic security for more people. In the United States, over 70% of jobs paying over \$35,000 per year require a college degree, yet less than 40% of the population holds one.¹ To help bridge this gap, we launched the Google Career Certificates in 2018. Working in close partnership with employers, nonprofits, workforce development boards, government bodies, and educational institutions, we've tackled this challenge at scale, helping over 1.5 million certificate graduates globally, and 400,000 across the United States.²



Learners

Learners, from students to job seekers, can gain job-ready skills to advance their careers and help find new jobs. These flexible online training programs are designed to put learners on the fast track to jobs in high-paying fields, now including practical AI training. No experience necessary.



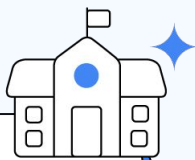
Educators

Educators can learn how to put the latest technology to work inside and outside the classroom. Generative AI for Educators with Gemini helps teachers save time on everyday tasks, personalize instruction, enhance lessons and activities in creative ways, and more.



Employers

Employers can bring the latest skills and talent to their workforce. 2000+ businesses leverage Google Career Certificates to upskill and reskill their own workforce, and 150+ employers are in our Employer Consortium actively considering program graduates for open jobs.



Educational Institutions

800+ educational institutions across all 50 U.S. states are integrating Google Career Certificates into their offerings.



Nonprofit Organizations

Leading nonprofit organizations support Grow with Google learners, delivering training and wraparound support.



Small Business

Small business owners can gain skills to grow their business and build their online presence.

Visit grow.google to learn more

¹ Rise with the STARS: Building a Stronger Labor Market for STARS, Communities, and Employers. Published by Opportunity@Work, January 2022.

² Google internal data, May 2026.

Speaker Biographies

Adam Seidel

Senior Associate Commissioner of High School and Beyond

Dept of Elementary & Secondary Education

Adam Seidel is a lifelong educator, committed to advancing equitable K–12 education systems and postsecondary success for all young people. Adam currently serves as the Senior Associate Commissioner for Secondary Schools and Beyond at the Massachusetts Department for Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) where he is responsible for ensuring that all Massachusetts learners – youth and adults – have equitable access to high-quality academic, career and postsecondary pathways that prepare them for success in college, careers, and civic life. This includes implementation of the proposed graduation requirements as well as expanding pathway programs. Prior to joining DESE, Adam spent over two decades leading schools and education non-profits in Massachusetts and New York City. Adam holds a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in Politics from Oberlin College and a Master's in Public Administration from Baruch College. He lives in Cambridge with his family.

Chiderah Okoye

CEO

Transform Power Systems

Chiderah Okoye is the CEO of Transform Power Systems (TPS), a Boston-based electrical engineering and workforce solutions firm supporting the deployment of clean energy, electrification, and resilient infrastructure projects. TPS works with developers, utilities, municipalities, and other infrastructure owners to provide electrical and power systems engineering across renewable energy, energy storage, EV infrastructure, and grid modernization initiatives. As an engineering employer operating in a rapidly growing industry, Chiderah's work has increasingly focused on the talent and capacity required to turn ambitious infrastructure goals into delivered projects. Under her leadership, TPS has expanded its model to include workforce solutions that help employers identify, prepare, and integrate talent into technical roles. In partnership with the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, TPS operates the TPS Workforce Hub, connecting workforce development more directly to the skills and roles employers need.

An engineer by background, Chiderah began her career at Rockwell Automation and holds a B.S. in Biomedical Engineering from Case Western Reserve University. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of Resilient Coders and as an Advisor to NSBE Boston Professionals.

Emmanuel Owusu

Founder and Executive Director

African Bridge Network

Emmanuel Owusu is the Founder and Executive Director of African Bridge Network (ABN), a Massachusetts nonprofit helping internationally trained professionals rebuild their careers and connect their skills to the Commonwealth's workforce needs. He leads ABN's work to develop career pathways, employer partnerships, and workforce solutions that help skilled immigrants put their education and professional experience back to work. Emmanuel also leads ABN's AI for Immigrant Workforce Development initiative, which seeks to ensure that immigrant workers and job seekers are not left behind as AI reshapes the workplace. Through training, partnerships, and research, the initiative is expanding access to practical AI skills and helping immigrant professionals adapt and advance in a changing labor market.

Hanna Adeyema

Head of Immersive Programs

MIT RAISE

Hanna is Head of Immersive Programs at MIT RAISE, where she is a program lead at MIT PATH (Pathways for AI Training and Hiring), a multi-state initiative connecting research universities, community colleges, employers, and government to build industry-aligned AI career pathways. In addition, she also directs MIT SUD Ventures, a National Institute on Drug Abuse-funded program that equips researchers, engineers, clinicians, and business experts to commercialize innovations addressing substance use disorder, and MIT FutureBuilders, an immersive entrepreneurship and leadership program for high school students. Prior to this role, Hanna was a Director at MIT Bootcamps. She also co-founded and served as Chief Operating Officer of Tenacity, an employee-engagement software company backed by Techstars and acquired by Cogito. Her career includes technology consulting with clients ranging from startups to Fortune 500 companies, coaching, and international projects, such as internet access expansion in Indonesia. Hanna holds an MBA from the MIT Sloan School of Management, a master's degree from the University of Sussex, and a bachelor's degree in economics and management from Belarus State Economic University.

The future of work starts with **people.**

Commonwealth Corporation helps Massachusetts employers and training providers invest in the future workforce, develop skilled talent, and train and upskill current employees.



OUR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT IN FY 26

\$60M+

in workforce grants awarded

4,700+

unemployed and under-employed adults enrolled in training for high-demand occupations

6,220+

youth and young adults engaged in career training, exploration, or subsidized employment

2,400+

employers reached statewide

*FY26 adult enrollment covers WCTF, CTI, and Re-Entry programs; employer reach includes WTFP employers, formal training partners, and estimated employers hiring program participants; youth and young adult enrollment covers YouthWorks.

INTRODUCING

FAST-AI

Focused AI Skills Training

Practical AI skills. No-cost training.

FAST AI will help Massachusetts employers equip their current and newly hired workers to apply AI on the job through hands-on, instructor-led courses. To deliver this training, Commonwealth Corporation is now seeking qualified training providers, with applications due November 6, 2026. Enrollment for eligible employers is expected to open in January 2027. Learn more at commcorp.org/fastai

Administered by Commonwealth Corporation, a quasi-public agency of EOLWD. Funded through the Workforce Investment Trust Fund in partnership with EOED.

**Find funding. Explore training.
Build our workforce.
Start at commcorp.org**



Speaker Biographies

Heather Boulger

Executive Director

MassHire Berkshire Workforce Board

Heather has 28+ years developing partnerships, generating resources and advocating for workforce solutions for Berkshire County. Under her guidance, the Berkshire REB has become a key player in statewide workforce and economic development efforts that result in a skilled workforce, prospering businesses, and equitable access to meaningful career pathways and quality employment for residents and youth. Heather is known for igniting the School-to-Career initiative, building industry sector pathways in healthcare, technology & manufacturing, and implementing the Berkshire Workforce Blueprint to connect employers with services throughout their business cycle. During her tenure, she has assisted thousands of companies, job seekers and youth, and generated more than \$25 million in new resources. As a native of North Adams, Heather currently serves on the North Adams Council on Aging and American Legion Auxiliary, and was on the North Adams School Committee for 24 years. Heather has a Master's Degree in Education, a Master's Degree in Business Administration, and Program in Negotiation Certificate from Harvard Law School.

Jerry Rubin

Senior Advisor

Harvard Project On The Workforce; Foundation Fellow Eastern Bank Foundation.

Jerry Rubin is a Senior Advisor at the Harvard Project On The Workforce and a Foundation Fellow at the Eastern Bank Foundation. He served for fifteen years as President and Chief Executive Officer of Jewish Vocational Service, Boston. Prior to joining JVS, Jerry was Vice President of Building Economic Opportunities at Jobs for the Future. Jerry is co-author of numerous articles, book chapters, and the new book, co-authored with Steven L. Dawson, "Help Wanted: How to Find and Keep Talent In A Forever Tight Labor Market", MIT Press, August 2026.

Josh Bruno

Director of Employer Engagement

Boston Private Industry Council

Josh Bruno is the Director of Employer Engagement at the Boston Private Industry Council. The Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) has worked at the intersection of business and community interests to connect Boston residents to promising career pathways, while creating a diverse talent pipeline for local employers. The PIC's work is grounded in the belief that meaningful employment changes lives, lifts people out of poverty, and strengthens the local economy. For over 20 years Josh has made it his goal to place thousands of Boston Public School students in private sector internships and jobs. While at the PIC, he has worked his way through four different roles in an effort to improve and motivate both colleagues and students. Josh started as an executive recruiter for IT professionals at Mass Futures. Josh graduated from Trinity College in 1993 with a degree in American Studies.

Secretary Lauren Jones

Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Massachusetts Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Lauren Jones was sworn in as Secretary of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development on January 28, 2023.

She brings over two decades of experience working in local and state government, non-profits, and the private sector, with a particular focus on workforce development. Prior to joining the Healey-Driscoll Administration, Jones served as Executive Vice President of the Massachusetts Business Roundtable and led the organization's workforce development policy and strategy. She previously led the Massachusetts market for the non-profit Apprenti, where she worked with companies to cultivate and diversify tech talent through registered apprenticeships. She also created and led the Business Strategy Unit for Boston Mayor Marty Walsh's Office of Economic Development, supporting business attraction and employer engagement in the city of Boston. Prior to that, she held several roles in the Patrick-Murray Administration, including Communications Director for the Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development, Policy & Communications Director for former Lieutenant Governor Tim Murray, and Senior Program Manager of the Economic Development Incentive Program in the Office of Business Development.

As Executive Vice President of the Roundtable, Jones was the Co-Chair of the Workforce Solutions Group and served on the Board for the Massachusetts Workforce Association, the Executive Committee for the Alliance for Vocational Technical Education, the Board of Advisors for the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, the Boston Private Industry Council, and previously served on the Future of Work Commission. She holds a Master's in Public Administration from Northeastern University and a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Providence College. She lives in Boston.

Speaker Biographies

Lauren Robar

Senior Director of AI Transformation

Liberty Mutual

Lauren Robar is Senior Director of AI Transformation at Liberty Mutual, where she leads efforts across Liberty Mutual's People, Purpose & Brand organization focused on the future of work and how organizations can harness AI to create meaningful business value. Her work spans AI capability building and adoption, work redesign for human-AI collaboration, and helping teams adapt their skills, workflows and ways of working for an AI-enabled future. With more than 15 years of experience across strategy, operations, talent and transformation, Lauren specializes in helping organizations navigate periods of significant change. Her perspective sits at the intersection of technology and people, with a focus on how AI is reshaping work, leadership, workforce capabilities and organizational effectiveness. She is particularly passionate about ensuring technological transformation remains people-centered, enabling employees to build new skills, apply human judgment and thrive alongside emerging technologies.

Mark Rembert, Ph.D.

Chief Economist

Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Mark Rembert, Ph.D. is the Chief Economist at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, where he leads the research division within the Department of Economic Research. A regional economist with 15 years of experience in economic policy and research, Mark studies labor market dynamics, barriers to employment, and the economic impacts of AI and automation on jobs and skills across the Commonwealth. His research has been published in academic journals and policy reports and cited in national media. He holds a Ph.D. in Regional Economics from The Ohio State University and a B.A. from Haverford College.

Matt Hartman

Assistant Secretary for Workforce Innovation

Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Matt Hartman serves as Assistant Secretary for Workforce Innovation in EOLWD. He provides support for the MassHire State Workforce Development Board, its various subcommittees and initiatives, and oversees significant elements of the MassHire Innovation Project including the Legal and Policy Working Group. He has been managing the team working on the 2026 Gateway Cities Youth Pilot throughout 2025-26. Assistant Secretary Hartman transitioned to EOLWD after spending 12 years in the legislature, working for two state senators and workforce leaders, Sen. Ken Donnelly and Sen. Pat Jehlen, and serves as an elected member of the Melrose School Committee.

Molly Jacobson

President and CEO

Commonwealth Corporation

Molly Jacobson is President and CEO of Commonwealth Corporation, Massachusetts' quasi-public workforce development agency. With her team, she leads efforts to expand access to high-quality training and upskilling opportunities for youth, jobseekers, and incumbent workers across Massachusetts, while helping employers meet their workforce needs and strengthening the state's economy. Previously, Molly was a Partner in the public sector practice of Boston Consulting Group, where she advised government and nonprofit organizations on strategy, operations, and organizational transformation. She holds a joint MBA and Master of Public Policy from Harvard Business School and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

Pablo Suarez

Senior Researcher

Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation

Pablo is a Senior Researcher with the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, where he primarily focuses on the organization's reports and analysis on workforce, demographics, and state competitiveness. Since joining MTF in 2023, his research portfolio includes a series of primers on the state's workforce investments through the state budget, the behavioral health workforce, an economic impact report of the state's Hispanic/Latino population, unemployment insurance reform, and collaborating with other MTF researchers on the Competitiveness Index. Pablo manages the networking program of MTF's Policy Start Fellowship program and oversees the organization's external communications. Before joining MTF, Pablo was the Director of Constituent Services for Governor Charlie Baker. Pablo holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Relations from the University of Massachusetts Boston.

Speaker Biographies

Tricia Canavan
CEO
Tech Foundry

Tricia Canavan serves as the CEO of Tech Foundry, an IT-focused workforce development and digital literacy organization which serves the residents and employers of Western MA. She brings a background in management, recruiting, education, and workforce development to her role, including experience as a business owner, nonprofit executive director, human resources executive and as a high school and community college instructor at schools in Massachusetts and Tampico, Mexico. She focuses on implementing innovative and collaborative approaches to learning, training, economic and community development and believes in the power of collaboration to create new ideas, strategies, and progress on important initiatives. Tricia's role as CEO focuses on organizational leadership, including strategy, operations, community and partner/corporate relations, and resource development.

A graduate of Trinity College, Hartford, Tricia serves on several boards including the Economic Development Council of Western MA (immediate Past Chair), Mass Business Alliance for Education (Executive Committee member), Associated Industries of Massachusetts (Vice-Chair), and the Springfield Public Forum (Treasurer). She is a former Member of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The MA AFL-CIO is proud to sponsor The 17th Annual Jobs and Workforce Summit



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MASSACHUSETTS JOBS AND
WORKFORCE SUMMIT**

Congratulations to
Eastern Bank Foundation Fellow Jerry Rubin

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CAMBRIDGE TRUST

About The Workforce Solutions Group

The Workforce Solutions Group (WSG) is a statewide advocacy coalition that brings together business, labor, community, and workforce organizations to advance a clear and unified policy agenda for workforce development. WSG advocates for systems change and alignment among workforce, education, and economic development systems in Massachusetts, and serves as the leading advocate for skills training for lower income adults and youth across the Commonwealth.

WSG works with policy makers, stakeholders, training providers, young people, and employers to better align the workforce system and increase resources so residents can earn sustaining wages and employers can access the skilled workforce needed to grow our state's economy.

WSG strives to support workforce policies and investments that help ensure everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter the color of their skin, the language they speak, where they live or where they came from. Moreover, WSG works to support and create a workforce development system where race, ethnicity, or immigration status no longer determines a person's pathway to a household-sustaining job.

Over the years, WSG's advocacy, in partnership with the Legislature, has added nearly \$200 million in new funding for workforce development and has helped spearhead changes in policy and programs that continue to impact Massachusetts' workforce and education systems.

Follow WSG on X @WorkforceSolGrp or visit our website for updates wsgsummit.com.

Workforce Solutions Group Executive Team



Andre Green
Executive Director
SkillWorks at The Boston Foundation



Chrissy Lynch
President
Massachusetts AFL-CIO



Cole Angley
Executive Director
Mass Workforce Association
Co-Chair, Workforce Solutions Group



JD Chesloff
President & CEO
Massachusetts Business Roundtable



Juan Cantu
VP of Youth & Young Adult Pathways
United Way of Massachusetts Bay



Kaitlyn Bean
Deputy Director
SkillWorks at The Boston Foundation



Kelly Hanlon
Associate Director
Mass Workforce Association



Lew Finfer
Director and Community Organizer
Massachusetts Action for Justice



Marybeth Campbell
President & CEO
Worcester Community Action Council



Ruthie Liberman, MPA
Vice President Public Policy, EMPATH



Sezan McDaniel
Workforce Development Specialist
MA AFL-CIO



Tim Sullivan
Project Director, WSG
Managing Director, Liberty Square Group



Tonja Mettlach
Executive Vice President
Massachusetts Business Roundtable;
Co-Chair, Workforce Solutions Group



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SkillWorks: Partners for a Productive Workforce
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WSG Member Biographies

Andre Green

Executive Director

SkillWorks at The Boston Foundation

Since 2020 Andre has served as the Executive Director of SkillWorks. Founded in 2003 and housed at the Boston Foundation, SkillWorks is a funder collaborative that brings together philanthropy, government, community organizations and employers to address the twin goals of helping low-skill, low-income individuals attain family-supporting jobs and helping employers find and retain skilled workers.

After spending a few years teaching 5th grade and consulting in IT, Andre began his community organizing career at YouthBuild, where he started in Data Services before moving on to serve as a Senior Manager for Field Mobilization. In this role, Andre was responsible for coordinating federal advocacy efforts of 240+ local YouthBuild programs in 45 states. Andre later served as Founding Senior Project Manager at the On Solid Ground Coalition, a group of 40 Massachusetts organizations working on comprehensive cross-sector solutions to end family homelessness. Here, Andre organized the work of the Coalition by developing legislative strategies, drafting and implementing MOUs and other governance documents, coordinating the separate advocacy efforts of member organizations, and steering the strategic planning process.

In 2016, Andre was selected to serve as the first Political Director of MASSCreative, where he led their efforts to have access to Arts Education be included in the state's education assessment plan, as well as filing the organization's first legislation, aimed at expanding public art in the state. Most recently, he has served as a transitional Executive Director with FairTest, a national advocacy organization going through a generational change as the founding staff and board move to retirement.

He stepped into this role after leading a yearlong strategic planning process. In his time with FairTest, he testified before two state legislatures, found new foundation funding and launched two new campaigns to bring testing as a prominent issue in federal politics.

Chrissy Lynch

President

Massachusetts AFL-CIO

Chrissy Lynch was unanimously elected as President of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO in October 2023 after previously serving as the Secretary-Treasurer and Chief of Staff of the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, and after spending 15 years running the political and legislative departments of the MA AFL-CIO. She also spent time as Director of Operations for the Greater Boston Building Trades Unions, where she helped run programs that advanced equity, inclusion, and community standards in the construction industry. Before working for organized labor in Massachusetts, she worked on union-led electoral campaigns in California and Massachusetts.

Chrissy is a current member of LiUNA Local 22 and former member and steward of OPEIU Local 6. Before her time with the Labor Movement, she worked jobs that hadn't yet been organized – including several years as a barista, waitstaff, and PCA. Her experience in non-union sectors led her to the Labor Movement.

Chrissy is a graduate of the Harvard Trade Union Program in the Harvard Labor and Worklife Center at Harvard Law School, has a Master's Degree in Labor Studies from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism from Suffolk University, and an Associate's Degree from Massasoit Community College. She lives in Quincy with her husband, 2 children and 2 dogs.

Cole Angley

Executive Director

Mass Workforce Association

Cole Angley is the Executive Director of MWA and has more than seven years experience within the Massachusetts Legislature. His tenure there included significant positions such as Chief of Staff to the Joint Committee on Labor & Workforce Development and Legislative Aide for then-Representative Josh Cutler.

During his service, Cole managed critical commissions and task forces, including the Legislature's Future of Work Commission, UI Trust Fund Study Commission, and WorkAbility Task Force. His contributions to co-authoring a legislative report on disability hiring policies and enacting new pay transparency legislation have marked significant advancements in our field. Cole is a graduate of the University of Vermont with a BA in Political Science and a J.D. from Suffolk Law School.

WSG Member Biographies

JD Chesloff

President & CEO

Massachusetts Business Roundtable

As President & CEO, JD is responsible for developing and implementing the Roundtable's agenda on public policy matters, and works collaboratively with opinion leaders, policy makers and other stakeholders in pursuit of its mission to make Massachusetts the most desirable place to live, work and do business and ensure access to a robust, diverse and talented workforce that enhances the Commonwealth's competitiveness in a global economy.

JD has worked in and around Beacon Hill for more than 30 years. In the Legislature, he was the Chief of Staff to the House Committee on Commerce and Labor, and was the education issues analyst and Deputy Budget Director for the House Committee on Ways and Means. After working as both a budget analyst and Assistant to the President at the University of Massachusetts, JD worked as the Legislative Director for State Treasurer Shannon O'Brien and then as Issues Director for the O'Brien-Gabrieli gubernatorial campaign in 2002. He joined MBR in 2004 after serving as Legislative/Issues Director for the Early Education for All (EEA) Campaign, where he was responsible for developing and driving legislative support for EEAs legislation and agenda which included the creation of the Massachusetts Board and Department of Early Education and Care.

JD serves on the Boards of Lever, a start-up incubator in Berkshire County, the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation, and Science from Scientists. He also is on the Advisory Boards of ReadyNation, CEO Action for Racial Equity, and Mill Town Capital.

Juan Cantu

VP of Youth & Young Adult Pathways

United Way of Massachusetts Bay

Born and raised in South Texas, Juan Cantu has called Boston home since 2008. Juan grew up as a migrant worker, spending his summers traveling from Texas to Iowa to work in the cornfields to help his parents make ends meet. His family instilled in him the value of education and through their support and resources from his high school, he was able to make it up to Boston to attend college. He graduated from Harvard in 2012 with a Bachelors and the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2018 with a Masters.

Juan is passionate about educational access and success, having worked at the Hyde Square Task Force to provide college success support, and at The Boston Foundation, overseeing the Success Boston College Completion Initiative. Juan is now VP of Youth & Young Adult Pathways with United Way of Massachusetts Bay.

Kaitlyn Bean

Deputy Director

SkillWorks at The Boston Foundation

Kaitlyn Bean has over 10 years of experience in workforce development, spending the majority of that time supporting the SkillWorks funder collaborative and workforce development strategy at the Boston Foundation. In her current role as Deputy Director of SkillWorks, Kaitlyn oversees SkillWorks' grantmaking portfolio of around \$1 million annually, managing relationships with grantees, as well as a variety of other key partners and stakeholders. Kaitlyn also engages in public policy advocacy on the local, state, and federal levels, representing SkillWorks as a member of the Workforce Solutions Group, National Skills Coalition's SkillSPAN initiative, and other workforce and related advocacy coalitions.

Kaitlyn began her career at Root Cause, as a Social Innovation Research Fellow, focused on best and promising practices in youth and adult workforce development. She holds a Dual Bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Affairs from Northeastern University.

Kelly Hanlon

Associate Director

Mass Workforce Association

Kelly Hanlon is the Associate Director of MWA and has more than twenty years of experience in organizational and employee development. Kelly served as an Event Manager for the University of Massachusetts-Amherst in the Office of External Relations and University Events. Kelly also worked for TJX Companies in operations management. She worked for Senator Ted Kennedy in his Office of Labor and Industry and in the Office of Communications. She is a graduate of George Washington University (BS).



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Our commitment to community organizations reflects our belief that shared values spark meaningful change.

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WSG Member Biographies

Lewis Finfer

Director and Community Organizer

Massachusetts Action for Justice

Lew Finfer is a community organizer and Director of the Massachusetts Action for Justice. He began organizing in 1970 in Dorchester with neighborhood organizations and then subsequently director of Dorchester Fair Share, Somerville United Neighborhoods, MA Tenants Organization, Greater Boston Interfaith Organization, and MA Affordable Housing Alliance. Then, he was the founding Director and Director of MA Communities Action Network 1985-2021, which is a network of 7 community improvement organizations in cities across Massachusetts. His group was a founder and a leader of the Raise Up MA Coalition that led the passage of two minimum wage increases, the Earned Sick Days law, the Paid Family Medical Leave law, and the 2022 passage of the Millionaire's Tax to fund education and transportation. Representing MCAN, he was one of the founders of the Workforce Solutions Group and still serves on its Executive Board.

Marybeth Campbell

President & CEO

Worcester Community Action Council

Marybeth Campbell is the Chief Executive Officer of the Worcester Community Action Council, a Central MA anti-poverty focused on stabilizing individuals and households through safety net programs and partnering with people to help them thrive. Marybeth joined WCAC as a board member in 2017 and became Executive Director in 2019. Prior to joining WCAC as Executive Director, she was the Executive Director of SkillWorks at the Boston Foundation, an ambitious effort on the part of philanthropy, government, community organizations, unions, and employers to create a workforce development system that helps low-skill, low-income residents move to family-sustaining jobs and helps employers find and retain skilled employees.

Marybeth has near 25 years experience in public policy, public education, and project management in the areas of clean energy, education, economic and workforce development. From 2012-2014, Marybeth served in a role as the Commonwealth's first cross-secretariat Director of Education and Workforce Development advising the Deval L. Patrick Administration's cabinet secretaries in the Executive Offices of Education, Labor and Workforce, and Housing and Economic Development on workforce and education policy development, program strategy and implementation. Marybeth previously served as the state's first Workforce Development Director at the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center establishing national-leading green jobs programs by working with higher education, vocational schools, labor organizations and community-based nonprofits to develop training and workforce capacity that supports the Commonwealth's growing clean energy industry. Her previous work also includes serving as the Public Education Manager for the former Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust where she oversaw two education initiatives that funded projects to increase awareness among teachers, students, and the public about the benefits of clean energy, and as a senior research analyst for the Massachusetts House of Representatives Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy.

She has a bachelor's degree in political science from Providence College and attended Suffolk University Law School.

Ruthie Liberman, MPA

Vice President

Public Policy, EMPATH

Ruthie serves as Vice President for Public Policy for EMPATH. In this role she serves as the chief policy strategist on national and state policy related to economic mobility. She provides leadership in the areas of education and workforce development, affordable housing, and work supports (including child care) to create public policy leading family economic stability. Ruthie has a Bachelor's Degree from Pomona College in government and public policy as well as a Masters Degree in public administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Ruthie has worked in major hospital settings such as Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Brigham and Women's Hospital. She also ran a Pediatric and Family AIDS program at Dimock Community Health Center in Roxbury for 6 years. While living in California, Ruthie served as a Senate Fellow in the California Legislature and as the Director of Public Policy for Planned Parenthood Los Angeles.

WSG Member Biographies

Sezan McDaniel

Workforce Development Specialist

MA AFL-CIO

Sezan joined the Massachusetts AFL-CIO in 2022 as a Workforce Development Specialist after serving as Chief of Staff for Massachusetts State Representative Peter Capano and successfully running his campaign in 2018. She previously did research and programmatic work for the Atlantic Council and the Brookings Institution as well as nonprofit advocacy on Capitol Hill.

A native Texan, Sezan earned her bachelor's degree from the University of Houston and a master's degree from American University's School of International Service in Washington, DC.

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Attracted **\$3B+** in private & federal capital through awards and investments

* In FY26.

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WSG Member Biographies

Tim Sullivan

Project Director, Workforce Solutions Group
Managing Director, Liberty Square Group

With over 20 years of government relations and campaign experience, Tim Sullivan is widely recognized on Beacon Hill, Capitol Hill, in Boston, and across Massachusetts as a strong and reasonable advocate with a solid grasp of the issues and a unique ability to effectively articulate policy positions in a manner that resonates with people on all sides.

After 10 years at the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, where he rose to be Legislative & Communications Director, Tim joined the new administration of Mayor Martin J. Walsh in the City of Boston in 2014 as Chief of Staff for Intergovernmental Relations/Senior Advisor for External Affairs. In 2016 he was promoted to Director of Intergovernmental Relations.

In his decade at the AFL-CIO Tim worked hard to pass legislation to improve the quality of life for working families and served as the spokesman for the state AFL-CIO. In the City of Boston Tim managed the staff that enacted Mayor Walsh's legislative priorities in Washington, on Beacon Hill and in the City Council, and served as Mayor Walsh's chief representative to elected officials at all levels of government. Prior to joining Liberty Square Group, Tim founded Teamwork Public Strategies and worked with clients on issues from climate change to the 2020 Presidential Election.

Tim served as an early member of the Workforce Solutions Group Executive Team representing the Mass. AFL-CIO until 2013 and returned in 2021 to become the WSG Project Director.

He has received numerous recognitions for his contributions in public affairs, including the 2010 Massachusetts AFL-CIO Merit Award for Outstanding Service and Leadership, and Campaigns and Elections Magazine's "Top 80 Across the Spectrum Massachusetts Influencers." Tim also serves as a member of the Board of Directors of MembersPLUS Credit Union and served for the maximum term of nine years on the Board of Directors of the United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley. A graduate of the University of Richmond's Jepson School of Leadership Studies, Tim received a Bachelor of Arts with a triple major and honors-level credentials in Leadership, Political Science and Rhetoric & Communication Studies. In 2012, Tim graduated with a Master's Degree in Labor Studies from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, as well as from the University of Massachusetts Boston Center for Collaborative Leadership Emerging Leaders Program, where he was the first union leader ever accepted into the program and now serves on the Board of Directors.

Tim and his wife Beth are the overjoyed parents of three kids 8 and under: Ryan Joseph, Christian James, and Avalyn Amor.

Tonja Mettlach

Executive Vice President; Chair
Massachusetts Business Roundtable; Workforce Solutions Group

As Executive Vice President, Tonja is responsible for developing and advancing all Roundtable public policy strategies and initiatives with a focus on implementation of the Roundtable's "Talent Agenda to Drive Massachusetts' Competitiveness," a framework to drive the state's economic competitiveness by attracting, retaining, developing, and diversifying talent that reflects the top priority expressed by Roundtable members. She also manages all internal and external communications, undertakes organizational management responsibilities including serving as a liaison to external stakeholders, managing day-to-day operations, and advancing member recruitment and engagement.

Tonja has over ten years of experience working in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. Prior to joining the Roundtable, she was the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Workforce Association (MWA), a statewide membership organization that leads, advocates, and convenes on behalf of the Commonwealth's regionally-led and employer-driven workforce system. In this role, she worked closely with employers to help meet their workforce needs and connect job seekers to employment and career pathways. Prior to that, she was the Director of Government Affairs for the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network and worked at the Massachusetts State House, first as Chief of Staff to Representative Tom Conroy on the Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development and then as Research Director and Committee Counsel for Representative Jennifer Benson, House Chair of the Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee.

Tonja holds a B.A. and M.S. from Clark University and a J.D. from the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University.

2026 Kathie Mainzer Award Winner



Jerry Rubin
Senior Advisor

Harvard Project On The Workforce; Foundation Fellow Eastern Bank Foundation.

Jerry Rubin is a Senior Advisor at the Harvard Project On The Workforce and a Foundation Fellow at the Eastern Bank Foundation. He served for fifteen years as President and Chief Executive Officer of Jewish Vocational Service, Boston.

Prior to joining JVS, Jerry was Vice President of Building Economic Opportunities at Jobs for the Future. Jerry is co-author of numerous articles, book chapters, and the new book, co-authored with Steven L. Dawson, “Help Wanted: How to Find and Keep Talent In A Forever Tight Labor Market”, MIT Press, August 2026.

By collectively advancing strategies and public policies to attract, retain, develop, and diversify talent, we will also enhance opportunity and equity for a stronger Commonwealth.



2026 Employer Of The Year Award Winner

Beth Israel Lahey Health

Beth Israel Lahey Health (BILH) is an integrated health care system that unites leading academic medical centers, community hospitals, specialty hospitals, and primary care providers around a common mission: to expand access to exceptional care, advance clinical excellence, and drive innovation through research and education. With nearly 40,000 employees within the system, BILH and its employing organizations comprise the second-largest private sector workforce in Massachusetts.

Workforce development is a strategic priority embedded within BILH's organizational culture and long-term sustainability strategy. Through its Workforce Planning and Development function, BILH invests in building and strengthening talent pipelines for high-demand health care occupations, advancing career mobility for employees, and expanding economic opportunity within the communities it serves. The team works collaboratively across the system and with external partners to ensure a skilled, diverse, and future-ready workforce capable of meeting evolving patient care needs.

BILH's comprehensive workforce development portfolio includes individualized career advising, English language learning programs, college readiness and academic advancement opportunities, the Pathway to Nursing program, the Bentley MBA Program at BILH, and a growing suite of workforce pipeline initiatives designed to address critical staffing needs. These programs prepare employees for advancement into high-demand health professions, including Surgical Technologist, Nursing Assistant, and Pharmacy Technician roles, among others.

BILH maintains a broad network of partnerships with more than 90 community-based organizations, educational institutions, and workforce development agencies, including the MassHire system. Together, these collaborations create pathways to rewarding careers in health care, strengthen local talent pipelines, and support the economic well-being of communities across the region.

2026 Legacy of Legislative Leadership Award Winner



State Senator Pat Jehlen

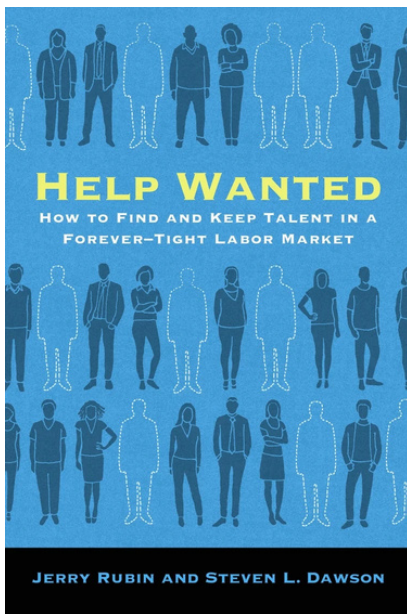
Senator Pat Jehlen represents Somerville, Medford and parts of Winchester and Cambridge. She was elected to the Massachusetts Senate in 2005 after serving her community as a Representative in the House and a Somerville School Committee Member.

In the Senate she currently serves as Chair of the Joint Committee on Aging and Independence, Vice Chair of the Joint Committee on Education as well as the Joint Committee on Revenue. Senator Jehlen also serves on the Committee Labor and Workforce Development which she previously chaired for multiple sessions.

Senator Jehlen helped lead the fight to increase the minimum wage, to target tax cuts towards working families by increasing the earned income tax credit and child care credit, and to increase the senior circuit breaker. She was able to pass bills in 2016 and 2024 on wage equity and wage transparency to better equip workers and job seekers across the state with information on pay ranges and help close wage gaps.

HELP WANTED: HOW TO FIND AND KEEP TALENT IN A FOREVER-TIGHT LABOR MARKET

By Jerry Rubin and Steven L. Dawson



ABOUT THE BOOK

Help Wanted, from MIT Press, is your practical resource for finding and keeping talented employees in a labor market where low birth rates, an aging workforce, and anti-immigration policies are here to stay.

We focus on answers for:

- Tapping untapped candidates
- Redesigning jobs to attract and retain talent
- Rethinking government-relations strategies

We share over two dozen real-world examples from diverse organizations that are facing the challenge head-on with their employee-centered business strategies.

WORDS FROM A READER

“Brilliant tool kit for job creators to creatively find talent – toughest part of our job now – must read book to help bring on new talent and recruit the best in a labor strained economy where great people are critical for growth.”

-Drew Greenblatt, Owner, Marlin Steel Wire Products LLC

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