Regional Workforce Skills Planning Initiative

Final Berkshire Blueprint
Submitted for consideration:
March 30, 2018

Consistent with the Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet, as part of the Workforce Board Certification process, and on behalf of the Berkshire Regional Skills Team, the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc. is pleased to submit the final Berkshire Blueprint. The Berkshire Skills Team, comprised of regional leaders representing the three executive branches and other community leaders, have drafted and revised components of the Blueprint between May 2017-March 2018.

There was a 30-day public comment period from February 2, 2018-March 9, 2018. Feedback received is included in Attachment E which reflects input from the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Department of Career Services, Commonwealth Corporation, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, MassTech, Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative, Executive Office of Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Higher Education, and Adult and Community Learning Services. Any questions relating to this document should be submitted to Heather@BCREB.com.
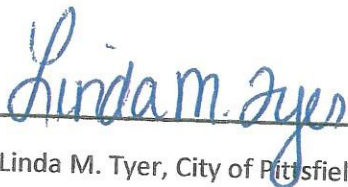
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Attachment F: Regional Planning Blueprint Signature Page

Pursuant to WIOA Sec. 106(c)(1) and (2) the undersigned submit and support the Regional Planning Blueprint and assure that the plan will be implemented as submitted, in order to meet the goals of the WSC's regional planning initiative.

Local Plan priorities and/or activities may change as a result of regional strategies developed through the regional planning process, and contained in the Regional Planning Blueprint. Local plans will be modified to reflect any such changes.

Note: Regional Plan signature page may include additional signatures; for example, economic development and/or education partners, or others as deemed appropriate by each region.

Linda M. Tyer   3/27/18
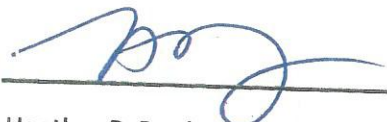
Mayor Linda M. Tyer, City of Pittsfield, Chief Elected Official   Date

(signature)   3-29-18

Michael Supranowicz, Board Vice Chair   Date

(signature)   3/26/18

Heather P. Boulger, Board Director   Date
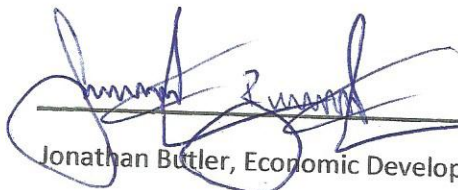
Ellen Kennedy   March 26, 2008

Ellen Kennedy, Education Regional Skills Team   Date

(signature)   3/28/18

Jonathan Butler, Economic Development Regional Skills Team   Date

Berkshire County Regional Skills Workforce Blueprint (Revised & Submitted 3-30-18)

Introduction: Across Massachusetts, economic growth is constrained by a labor shortage while jobseekers are looking for work. Bridging the gap between the skills and experience of individuals and the needs of employers seeking to hire is the work of the Regional Planning Core Team. Regional teams will create a shared understanding of regional priorities and strategy for investments related to industries and occupations in each individual region.

The purpose of this document is to offer a *guiding template* to support the economic, workforce and education organizations within a region working to create a Regional Labor Market Blueprint. This document confirms Team decisions about priority areas for investment, and shared priorities reflecting the application of the criteria to analyze local data.

Process: In 2015, Governor Baker created the Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC) in order to align the Executive Offices of Education, Labor and Workforce Development, and Housing and Economic Development toward a comprehensive economic growth agenda. The task of the WSC is to create and implement a strategy that ensures individuals can develop and continuously improve their skills and knowledge to meet the hiring needs of employers in the Commonwealth. The WSC kicked off the regional planning process across 7 regions in Spring 2017.

Through the development of the WSC Regional Blueprint, key stakeholders will work to:

- Describe the **Core Regional Planning Team**
- **Understand Economic, Education and Workforce context** for the Region
- Develop **criteria** for identifying priority industries and occupations
- Identify **Priority Industries and Occupations** that align to shared criteria
- **Asset map existing resources and resources** for growth in the pipelines prioritized by the Team
- Develop **shared strategies** to expand talent pipelines prioritized by the Team
- Measure and build **shared accountability** for results across Team members

Blueprint Template: This template provides a guide for Regional Teams to utilize in building a Blueprint to create consistency in the type of information contained in the final products while maintaining the opportunity to reflect regional differences.

Impact: The Regional Labor Market Blueprints will guide the work of regional partners to address talent gaps and needs in the region. The process and Blueprint can help to:
- **Coordinate and leverage a variety of localized efforts** across three systems that may focus on the same businesses, occupations or industry pathways (*e.g. WIOA local programming and MOU activities, WCTF programming, small business development, Manufacturing sector initiatives, Urban Agenda strategies, Working Cities etc.*)
- **Improve connectedness between employers** (generally who are not sure where to turn) and education/workforce systems.
- **Develop new state level strategies and/or align existing state-level resources** to respond to regional priorities or common priorities that emerge across all seven regions.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Describe the process of creating a regional plan.

Regional Planning Team. Describe the different **partner organizations** brought together to be a part of the **Regional Planning Team** (K-12 District, Vocational Technical School, Community College, State University, Workforce Development Board, Massachusetts Office of Business Development, Regional Economic Development Organization, Regional Planning Authority, and more).

Individual Name	Individual Title	Organization Name
James Birge	President	Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts
Debra Boronski	Regional Director	Mass Office of Business Development
Heather Boulger	Executive Director	Berkshire County Regional Employment Board
James Brosnan	Superintendent	McCann Technical School (vocational)
Gerald Burke	President/CEO	Hillcrest Educational Centers & MA Workforce Board
Jonathon Butler	CEO/President	1Berkshire
Howard Jacob Eberwein	Superintendent/Director	Lee Schools (K-12) and Berkshire Compact for Education (pre-K – 16 years)
Tyler Fairbank	CEO/President	EOS Ventures & Berkshire Blueprint
Kristine Hazzard	President & CEO	Berkshire United Way
Nathaniel Karns	Executive Director	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Ellen Kennedy/Jill Sasso Curtis	President/Director of Workforce Development	Berkshire Community College
Michael Knapik	District Aide	Office of the Governor, Western Mass
Jason McCandless	Superintendent	Pittsfield Public Schools (K-12)
Arthur Milano	Vice President	Berkshire Health Systems
Beth Mitchell	Director, Systems Integration	General Dynamics Mission System & MA Workforce Board
Eva Sheridan	Vice President of People and Human Resources	Main Street Hospitality & BCREB
Peter Taylor	President	Berkshire Taconic Foundation

Regional Planning Process. Describe your region's process to develop Labor Market Blueprint.

The Berkshire Regional Planning Team first convened all the partners together and selected a core leadership team to represent each sector. The Regional Planning Team listed above was created by targeting five organizations in each sector (education, workforce development, and economic development) and focusing on strategic relationships that will positively impact the implementation of the

Blueprint. Included in the strategic partnerships are private sector representatives to highlight the needs of industry and employers.

Economic Development leaders include representatives from: 1Berkshire (formerly the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, Berkshire Visitor's Bureau and Berkshire Creative); Regional Planning (actively engaged in CEDS development and labor market data gathering for multiple organizations); Berkshire Blueprint (Decade benchmarks to improve economic, community and workforce priorities); Berkshire Taconic Foundation (recently completed a report on economics in the Berkshires); and Governor's Office.

Education leaders include representatives from: MCLA (regions only public university or college and contributes more than $150 million annually to the regional economy); BCC (region's only community college and has a strong workforce development office); McCann (regions vocational school which has post-secondary offerings); Berkshire Compact (which is leading the charge for 16 years of education as the norm); Berkshire United Way (which is leading the charge with helping communities thrive and is currently convening regional partners to develop regional community strategies); and Pittsfield Public School (representing K-12 systems and has recently built a new Taconic High School for vocational programming).

Workforce Development leaders include representatives from: BCREB (which provides LMI, oversight of career centers/ABE providers, assists companies with training and implements the region's college/career readiness programs for the region); Hillcrest Educational Centers (non-profit, leader in the CEO roundtable, and part of statewide workforce board); Berkshire Health Systems (largest employer in region); General Dynamics (leading with STEM programming and part of state workforce board); and MainStreet Hospitality (chair of the BCREB and leading countywide hospitality efforts).

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development provided leadership throughout the process, answered questions, and provided technical assistance and labor market information for two regional sessions. Once the core team was established, the group then moved forward to procure assistance from a consultant to assist with reviewing existing data, existing reports, assist with facilitation of meetings/focus groups, and support in the preparation of the Blueprint document. The Berkshire Region hosted three focus groups in different parts of the county to gain feedback from employers. Please see Attachment D for a list of participating companies. The Berkshire Regional Planning Team convened a total of five times to gain consensus around priority occupations, industries, vision, mission, goals and strategies.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Business Engagement. Describe how the Team engaged business to develop the blueprint, including the number of businesses engaged, the industries businesses associate with, and the format of engagement the team employed.

Throughout the Blueprint process, the Berkshire Region focused heavily on including businesses in the discussion. The Berkshire Region held a set of three focus groups to engaged 36 businesses in discussions around what their needs are, major workforce related issues they face, their plans for the future, and other feedback to be included within the Blueprint. Please see Attachment D for a list of the Berkshire companies that participated including a variety from small, medium and large sized employers representing all critical industries in the region. In addition, the planning team had 15 businesses engaged in the process from the start. Business interests and needs were represented throughout including both large and small employers from a variety of industry sectors. Feedback was also requested and provided from 30 Berkshire County Regional Employment Board members and 35 Berkshire United Way leaders. It was important to include organizations that have been developing similar, complimentary reports including 1Berkshires's Berkshire Blueprint (a community-generated strategic plan designed to grow the region's economy), Berkshire United Way's Economic Prosperity Impact Council (advocating for a diverse, thriving, and sustainable economy where everyone has equitable access to economic prosperity), and Berkshire Compact for Education (raising the educational access, aspirations, and attainment of all Berkshire residents) to ensure that we are maximizing our limited regional resources. It was equally important to involve the Berkshire Innovation Center, Creative Economy, and Healthcare Alliances to ensure that we are developing solid career pathway opportunities for advancement.

II. Where are we now?

Describe the current state of your region, including an analysis of industries, occupations, demographic shifts, and gaps between employer demand and employee supply.

Regional Context

Utilize the information provided through state data sets and additional local analysis to highlight the region's unique geography, communities, population growth/change, education demographics, workforce history, high-level industry trends, etc.

Describe critical trends in population change in the next decade that will have an impact on the workforce.

Since 2012, Berkshire County has seen a 3.1% decline in the population, losing over 3,900 residents. This trend is projected to continue as the county is projected to lose an additional 2,700 residents over the next five years, a further 2.2% decline in population. The age cohort projected to see the largest decline in population are residents ages 20-24 years old. Over the next five years, Berkshire County is projected to lose nearly 2,000 people within this cohort, a 22% decline. This is important for the workforce because losing people between the ages of 20-24 will increase workforce supply challenges for local employers. Other cohorts that are projected to experience large population declines include people ages 45-49 and people ages 50-54, both cohorts projected to experience an 18% decline in population. The population cohorts that are projected to grow within the next five years include people ages 75-79 and 70-74, projecting to increase by 28% and 26%, respectively, totaling an addition of over 2,900 residents.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Population by Age Cohort

■ 2012 Population   ■ 2017 Population
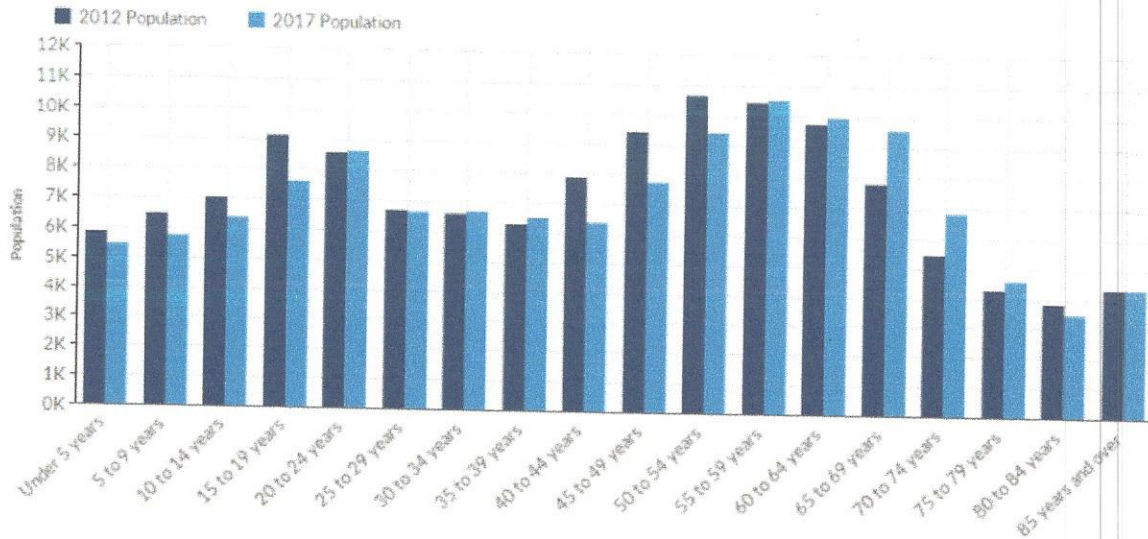
Source of data: Emsi 2017.4 class of worker

Describe critical trends in regional demographics that will have an impact the workforce. *Age, education, etc.*

Within Berkshire County there is a lower than average number of millennial residents, defined as being between the ages of 20-34. Berkshire County currently has an estimated 21,800 millennials. The lack of millennials can exacerbate the workforce supply challenges that occur due to high labor force participation and low unemployment. Additionally, Berkshire County has a large portion of the population who are at or near retirement age. The number of people in the county who are considered to be retiring soon, defined as people ages 65 and older, total over 28,100, which is notably higher than the national average as a percent of the full population.

The population of Berkshire County also shows a lack of racial diversity, with nearly 89% of the population identifying as White, Non-Hispanic, followed by the next largest cohort of 3.7% of population identifying as White, Hispanic, and another 3% identifying as Black, Non-Hispanic. However, over the next five years, the number of people identifying as White, Hispanic is projected to increase by 11%, adding nearly 500 residents. Additionally, the number of people identifying as Black, Hispanic is projected to increase by 6%, adding over 230 residents. Attracting these cohorts may help mitigate the decline in working age residents.

Nearly 18% of the Berkshire County population holds a Bachelor's Degree, which is about 0.5% lower than the national average. However, nearly 10% hold an Associate's Degree which is about 1.5% above the nation average, and an additional 14% of the population has a Graduate Degree or higher, which is about 4 percentage points higher than that of the US whereas 11% of the population holds a Graduate Degree or Higher.

Source of data: Emsi 2017.4 class of worker

Describe past and current high-level industry trends affecting workforce needs (i.e. growing, declining, emerging industries).

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

The Berkshires are feeling the impact of a number of different forces when it comes to their ability to grow their economy and create opportunities for residents and businesses to thrive. At nearly 1,000 square miles and around 130,000 people, this rural county truly is picturesque yet can be isolating for workers and residents looking to connect with opportunities and community. Like other similar rural regions, the Berkshires began losing population in the 1970's as manufacturing companies started to decline, including the loss of GE Plastics headquarters in Pittsfield and Sprague's.

By 2010, it was revealed that the Region lost more than 18,000 people since 1970's, and in 2010 more people died than were born and more people left the region than moved to it. According to projections prepared by the Planning Commission, the population decline could increase by 37% by 2030 or an additional 12,420 fewer people. Many organizations are working to stop this decline, including an effort that started in 2006 which included a task force charged with coordinating a long-term plan known as the Berkshire Initiative for Growth (BIG) to understand and explore solutions to the Region's population loss. Efforts were focused on the retention and recruitment of young adults (ages 22-40) and the recommendations identified by that task force are included in this Blueprint.

Industries are having a very hard time filling positions, with the Berkshire's having the largest job vacancy rate since the 1990's, exceeding the state's average (Berkshires job vacancy rate is 5.1% and Massachusetts is 4.8%). More specifically, over the past decade, one of the largest private sector employers (General Dynamics) has not been able to attract/retain enough workers and consistently reports needing engineers to fill positions. The entire Berkshire Region is under constant demand for at least 100 engineers. Recently, MCLA added an electrical engineering concentration to the computer science curricular offerings in consultation with GD.

When looking at data trends, all industries combined in the Berkshires have been experiencing very low levels of job growth over recent years and that is projected to continue, with 0% jobs growth between 2017 and 2022 projected. Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest industry in the County, with over 13,500 jobs. Unlike all industries combined, Heath Care and Social Assistance individually is projected to grow by 6% or 799 jobs by 2022. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry is also projected to growth by 4% or 146 jobs which will continue to put a strain on the workforce as it is already difficult to find enough engineers to fill the positions as described by General Dynamics. Professional, Scientific and Technical is followed in number of total job growth by Government at 139 jobs, a 2% growth, and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation projected to add 47 jobs, another 2% growth.

In contrast, Manufacturing is the fastest declining industry in terms of total job numbers, projected to shed 342 total jobs by 2022 or -7%. While it is true that there is industry decline in Manufacturing, the demand still exists as employers are struggling to find workers which leads to constraints related to expansion. This dichotomy is made obvious when looking at the data while at the same time hearing from businesses that they have openings to fill and they are unable to fill them. Berkshire manufacturing company's dynamics are shifting from once traditional tendencies towards more advanced, technical manufacturing including information technology/cybersecurity, automation, robotics, Lean, and other operational methods.

Overall, average wages are low in the Berkshire Region at $43,418 compared to the State average of $63,589. In the Berkshire Region, the Health Care and Social Assistance industry pays higher than the County average at $47,000, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services pays far higher than the County average at nearly $66,500.

In addition to the overarching economic trends, some of the specific events that are impacting the Berkshires include:

- SABIC (formerly GE) closed in 2015 eliminating 200 engineering jobs
- In 2017, 8 companies closed/downsized impacting 465 employees (3 manufacturing companies, 4 retail companies, and 1 hospitality company)
- Declining mall retail activity (Berkshire Mall lost Penny's, Sears, Macys and several other stores during the past year) but growing mom & pop shops and Lee Outlets

Describe critical trends in occupational employment history in the region (i.e. growing, declining, emerging occupations).

When looking at occupation related trends in the Berkshires, a major issue identified in the 2016 Workforce Needs Assessment was that companies would be able to grow and create more jobs if there were more skilled/educated workforce available in the region to hire. Interestingly, a 2015 Youth Adult Survey found that the majority of young adults living in the Berkshires liked it but thought that there were not enough career advancements or higher paying jobs available and therefore needed to look outside of the Region for work. These two inconsistent sentiments highlight the need for improved awareness of job opportunities within the Region to retain young, educated adults to serve the existing companies.

The Berkshire Region is experiencing growth in health care related occupations, including Personal Care Aides (261 new jobs by 2022); Home Health Aides (152 new jobs by 2022); Registered Nurses (33 new jobs by 2022); Social and Human Service Assistants (30 new jobs by 2022); and Nursing Assistants (29 new jobs by 2022). Additionally, there continues to be high demand and need for health care technicians such as surgical technicians, dental assistants, nursing assistants and others.

Even though the population is declining, there continues to be need for educators, especially as many current educators are reaching retirement age. Specifically, a number of superintendents, principals, teacher's assistants, and speech and physical therapists are needed to fill existing gaps.

Manufacturing related occupations continue to shed jobs; however, the replacement demand is high as the workforce continues to age and move towards retirement. With the average age of manufacturing workers at 54, the replacement need will be 45% in the next 3-5 years. And despite overall industry declines, the Berkshires are still home to a number of highly competitive advanced manufacturing firms demonstrating a sustained need for workers. As manufacturing companies continue to keep pace with the nation, additional training is needed in analytics, technology, automation, cybersecurity, Lean, robotics, etc. for our companies to remain competitive. Replacing the lost workers who have decades of experience is challenging for employers who do not have the resources to be able to properly train the workers.

Impacting both the manufacturing sector and the health care sector, employers also report struggling to with find workers who are able and willing to work both night and weekend shifts, as well as complain of issues around the lack of work ethic and work readiness skills.

What are the top three challenges facing the region's business and industry over the next five years?

1. **Finding skilled talent**: Employees lack the essential jobs skills, work readiness skills, and overall work ethic and motivation to be successful in many of the jobs available within Berkshire County. This illustrates both the skills gap issue as well as reduces the ability of employers to fill open positions and hire for new positions.

2. **Retaining talent:** As previously noted, Berkshire County has a lower than average number of millennials working within the region, additionally, the county is projected to see a continued and substantial decline of people aged 20-24 over the next five years. The existing population is aging and there are a large number of people 65 and older at risk of retirement. The lack of millennials, high rate of retirement, the challenges of retaining college graduated, and overall population loss, makes retaining talent crucial for the health and stability of the Berkshire County economy.

3. **Rising cost of doing business:** The cost for employers to both start, expand, and continue operations in Berkshire County is high as a result of infrastructure issues including cost of transportation and energy and a deficiency in both broadband infrastructure and public transit.

What are the top three opportunities related to business and industry in your region over the next five years?

1. **Variety of industries and occupations:** In Berkshire County, the economy is diversified and are a variety of industry sectors which allow for a wide range of job opportunities at varying education and experience levels, such as engineering, nursing, hospitality, and business management.

2. **Partnerships with educational institutions:** Within the county there are a number of four-year colleges, community colleges, and technical schools which act as partners in the workforce and economic development sectors. Our education partners are responsive and have established specific sector based training and learning programs, as well as contributed to creation and sustainability of career pathways. Industry sectors with strong education partners include healthcare, manufacturing, and the creative economy.

3. **Growing entrepreneurial spirit:** Berkshire County is particularly attractive to those looking to start their own business, with affordable space and relatively low cost of living, and a growing entrepreneurial ecosystem. The Region is focusing efforts on communication, infrastructure, social opportunities, and workforce programming. There have been recent efforts to reimage the region with a focus on the creative and innovative economy with many new start-ups and makerspaces being developed.

Industry Demand Analysis (NAICS)
Utilize your region's criteria and labor market data (i.e. data packages and excel tool) developed for the regional planning teams to explore the following questions in discussion and develop consensus for each section.

What top three industries are most important to the region's economic success and why?

- **Health Care**: As the largest and fastest growing industry in the Berkshires, Health Care and Social Assistance is vital to the Berkshire economy. With an aging population, the provision of health services will grow in importance and it will be necessary to continue to prepare a high-quality workforce. This industry also offers career pathways, has a supply gap in terms of more openings than applicants, is aligned with the Region's economic development strategies, and is a resilient industry.

- **Advanced Manufacturing**: As one of the Region's top five largest industries, Advanced Manufacturing is a priority for the Berkshires in terms of supporting the overall economy. The industry has experienced a consistent need for employees, is aligned with the Region's economic development plan, offers career pathways, and includes high growth/wage occupations.

- **Hospitality/Tourism**: The Berkshires are well known as a tourist destination, with a focus on health and wellness. With a high location quotient for Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (2.0 in 2017), the area has a wide variety of resorts, hotels, cultural institutions, and recreation

destinations. Building on this industry is important to the overall economy as it serves not only tourists but also builds on the quality of life for residents. This industry is also in line with the Region's economy development strategy, experiences supply gaps, and offers career pathways.

What three industries currently face the most significant workforce development challenges?

- **Health Care:** The Health Care industry faces significant workforce development challenges as many employers are unable to find a sufficient number of qualified applicants to fill open positions. The industry struggles with not having enough training programs that are supportive of the interested participants' schedules and meet participant needs in terms of timing, location, transportation, child care, and other constraints.
- **Manufacturing:** The Manufacturing industry is facing workforce development challenges due to a lack of applicants who are willing and able to work the different shifts that are required, such as nights and weekends. Additionally, the lack of transportation remains an issue for the workforce as they are unable to take public transportation. Another challenge related to workforce development for the Manufacturing industry is the cost of creating appropriate and adequate training programs that meet the needs of the ever-changing industry, including lack of access to high tech equipment. Many employers also show concern related to work readiness of the applicants including needing workers who have greater level of fluency in technology, problem solving skills, and general work ethic. This industry is facing high replacement demand as workers are getting older and closer to retirement age.
- **Professional, Scientific and Business services:** Particularly industries that employ engineers are experiencing workforce challenges as there is such a lack of qualified engineers to serve the many different technical sectors. Additionally, some of the area's largest companies are struggling to attract and retain qualified engineers due to limited options for accompanying partners.

Occupational Demand Analysis (SOC)

Utilize your region's criteria and labor market data (i.e. data packages and excel tool) developed for the regional planning teams to explore the following questions in discussion and develop consensus for each section.

What are the top occupations or occupational groups in which the region is facing the most significant employee shortages? Utilize the regional occupational list that ranks of 3, 4 and 5 star occupations for the region and determine those with significant shortages based upon the "supply" data for the region, input from business, organizations and other input.

Based on the information provided by the State as well as information collected from interviews, additional data, and experience working in the region, the following occupations and occupations groups are facing the most significant employee shortage:

- **Registered Nurses & Healthcare Technicians**: The Registered Nursing occupation (along with Nurse Practitioners and Vocational Nurses) is facing the highest level of employee shortage, with the occupation projected to continue to grow over the next decade indicating need for more nurses to be trained. Data from the HWOL indicates there are currently over 150 unfilled openings.
- **Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers**: Primarily serving the Manufacturing industry, the Heavy and Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers occupation is experiencing a shortage of employees. Data from HWOL indicates that there are just under 125 unfilled openings for this occupation.
- **Retail Professionals**: Despite recent retail downsizing, First Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers and Retail Salespersons are both experiencing high levels of demand. The Retail

Professional occupational group is constantly hiring as there is high level of turnover in these occupations. Data from HWOL indicates that there are a combined 140 unfilled openings for these occupations.

Which occupations offer a "career pathway" for workers to move to higher skills and wages, especially workers starting at entry-level? (Add 1 or 2 star occupations not included above that are entry-level yet important because of a career pathway or cluster.)

- **Medical Assistants:** Nursing Assistants, Home Health Aides, Personal Care Aides, and others are all critical entry points for careers in the Health Care industry. These occupations are rated as a 3 on the star system, but they provide entry into viable career ladders.
- **Hospitality Workers**: Including Cooks, Short Order (Star 1), Dishwashers (Star 2), Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop (Star 2), Food Servers, Non-restaurant (Star 2), and Bakers (Star 2), are all entry level jobs that offer opportunities to get into higher paying positions along the career ladder.

Workforce Supply

Using the regional planning data tool and packages, review information on existing unemployed workers, graduates coming from educational pipelines and other data on workforce supply.

What are the top three broad labor supply challenges facing the region over the next five years based on the existing workforce in the region (e.g. retirement and aging of population, low high school graduation rate, education or workforce skills of existing labor pool, limited language proficiency, etc.)?

1. **Educational attainment:** As mentioned, the number of people within Berkshire County with a Bachelor's Degree is slightly lower than the state average. A significant percentage of the population lacking educational attainment and/or college completions has resulted in, and will continue to result in, a talent shortage for employers.
2. **Perceived lack of available jobs:** There is limited awareness of the wide variety and high number of job opportunities that exist in the Berkshire Region, which often results in people giving up or not looking at all. According to feedback from the focus groups, there is a growing culture of relying on social assistance which has made it difficult for people to break out of the cycle and break out of the mind frame that there just is not any work to be had and so why should they even look. According to comparisons in employment from 2ndQ 2016 to 2016, there has been 3.9% growth in residential mental health facilities, 8.7% growth in Elder care, 2.2% in social assistance, and 7% in emergency relief services indicating that more services are being utilized. This perception of a lack of jobs is also a challenge when trying to retain the region's college graduates.
3. **Barriers to employment:** a significant portion of the Berkshire County labor force experiences multiple barriers to employment, including but not limited to, lack of transportation, requirement of drug testing, wage disparity, and lack of employable skills. These barriers hinder residents from finding and pursing available jobs.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

What are the top three labor supply opportunities facing the region over the next five years based on the existing workforce in the region?

1. **Quality of Life**: The Berkshires offers a high quality of life including access to natural and cultural resources, quaint and unique downtowns, and easy access to the Albany area. The region offers an opportunity for the workforce to achieve a healthy work-life balance, which may be more difficult to achieve in other parts of the state, so there is potential to attract new employees and those looking to start companies. Additionally, lower housing costs, limited traffic, and access to major metros may be attractive to families or individuals looking to move out of the Boston area and reassess their priorities.
2. **Strong Educational Institutions**: The Berkshire region educational institutions are responsive to employer and workforce needs, have established sector training programs, and created career pathway opportunities. This Blueprint process is intended to build on these opportunities, increase awareness, and enhance the offerings over the next five years to benefit the labor supply.
3. **Diversified Economy**: The Berkshires is not heavily concentrated in one particular industry which makes it possible for job seekers to find a variety of opportunities and train for those that meet their needs.

Based upon UI Claimant population, what is the region's largest supply of unemployed workers by job type?

Based on November 2017 Unemployment Claimant statistics, the region's largest supply of unemployed workers are Construction workers (150), followed by Office and Administration Support occupations (115), and Management occupations (109).

In terms of industry, the Retail Trade industry (123) has the largest number of UI claimants, followed by Manufacturing (117), and Construction (103).

What are the characteristics of unemployed and under employed workers in the region?

As of the November 2017 UI statistics, there are a total of 1,014 people claiming unemployment benefits in the Berkshire region. Of those 1,014, there are 596 males and 418 females. The following are additional characteristics of the unemployed and underemployed workers in the region:

- **Age**: The unemployed workers are split pretty evenly between three main age groups including those aged 55-64 (235), 45-54 (228) and 25-34 (225).
- **Education**: The vast majority of the UI claimants have a HS/GED as the highest level of education (441), followed by some college education (191), and then a Bachelor's degree (130). Only 47 people with vocational training were claiming UI in November.
- **Race**: Over 900 of the claimants are white, followed by Hispanic/Latino (45), Black (43).

- **Wage**: Most of the recipients have wages of less than $400 (355), followed by $400-$699 (296), and then $700-$999 (190).

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Describe the universe of the region's existing pipelines of new workers (credentials) across public and private secondary and post-secondary institutions.
➢ Highest and lowest number of new graduates by credential/CIP?
➢ How does retention of graduates in your region influence supply?

Four area colleges provide invaluable educational opportunities for students including:
- **Berkshire Community College**: public 2-year college – enrollment is 2,730 (1,112 full time; 1,618 part time). Estimate that 95% remain in Berkshires.

- **Williams College**: private, 4- year liberal arts college undergrad enrollment is 2,000. Estimated 8% remain in Berkshires.

- **MA College of Liberal Arts (MCLA)** – public 4-year college – 1,800 students (1558 full time; 416 part time). Estimated that 52% remain in Berkshires.

- **Bard College at Simon's Rock** – private 4-year, not-for-profit – 380 students. Estimate that 3% remain in Berkshire County.

The highest number of graduate by degree from public and private secondary and post-secondary institutions include:
- Liberal arts and sciences (171)
- Economics (92)
- Health Professionals (72)
- Mathematics (72)
- Business management, marketing (63)

The lowest number of new graduates by degree from public and private secondary and post-second institutions include:
- Foreign language (2)
- Natural resources (8)
- Philosophy & religion (8)
- Education (9)
- Engineering (14)

Berkshire Community College and MCLA offer the most opportunities for pipeline opportunities through work experiences and college internships. Williams and Bard provide service learning and community outreach activities, but small portions of graduates remain in the Berkshires. The Region struggles to retain the graduates of the programs with many leaving the area for career opportunities in the Boston area or elsewhere creating a supply gap. This Blueprint process has created awareness around the need to connect local graduates with local job opportunities to try to reduce the supply gap and create strategies for retention. Significant progress and strategies have been developed for retaining MCLA and BCC students, however, as part of this regional planning effort, strategies will be developed to exposure Williams College and Bard College at Simon's Rock students to integrated efforts. This is currently being done through the development of the college internship program to help promote local opportunities for these students. We are also exploring the idea of having stronger local job/career fairs provided for college students and strengthening our STEM programs so that our local engineering and technology firms will attract our college students to their companies.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

III.   Where do we want to go?
Describe the collectively developed criteria, industry and occupational priorities, vision, mission, and goals for your region.

Criteria for Priority Industries/Occupations
The regional kick-off meetings with the WSC suggested a number of foundational criteria to prioritize industries and occupations, including existing job openings, jobs with low barriers to entry, jobs that lead to career pathways, and occupations with high demand (current openings, short/long term projections), and self-sustaining wages.

STATE CRITERIA
- ➢ High employer demand
- ➢ High demand and high wage (4-5 Star Occupations)
- ➢ Talent Gaps (Ratio of Supply to Demand)
- ➢ Career Pathways

REGIONAL CRITERIA
What additional criteria are important to your Regional Planning Team?
- ➢ Supply Gap (more openings than qualified)
- ➢ High growth, high wage occupations (4 and 5 stars)
- ➢ Supportive employers (job growth, wages, benefits)
- ➢ Aligned with economic development strategies (fit with 7-year vision, leverage existing assets)
- ➢ Career pathways (pathways with entry-level points and growth potential)
- ➢ Support industry resilience (emerging, stable, attract workforce, ripple criteria, supporting small business and entrepreneurship)
- ➢ Wealth generation

Priority Industries and Occupations
Using your regional context and mutually agreed upon regional criteria, list your priority regional industries and occupations or occupational groups.

List your 2-3 priority industries by 2-digit NAICS. Where you choose to prioritize an industry that does not fit neatly into a 2-digit NAICS code (i.e. creative economy), note where it would best fit (i.e. Arts and Recreation) and describe the portion of the 2-digit industry you are prioritizing. For each selection, write a brief justification of your choice.

1) Health Care and Social Assistance (NAICS 62): As the largest and fastest growing industry in the Berkshires, Health Care and Social Assistance is vital to the Berkshire economy.

2) Hospitality and Management (NAICS 71 and NAICS 72): With a high location quotient for Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (2.00 in 2017), this industry is in line with the Region's economy development strategy, experiences supply gaps, and offers career pathways.

3) Advanced Manufacturing (NAICS 31): Manufacturing is one of the Region's top five largest industries and is aligned with the Region's economic development plan, offers career pathways, and includes high growth/wage occupations.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

List 3 to 5 priority occupations or occupational groups by SOC code (4-8 digit, as necessary). Include a short description justifying the choices. In building the list regions should consider:
- the list of top 4 and 5-star occupations identified in the previous section (green)
- occupations that are part of a career pathway (but maybe lower stars) and;
- a further prioritization of those occupations on the list experiencing a constricted "supply" of workers or new graduates with necessary skills (credentials, degrees, apprenticeships etc.) for occupations.

The Berkshires Region worked hard to capture priority occupations that serve the priority industries, meet the criteria, and include career ladder/pathway opportunities. Please see the attached graphic for more detail about what occupations are included in these groupings.

Health Care and Social Assistance Industry:
- **Nurses and Nurses' Aides** related occupations were identified as a priority due to the constant need for more entry-level applicants and the growing size of the industry. Although there are a number of career pathway opportunities that currently exist, we are working with companies and training providers to expand the number of programs to help develop additional pipeline opportunities.

Hospitality and Management Industry:
- **Chefs and Management** related occupations were selected as a priority to serve the hospitality industry and create programming to have top-notch service throughout the Region. This group also offers career growth opportunity. We are currently exploring the development of a post-secondary culinary arts training programs to help connect students and adults to career pathway opportunities in hospitality and management.

Hospitality/Management and Health Care/Social Assistance Industries
- **Cross over occupations** include jobs that could serve both priority industries and therefore are particularly important for program and training development. This group includes waiters and waitresses, maids and housekeeping cleaners, general maintenance, and others. The immediate earnings potential in these occupations is low, but there are opportunities to grow from these initial entry-level jobs. During our employer focus groups, it was noted that there are significant opportunities for entry-level employees to receive training and move up a career ladder between hospitality careers into healthcare careers. This concept was appealing as it would open up additional employment opportunities at the entry level.

Advanced Manufacturing
- **Machinists** and related occupations are in high demand in the Berkshires so it is a priority to focus on ways to create training and credentialing programs to create more qualified applicants.
- **Engineering** related occupations are also in high demand to serve not only the Advanced Manufacturing industry but many other industries in the Region as well.
- **Management** related occupations are a priority to be able to fill the positions being vacated by long-time workers who are retiring.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Berkshire Region – Priority Industries & Occupations

	Health Care & Social Assistance		Hospitality & Management			Advanced Manufacturing

Nurses and Nurses Aides

29-1141	Registered Nurses
39-9021	Personal Care Aides
31-1011	Home Health Aides
31-1014	Nursing Assistants
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
31-9092	Medical Assistants
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners
21-1094	Community Health Worker

Chefs & Management

11-1021	General and Operations Managers
11-9051	Food Service Managers
35-1011	Chefs and Head Cooks
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
43-4081	Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks

Machinists

51-4041	Machinists
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics
51-9195	Molders, Shapers, and Casters, Except Metal and Plastic
51-9196	Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders
51-9041	Extruding, Forming, Pressing and Compacting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders

Engineers

17-2051	Civil Engineers
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers
17-2112	Industrial Engineers
17-2071	Electrical Engineers
17-2061	Computer Hardware Engineers

Cross-over Occupations (Hospitality & Health Care)

35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food
37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners
35-3022	Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers
35-9011	Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers

Management

11-1021	General and Operations Managers
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
11-3051	Industrial Production Managers

Industries and Occupations – Critical but not Prioritized. (*OPTIONAL*) If the team would like to describe industries and occupations that are notable in your region but not prioritized during this regional prioritization process, please list them here with a description of what makes the industry/occupation significant.

Critical Industries:
- **Education**: This is a crucial industry because of its size (3rd largest industry sector in the region) and there is replacement demand needs due to older workers in the industry.
- **Creative Economy**: At the intersection of arts, culture, innovation, and commerce, the Creative Economy is important to the region to continue to cultivate entrepreneurialism and create new jobs that are attractive to people who want to live in the Berkshires.
- **Business & Finance**: As the Region's 4th largest sector, the Business and Finance sector offers opportunities for growth including career ladder potential.

Critical Occupations:
- **Teachers** (including pre-school, teacher assistants, special education, and residential teachers): Education related occupations are critical to the region. With over 55 job opportunities for teachers reported by the state's Job Quest listing for December 2017. This occupation has a need to fill positions especially when considering that 45% of teachers are at retirement age.
- **Managers and Assistant Managers**: It continues to be challenging to fill manager and assistant manager positions but they are critical to organizations and operations running smoothly.
- **Phlebotomy, Surgical Technicians, and Healthcare Technicians**: These health care related occupations present opportunities for career ladder opportunities, there are over 40 openings currently, and there will continue to be demand with 43% of those in the field at retirement age.
- **Cybersecurity**: There will continue to be a growing need for those with extensive experience in cybersecurity and related technology to serve a variety of industries.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Each of these industries and occupations are critical to the Berkshire economy and specific strategies are currently underway with other regional initiatives to address these concerns. The Regional Team will continuously pull together the other organizations that are implementing programs within these sectors to make sure that we have a regional workforce strategy.

Assets
For each of the selected **priority industries and occupations (purple section),** articulate existing assets and gaps in capacity.

Credential Asset Mapping Tool. For priority industries and occupations that require credentials, use the Credential Asset Mapping Tool in Attachment 1 to demonstrate assets and gaps for each priority industry and occupation.

Part of our 1st year strategies will be conducting a skills gap and credentials assessment in order to better understand the assets and gaps that exits. We will utilize feedback from employers to establish new or modify existing curriculum, programmatic and training opportunities. Attachment A briefly highlights what exists, however, this will be completed more thoroughly during year one which will include baseline metrics and targets.

For example, our certified nursing assistant program is operated as a joint partnership between Berkshire Health Systems and Berkshire Community College and is currently a late afternoon training program. Potential job seekers have indicated that a morning or day program would be more appropriate for school-aged parents to participate which could potentially add additional job seekers to the pool of applicants. Our goal in year 1 is to conduct the baseline assessment to see if this would be feasible. Despite state-wide concerns that the CNA certificate is insufficient to prepare completers for employment in acute care settings, that is not a concern for our region as our hospital staff are the instructors of the training program. Additional creative ways to develop training and career pathway opportunities will continue to be explored for each priority industry and occupation.

Non-Credential Asset and Gap Analysis. For priority industries and occupations that **do not** require a credential, describe what existing assets in the region can meet the employer demand, and where systemic gaps prevent meeting employer demand.

As noted above, part of our Team's 1st year strategies will be to identify all existing assets and gaps that exist in the region. Baseline metrics, targets and trajectories will be provided over the next 5 years to develop more specific strategies. All priority cross over occupations require a certificate (i.e. Safe serve certificate, locally recognized certificate, etc.). A generalized analysis is provided in the attachment. This will continue to be updated and completed during the first year.

Vision, Mission, Goals.
Using your articulated priority industries, occupations, and existing assets, articulate your broader vision, mission, and goals.

Vision. State 2-5 things that you hope will be true in your region 10 years through the lens of education, workforce development, and economic development to address the priority industries and occupations identified in the Blueprint. Consider questions such as, which industries will thrive? What are the living standards and educational levels of your population?

The Berkshires are able to recruit and retain an effective workforce with jobs that offer competitive pay, high quality of life, economic mobility, and support a diverse and sustainable economy. In addition:

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- *Every Berkshire County employer has access to a skilled workforce.*
- *Every job seeker has access to meaningful employment.*
- *The Berkshires are the premier place to live, work and play.*
- *The Region has become more intentionally connected to the Massachusetts and Tri-State innovation economy*

Mission. State what each set of core partners has agreed to do in order to achieve your vision. What will educational partners do? What will economic development partners do? What will workforce development partners do? (*For example: Our education partners will focus resources on expanding career awareness and exposure, as well as the quantity and variety of education programming in priority industries X, Y, and Z. Please note these are broad mission statements rather than specific strategies, below*).

To promote economic vitality in Berkshire County by implementing creative solutions for business, workforce, and community challenges through a demand-driven, integrated system.

Education
Our education partners will enhance the alignment of academic programs and curriculum to workforce and employer needs. We strive to promote accessibility to education and training while focusing on early career exploration, clearly defining career pathways, supporting internships and apprenticeships, and instilling a "why we work" culture into the Berkshires.

Workforce
Our workforce partners will provide a single-point of contact, easy-to-navigate workforce system for all stages of career development, supporting the needs of area employers and linking them directly to our resident workers. We will partner closely with education and economic development to implement a wide-range of customized workforce initiatives to meet the unique needs of the Berkshires.

Economic Development
Our Economic Development partners will support career pathways for Berkshire workers by ensuring the region provides training aligned with industry/employer needs, convening economic partners and the education/workforce communities, and committing that the employer community will provide high-quality job opportunities.

Goals. Describe your *shared* goals for 2018, 2020, and 2022. Note that goals listed here should be those that need participation of players from multiple entities and across two or three of the systems for accomplishment.

By 2018, we will...	By 2020, we will...	By 2022, we will...
• Conduct an asset inventory of workforce, economic, and education initiatives to identify partners, gaps, and duplications and align stakeholders.	• Attract and retain the number of those ages 22-40 in the Berkshire Workforce. • Become more intentionally connected to the Massachusetts and Tri-State innovation economy.	• Increase the labor force participation rate and employment share in priority industries. • Increase services to those ages 22-40, accompanying partners and those with work experience (Non-WIOA career center customers) by 10%.

• Establish baseline data and metrics for goals and strategies. • Increase engagement of Berkshire employers with area K-12 schools, colleges, and graduates by 5% each year • Develop set of career pathways for 3 priority sectors.		• Improve inter-city and intra-regional public transportation system. • Increase the number of trained/certified workers for prioritized occupations by 10%. • Reduce supply gap ratio of priority occupations by 10%. • Decrease the average age of those working in the manufacturing sector. • Decrease the number of job openings unfilled for longer than 6 months. • Stabilize the economy to position the county to grow total number of jobs.

Please see attached matrix with goals, timeframes, strategies, and lead partner for more information. As part of the data gathering stage in 2018, baseline data and data points will be outlined.

IV.   How do we get there?
Describe the strategies you will jointly employ to align the work of multiple systems around your shared vision, mission, and goals.

Shared Strategies
While each system may make changes in individual programming to align with the region's priorities, all systems will need to commit to shared changes in the following areas, stated below. Describe how your region will work collaboratively in the following two areas.

Continuous Communication. How often and in what way will you meet to review progress towards shared goals and make course corrections?

The Berkshire Regional Planning Team will meet every other month for the first year to tighten the partnership (for a total of 4 meetings in the first year), identify necessary task forces, kick off priority projects, and continue to discuss implementation. After the first year the meeting schedule will be revisited. It will be critical in our rural region to incorporate all regional efforts into our planning in order to maximize efforts.

Shared Measurement Systems. What data and measurement systems will you rely on to support shared understanding of how well you are meeting your goals and making progress towards a shared vision?

During the first year, our Team will conduct an asset inventory of workforce, economic, and education initiatives to continue to identify partners, gaps, and duplications and to align stakeholders. It will be critical to establish baseline data and metrics for our goals. Realistic timelines, data points and who will be responsible for implementation will be identified and kept accountable.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

The Berkshire Regional Planning Team will use the following data points to measure the success of the efforts:

- Engagement of area employers through number of discussions, contacts, and communications
- Number and percent of residents aged 22-40
- Number of people using the career center
- Number of trained/certified workers in priority occupations
- Supply gap ratio in priority occupations
- Average age in the manufacturing sector
- Number of job openings left unfilled for longer than 6 months
- Total number of jobs in the priority industries as reported by the BLS

All of this will be tracked and reported out to the Regional Planning Team. Blueprint initiatives will also be documented and available for public review.

Other Shared Strategies. What other shared strategies will the region adopt to ensure progress towards the common agenda?

The Regional Planning Team is planning to:

- Continue to strengthen the spirit of collaboration among and between the different sectors.
- Continue to work to support the workers, employers, and residents of the Berkshires through high-quality education, a focus on economic growth, and support of personal improvement.
- Work collectively to establish best practices, share information, and work together to implement the Blueprint document.
- Reach out to additional partners including UMass Amherst and Williams to develop strategies around retaining regional college graduates as well as with assistance with research and development.
- Capitalize on the strong regional collaborations and efforts that are currently underway to maximize countywide efforts and reduce duplication.
- Explore and expand relationships with the Albany/Malta region relating to advanced manufacturing opportunities.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

To ensure that the work each partner is doing is supportive of the common agenda, describe the specific activities regional partners have committed to doing.

Education. Describe the changes in programming, recruitment, retention and placement strategies, assessment, tracking, or other strategies specific educational partners have committed to in order to meet shared regional goals.

- Berkshires have a strong Connecting Activities High School program whereas 85% of graduates participate in our career awareness, exploration and immersion activities. Our goal is to expand college and career readiness programming into middle schools by 15% and into elementary schools by 5%.
- Establish regular meetings with vocational-technical providers to guide programming and connect with key partners in industry, workforce development, and economic development. With the establishment of the new Taconic High School and expanding STEM program at McCann, we will capitalize on strengthening their career pathway opportunities and advisory councils with business leaders.

- Work to reframe the conversation around working in the manufacturing industry and increase promotion of opportunities and career pathways. For example: engage parents, counselors, teachers in opportunities and changes in manufacturing as a profession; create an "in the high school" program for manufacturing related industry to raise awareness among students who may be interested in pursuing; connect technology-inclined (IT) students with emerging opportunities in manufacturing; focus on students coming out of high school that are not planning to go to college as potential applicants for manufacturing entry-level positions.
- Expand on-campus visits by Berkshire County employers to local schools and colleges.
- Expand local college internship programming.

Workforce Development. Describe the changes in programming, employer relations, recruitment, retention and placement strategies tracking, or other strategies specific workforce development partners have committed to in order to meet shared regional goals.

- Develop, coordinate, and integrate common industry demand assessment tool to track changes in industry needs and connect to job seekers.
- Establish a single point of contact for all initiatives to ensure ease of access and coordination among job seekers, employers, education, economic development, and workforce development.
- Pilot Berkshire Business Internship program.
- Engage regional colleges around engineering training and pathways from high school STEM classes to internships, apprenticeships, and jobs. Work to align curriculum development to priority industries and economic growth and infusing career exploration into high schools.
- Pilot Berkshire Recruiter Initiative to connect atypical (experienced, educated, millennial, relocating, etc.) career center customers to employment, training, job club, and career center services.
- Develop a series of "work readiness" workshops or activities to help residents connect to employment opportunities.
- Explore and assess public transportation system to meet needs of employers and workers.
- Continue to collect and analyze employer needs and communicate with partners (Foundation from BCREB, BIC, CEDS, Compact, etc.).
- Coordinate education and training providers to address gaps, leverage resources, and establish one well defined cross-sector pathways.
- Look for opportunities to connect career pathways between hospitality and healthcare for careers in food service/preparation, facility services, and housecleaning.
- Increase marketing for career pathways to inform potential entrants about future opportunities.
- Create a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) day program.
- Establish a top-notch hospitality sector training program that makes Berkshire County known for service and high-quality experiences. This may consist of an application process to make it attractive and respected, include the development of certifications for customer service, and be considered a hospitality "boot camp" of intensive fixed-period training with resulting certification.
- Increase the number of grant applications to the state for funding related to internship and apprenticeships. Additionally, work to leverage other resources to address training gaps.
- Create a cross border task force to identify opportunities for partnering and training opportunities that link with manufacturing and innovation occurring in the Tri-State economy.
- Increase number of internships, on-the-job training programs, and apprenticeship opportunities in priority industries and occupations.
- Increase number of internships, on-the-job training programs, and apprenticeship opportunities in priority industries and occupations.
- Leverage resources to address training gaps.

- Increase short term certificate programs with partners that address non-credit and stackable credentials (healthcare, and hospitality sectors).

Economic Development. Describe the changes in economic development strategy that economic development partners have committed to in order to meet shared regional goals.

- Host "life after" events for both after high school and college students to provide appropriate information about career opportunities, local companies, and education opportunities. Plan to continue annually, if successful.
- Establish a task force to make improvements to employee retention in the community including improved transportation, housing options, young professional networking opportunities, and other initiatives to make the Berkshires a viable location for people to live all along the socioeconomic spectrum.
- Launch and utilize the Berkshire Innovation Center.
- Implement Berkshire Initiative for Growth recommendations.
- Cultivate an environment that attracts and retains employees by being responsive to business needs.
- Create a user-friendly job opportunities webpage that connects to 1Berkshire and other initiatives.

V. Conclusion

Conclusion. Describe any closing remarks, next steps, or considerations.

The Blueprint development process was an important opportunity to identify our regional strengths and challenges, understand our labor market supply and demand, and to begin to think differently and collectively on how to address these concerns. The Blueprint is a work in progress and will remain fluid as we develop baseline metrics, specific strategies, and as we implement our programs and activities.

The Berkshires are committed to creating a better tomorrow for our community. We have a long history of proactively addressing education, workforce and economic needs. We do this through innovative collaborations, advocacy, promoting the region, growing business, developing future leaders, training the workforce, and connecting young people to exceptional education and college/career readiness programming.

We have jobs and viable careers and need to creatively market these opportunities to a more diverse workforce and by articulating solid career pathway opportunities for success. We are unique, innovative and committed to accessibility, alignment, and excellence. In order to accomplish our goals, we will need to have human and financial capacity in order to balance all of our needs and look forward to working with the Massachusetts Skills Cabinet to accomplish our goals.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Credential Asset Mapping Tool – <mark>Advanced Manufacturing</mark>

Occupation	List the occupation the credential is for, including the SOC code.	51-4041 Machinists 49-9041 Industrial Machinery Mechanics 51-9195 Molders, shapers, and casters 51-9196 Paper goods machine setters 51-9041 Extruding, forming, pressing & compacting machine setters, operators
Type of Credential & Title of Credential	List the type of credential (e.g. Certificate, Degree, Certification, License, or Apprenticeship Certification)	1. Associate Degree 2. Certificate of Completion 3. Locally Recognized Certificate 4. Apprenticeship Certification
Credential Provider	List all training/ education providers that provide this credential in your region. For each provider, list the average number of individuals receiving the credential per year.	Berkshire Community College 1, 2, 3 (8) BCC Applied Mfg tech skills certificate (22 credits) BCC Technology certificate (28 credits) BCREB 2, 3 (13) McCann Technical School 2, 3 (5)
Integrated/ Accelerated	Is the training integrated with work experience and/or accelerated for adult learners? If no, how to basic learners matriculate?	Hands-on training provided May have internship component
Online/ Classroom/ Work-based	Describe education environment and instructional methods.	Classroom Hands-on laboratory
Pell-eligible?	Is the program Pell-eligible?	Yes – degree and certificate completion No – industry recognized certificate
Fee?	What are the fees?	Fees set by Board of Trustees (BCC $5,376, 28 credits) No fees for locally recognized certificate
Employer-validated?	Is the credential validated by local employers? If so, describe.	Employers align and validate curriculum and recognize the credentials
Stackable?	Is the credential stackable with other certificates? If so, describe.	Yes, stackable with other certificates, may not transfer to college credit
Portable?	Are the credentials portable to other states/ industries? If so, describe.	Yes, portable but acceptance may vary by employer
Credit/ Non-Credit?	Are they credit or non-credit?	Credit – Associates Degree & Certificate of Completion Non-credit – locally recognized certificate
Gaps?	Are there gaps in the pipeline for this occupation that require new strategies in the blueprint?	Occupational grouping requires ongoing alignment to reflect changing industry standards and requirements. Limits in offering based on limited grant funding.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Occupation	List the occupation the credential is for, including the SOC code.	**17-2051 Civil Engineers** **17-2141 Mechanical Engineers** **17-2112 Industrial Engineers** **17-2071 Electrical Engineers** **17-2061 Computer Hardware Engineers**
Type of Credential & Title of Credential	List the type of credential (e.g. Certificate, Degree, Certification, License, or Apprenticeship Certification)	1. Bachelor Degree 2. Associate Degree 3. Certificate of Completion 4. Locally Recognized Certificate 5. Apprenticeship Certification
Credential Provider	List all training/ education providers that provide this credential in your region. For each provider, list the average number of individuals receiving the credential per year.	BCC Engineering AS Degree (43 credits) BCC Computer/Electronic Technology AS Degree (47 credits) Manufacturing Technology: Engineering AS Degree (47 credits) MCLA Computer Sci./Elec. Eng. Degree (120 credits)
Integrated/ Accelerated	Is the training integrated with work experience and/or accelerated for adult learners? If no, how to basic learners matriculate?	
Online/ Classroom/ Work-based	Describe education environment and instructional methods.	Classroom Hands-on laboratory
Pell-eligible?	Is the program Pell-eligible?	Yes – degree and certificate completion No – industry recognized certificate
Fee?	What are the fees?	Fees set by Board of Trustees No fees for locally recognized certificate
Employer-validated?	Is the credential validated by local employers? If so, describe.	Employers align and validate curriculum and recognize the credentials
Stackable?	Is the credential stackable with other certificates? If so, describe.	Yes, stackable with other certificates, may not transfer to college credit
Portable?	Are the credentials portable to other states/ industries? If so, describe.	Yes, portable but acceptance may vary by employer
Credit/ Non-Credit?	Are they credit or non-credit?	Credit – Associates Degree & Certificate of Completion Non-credit – locally recognized certificate
Gaps?	Are there gaps in the pipeline for this occupation that require new strategies in the blueprint?	Occupational grouping requires ongoing alignment to reflect changing industry standards and requirements. Limits in offering based on limited grant funding.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Occupation	List the occupation the credential is for, including the SOC code.	11-1021 General & Operations Managers 51-1011 First Line Supervisors of Production & Operating Workers 11-3051 Industrial Production Managers
Type of Credential & Title of Credential	List the type of credential (e.g. Certificate, Degree, Certification, License, or Apprenticeship Certification)	1. Bachelor Degree 2. Associate Degree 3. Certificate of Completion 4. Locally Recognized Certificate 5. Apprenticeship Certification
Credential Provider	List all training/ education providers that provide this credential in your region. For each provider, list the average number of individuals receiving the credential per year.	
Integrated/ Accelerated	Is the training integrated with work experience and/or accelerated for adult learners? If no, how to basic learners matriculate?	
Online/ Classroom/ Work-based	Describe education environment and instructional methods.	Classroom Hands-on laboratory
Pell-eligible?	Is the program Pell-eligible?	Yes – degree and certificate completion No – industry recognized certificate
Fee?	What are the fees?	Fees set by Board of Trustees No fees for locally recognized certificate
Employer-validated?	Is the credential validated by local employers? If so, describe.	Employers align and validate curriculum and recognize the credentials
Stackable?	Is the credential stackable with other certificates? If so, describe.	Yes, stackable with other certificates, may not transfer to college credit
Portable?	Are the credentials portable to other states/ industries? If so, describe.	Yes, portable but acceptance may vary by employer
Credit/ Non-Credit?	Are they credit or non-credit?	Credit – Associates Degree & Certificate of Completion Non-credit – locally recognized certificate
Gaps?	Are there gaps in the pipeline for this occupation that require new strategies in the blueprint?	Occupational grouping requires ongoing alignment to reflect changing industry standards and requirements. Limits in offering based on limited grant funding.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Credential Asset Mapping Tool – <mark>Hospitality & Management</mark>

Complete one credential asset map for each priority occupation that requires a credential.

Occupation	List the occupation the credential is for, including the SOC code.	11-1021 General & Operations Managers 11-9051 Food Service Managers 35-1011 Chefs and Head Cooks 43-3031 Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks 43-4081 Hotel, Motel, and resort desk clerks
Type of Credential & Title of Credential	List the type of credential (e.g. Certificate, Degree, Certification, License, or Apprenticeship Certification)	1. Bachelors Degree 2. Associate Degree 3. Certificate of Completion 4. Locally Recognized Certificate 5. Apprenticeship Certification
Credential Provider	List all training/ education providers that provide this credential in your region. For each provider, list the average number of individuals receiving the credential per year.	MCLA 1 Berkshire Community College 2, 3 McCann Technical School 3 Mildred Elley 3 (8) Admin Assistant Quest Connect 3 (5) Quick Books BCC 3 (10) Microsoft specialist
Integrated/ Accelerated	Is the training integrated with work experience and/or accelerated for adult learners? If no, how to basic learners matriculate?	Hands-on training provided May have internship component
Online/ Classroom/ Work-based	Describe education environment and instructional methods.	Classroom Hands-on laboratory
Pell-eligible?	Is the program Pell-eligible?	Yes – degree and certificate completion No – industry recognized certificate
Fee?	What are the fees?	Fees set by Board of Trustees BCC ($5184 27 credits) Quest Connect ($575) No fees for locally recognized certificate
Employer-validated?	Is the credential validated by local employers? If so, describe.	Employers align and validate curriculum and recognize the credentials
Stackable?	Is the credential stackable with other certificates? If so, describe.	Yes, stackable with other certificates, may not transfer to college credit
Portable?	Are the credentials portable to other states/ industries? If so, describe.	Yes, portable but acceptance may vary by employer

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Credit/ Non-Credit?	*Are they credit or non-credit?*	Credit – Associates Degree & Certificate of Completion Non-credit – locally recognized certificate
Gaps?	*Are there gaps in the pipeline for this occupation that require new strategies in the blueprint?*	Occupational grouping requires ongoing alignment to reflect changing industry standards and requirements. Limits in offering based on limited grant funding.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Credential Asset Mapping Tool – <mark>Health Care & Social Assistance</mark>

Complete one credential asset map for each priority occupation that requires a credential.

Occupation	List the occupation the credential is for, including the SOC code.	29-1141 Registered Nurses 39-9021 Personal Care Aides 31-1011 Home Health Aides 31-1014 Nursing Assistants 29-2061 Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses 31-9092 Medical Assistants 29-1171 Nurse Practitioners 21-1094 Community Health Worker
Type of Credential & Title of Credential	List the type of credential (e.g. Certificate, Degree, Certification, License, or Apprenticeship Certification)	1. Bachelors Degree 2. Associate Degree 3. Certificate of Completion 4. Locally Recognized Certificate 5. Apprenticeship Certification
Credential Provider	List all training/ education providers that provide this credential in your region. For each provider, list the average number of individuals receiving the credential per year.	MCLA Health Science degree; Community Health Education degree; Med. Tech degree BCC Health Information Management AS Degree BCC Medical coding and health information management certificate BCC Human services certificate (29 credits) McCann Technical School 3 Mildred Elley 3 Berkshire Health Systems/BCC 3,4 Porchlight Home Care 3,4 Providence Care Center 3,4
Integrated/ Accelerated	Is the training integrated with work experience and/or accelerated for adult learners? If no, how to basic learners matriculate?	Hands-on training provided May have internship component
Online/ Classroom/ Work-based	Describe education environment and instructional methods.	Classroom Hands-on laboratory
Pell-eligible?	Is the program Pell-eligible?	Yes – degree and certificate completion No – industry recognized certificate
Fee?	What are the fees?	Fees set by Board of Trustees McCann - $500-$6,500 Mildred Elley - $12,644 No fees for locally recognized certificate
Employer-validated?	Is the credential validated by local employers? If so, describe.	Employers align and validate curriculum and recognize the credentials

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Stackable?	*Is the credential stackable with other certificates? If so, describe.*	Yes, stackable with other certificates, may not transfer to college credit
Portable?	*Are the credentials portable to other states/ industries? If so, describe.*	Yes, portable but acceptance may vary by employer
Credit/ Non-Credit?	*Are they credit or non-credit?*	Credit – Associates Degree & Certificate of Completion Non-credit – locally recognized certificate
Gaps?	*Are there gaps in the pipeline for this occupation that require new strategies in the blueprint?*	Occupational grouping requires ongoing alignment to reflect changing industry standards and requirements. Limits in offering based on limited grant funding.

REGIONAL PLANNING BLUEPRINT TEMPLATE

Credential Asset Mapping Tool – <mark>Cross-over Occupations (Hospitality & Health Care)</mark>

Complete one credential asset map for each priority occupation that requires a credential.

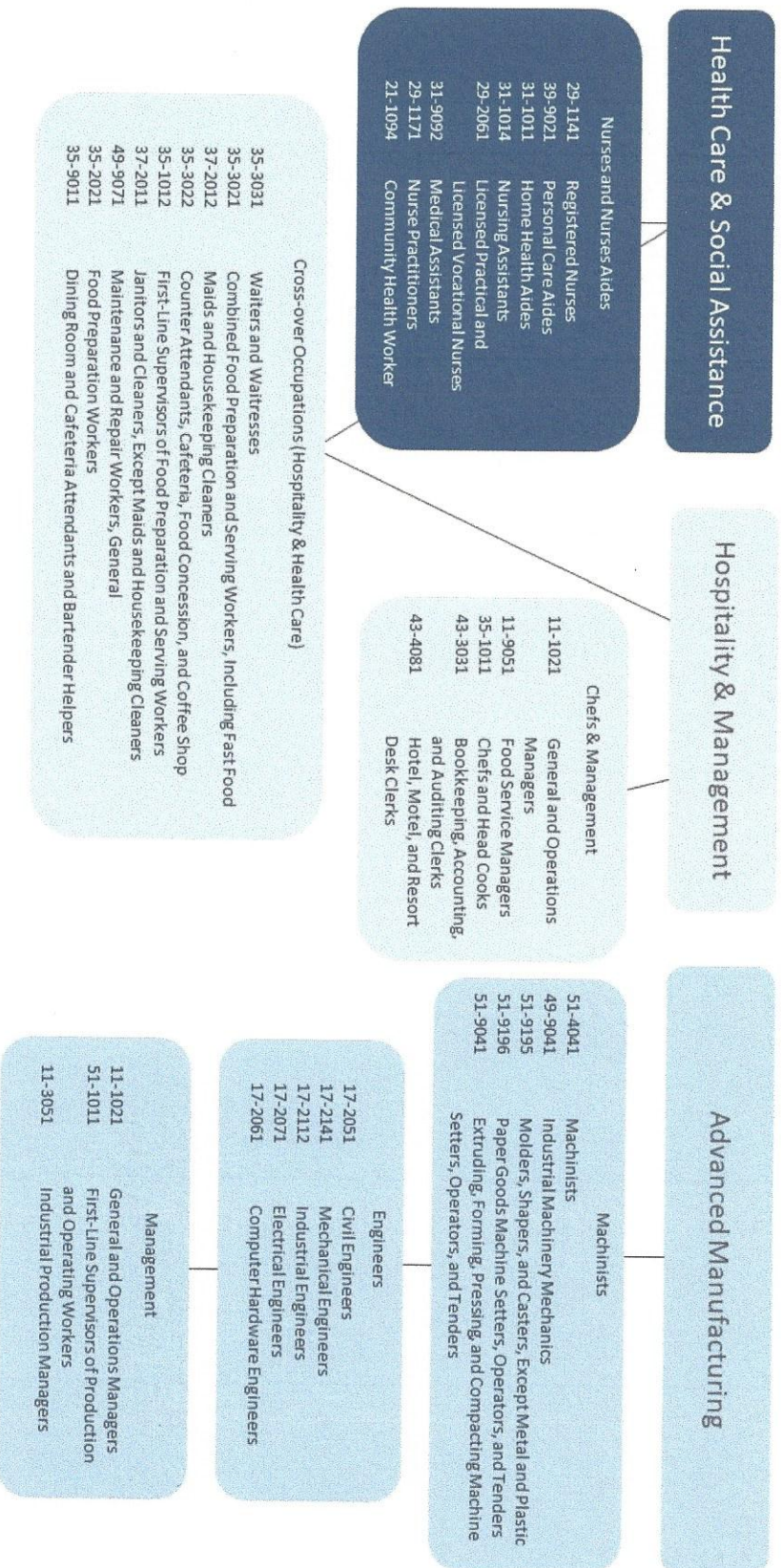|		
Occupation	*List the occupation the credential is for, including the SOC code.*	35-3031 Waiters and waitresses 35-3021 Combined Food Preparation and serving 37-2012 Maids and Housekeeping 35-3022 Counter attendants, cafeteria workers, food concession and coffee shop 35-1012 First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and serving workers 37-2011 Janitors and Cleaners 49-9071 Maintenance and repair workers 35-2021 Food preparation workers 35-9011 Dining room and cafeteria attendants and bartender helpers
Type of Credential & Title of Credential	*List the type of credential (e.g. Certificate, Degree, Certification, License, or Apprenticeship Certification)*	1. Associate Degree 2. Certificate of Completion 3. Locally Recognized Certificate 4. On-the-job training
Credential Provider	*List all training/ education providers that provide this credential in your region. For each provider, list the average number of individuals receiving the credential per year.*	BCC Culinary arts certificate BCC Lodging management certificate BCC Hospitality Admin AS Degree McCann Technical School BerkshireWorks 4 (2) Goodwill Industries 3 (2)
Integrated/ Accelerated	*Is the training integrated with work experience and/or accelerated for adult learners? If no, how to basic learners matriculate?*	Hands-on training provided May have internship component
Online/ Classroom/ Work-based	*Describe education environment and instructional methods.*	Classroom Hands-on laboratory
Pell-eligible?	*Is the program Pell-eligible?*	Yes – degree and certificate completion No – industry recognized certificate
Fee?	*What are the fees?*	Fees set by Board of Trustees No fees for locally recognized certificate
Employer-validated?	*Is the credential validated by local employers? If so, describe.*	Employers align and validate curriculum and recognize the credentials
Stackable?	*Is the credential stackable with other certificates? If so, describe.*	Yes, stackable with other certificates, may not transfer to college credit
Portable?	*Are the credentials portable to other states/ industries? If so, describe.*	Yes, portable but acceptance may vary by employer
Credit/ Non-Credit?	*Are they credit or non-credit?*	Credit – Associates Degree & Certificate of Completion Non-credit – locally recognized certificate

Gaps?	*Are there gaps in the pipeline for this occupation that require new strategies in the blueprint?*	Occupational grouping requires ongoing alignment to reflect changing industry standards and requirements. Limits in offering based on limited grant funding.

Attachment B

Berkshire Region – Priority Industries & Occupations

Health Care & Social Assistance

Nurses and Nurses Aides

29-1141	Registered Nurses
39-9021	Personal Care Aides
31-1011	Home Health Aides
31-1014	Nursing Assistants
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses
31-9092	Medical Assistants
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners
21-1094	Community Health Worker

Cross-over Occupations (Hospitality & Health Care)

35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food
37-2012	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners
35-3022	Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers
35-9011	Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers

Hospitality & Management

Chefs & Management

11-1021	General and Operations Managers
11-9051	Food Service Managers
35-1011	Chefs and Head Cooks
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
43-4081	Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks

Advanced Manufacturing

Machinists

51-4041	Machinists
49-9041	Industrial Machinery Mechanics
51-9195	Molders, Shapers, and Casters, Except Metal and Plastic
51-9196	Paper Goods Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders
51-9041	Extruding, Forming, Pressing and Compacting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders

Engineers

17-2051	Civil Engineers
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers
17-2112	Industrial Engineers
17-2071	Electrical Engineers
17-2061	Computer Hardware Engineers

Management

11-1021	General and Operations Managers
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
11-3051	Industrial Production Managers

Berkshire Region - Workforce Development Blueprint

Foundational - All Industries

Goal	Timeframe	Strategies	Lead
1. Conduct asset inventory of workforce, economic, and education initiatives to identify partners, gaps, and duplications and align stakeholders		a. Use findings to strengthen partnerships within and between each partner group. Establish regular meetings of key partners including economic development, workforce development, education, industry, and other stakeholders to discuss issues, coordinate on grants, implement Blueprint, and share data.	WD
2. To identify baseline metrics and realistic timeline in order to measure success	2018	b. Establish baseline metrics. Develop, coordinate, and integrate common industry demand assessment tool to track changes in industry needs and connect to job seekers	WD
		c. Establish a single point of contact for all of the initiatives to ensure ease of access and coordination among job seekers, employers, education, economic development, and workforce development.	WD
3. To increase engagement of Berkshire employers with area K-12 schools, colleges, and graduates by 5% each year	2018	a. Expand College and Career Readiness programming into middle schools	EDU
		b. Pilot Berkshire Business Internship program	WD
		c. Engage regional colleges around engineering training and pathways from high school STEM classes to internships, apprenticeships, and jobs. Work to align curriculum development to priority industries and economic growth and infusing career exploration into high schools.	WD
		d. Expand on-campus visits by Berkshire County employers to local schools and colleges. Host "life after" events for both after high school and after college to provide appropriate information about career opportunities, local companies, education opportunities. Continue annually if successful.	EDU/ED
4. To attract and retain the number of those ages 22-40 in the Berkshire Workforce	2020	a. Pilot Berkshire Recruiter Initiative to connect atypical (experienced, educated, millennial, relocating, etc.) career center customers to employment, training, job club, and career center services.	WD
5. Increase the labor force participation rate and employment share in priority industries	2022		
	2022	b. Support 1Berkshire Initiatives in attracting/retaining millennials	WD/EDU

Goal	Timeframe	Strategies	Lead
6. Increase services to atypical (non-WIOA) career center customers, including accompanying partners and those with work experience by 10%			
		c. Establish a task force to make improvements to employee retention in the community including improved transportation, housing options, young professional networking opportunities, and other initiatives to make the Berkshires a viable location for people to live all along the socioeconomic spectrum.	ED
7. To improve inter-city and intra-regional public transportation system	2022	a. Explore and assess public transportation system to meet needs of employers and workers.	ED / WD
		b. Proactive with high speed rail	ED
		c. Explore cross state border synergy	ED

Berkshire Region - Workforce Development Blueprint

Goal	Timeframe	Strategies	Lead
Industry and Occupation Specific			
8. Develop set of career pathways for 3 priority sectors		a. Strengthen and coordinate existing sector partnerships and activities	WD
		b. Launch and utilize Berkshire Innovation Center	ED
		c. Continue to collect and analyze employer needs and communicate with partners (Foundation from BCREB, BIC, CEDS, Compact, etc.)	WD
		d. Coordinate education and training providers to address gaps, leverage resources, and establish one well defined cross-sector pathways	WD
9. Increased number of trained/certified workers for prioritized occupations by 10%	2018 / 2022	e. Look for opportunities to connect career pathways between hospitality and healthcare for careers in food service/preparation, facility services, housecleaning.	WD
		f. Increase marketing for career pathways to inform potential entrants about future opportunities.	WD
10. Reduce supply gap ratio of priority occupations by 10%	2022	g. Create a CNA day program.	WD
		h. Establish a top-notch hospitality sector training program that makes Berkshire County known for service and high-quality experiences— could make it an application process to make it very attractive and respected, develop certifications for customer service, consider hospitality "boot camp" intensive fixed period training with resulting certification.	WD

Goal	Year	Strategy / Action	Lead
		i. Increase number of grant applications to the state for funding related to internship and apprenticeships. Leverage other resources to address training gaps	WD
11. Become more intentionally connected to the Massachusetts and Tri-State innovation economy		a. Create a cross border task force to identify opportunities for partnering and training opportunities that link with manufacturing and innovation occurring in the Tri-State economy. Increase number of internships, on-the-job training programs, and apprenticeship opportunities in priority industries and occupations.	WD
		b. Increase number of internships, on-the-job training, and apprenticeship opportunities in priority industries and occupations	WD
		c. Leverage resources to address training gaps	WD
	2020	d. Implement Berkshire Initiative for Growth recommendations	ED
12. Decrease the average age of those working in the manufacturing sector	2022	e. Establish regular meetings of the vo-tech providers to guide programming and connect with key partners in industry, workforce development, and economic development.	EDU
		f. Reframe the conversation around working in the manufacturing industry and increase promotion of opportunities and career-pathways. Engage parents, counselors, teachers in opportunities and changes in manufacturing as a profession; create an "in the high school" program for manufacturing related industry to raise awareness among students who may be interested in pursuing; connect technology-inclined (IT) students with emerging opportunities in manufacturing; and, focus on students coming out of HS that are not going to college as potential applicants for entry-level positions.	EDU
13. Decrease the number of job openings unfilled for longer than 6 months	2022	a. Cultivate an environment that attracts and retains employees by being responsive to business needs	ED
		b. Increase short term certificate programs with partners that address non-credit and stackable credentials (Healthcare, Hospitality)	WD
14. Stabilize the economy to position the county to grow total number of jobs		c. Create a user friendly job opportunities webpage that connects to 1Berkshire and other initiatives.	ED

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<u>Attachment D – List of Employers who participated in Focus Groups</u>

Participants represented both large and small companies throughout Berkshire County

1. 1Berkshire – representing 1400 Berkshire Businesses
2. Amaray Plastics - Manufacturing
3. Berkshire Community College – region's community college
4. Berkshire Health Systems – Health care
5. Berkshire Health Care Systems – Health care
6. Berkshire Innovation Center – group of 27 manufacturing organizations
7. Berkshire Medical Center – Health care
8. BerkshireWorks Career Center
9. BFair – Social Service
10. Brien Center – Social Service
11. Boyd Technologies – Manufacturing
12. Carr Hardware – Retail
13. Cascade School Supplies – Manufacturing
14. Covestro, LLC – Manufacturing
15. Crane Stationery – Manufacturing
16. Cranwell Resort – Travel/tourism
17. Crescent Creamery   Wholesale Distributing
18. Edward Jones – Financial organization
19. Fairview Hospital – Health care
20. General Dynamics – Manufacturing & STEM
21. Guardian Life Insurance – Financial institution
22. Hillcrest Educational Centers – Educational organization
23. Jacobs Pillow – Cultural organization
24. Lever, Inc. - Technology/Entrepreneurial
25. LTI Smartglass - Manufacturing
26. Neenah Paper, Inc. – Manufacturing
27. McCann Technical School – Education
28. Main Street Hospitality – Hospitality
29. Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts – Education
30. Mountain One Financial – Financial organization
31. Mountain View Home Care – Health care
32. Onyx Specialty Papers – Manufacturing
33. Premium Outlets – Retail organization representing 61 stores in Lee
34. Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute – Cultural organization
35. Tunnel City Transport – Transportation organization
36. Unistress Corporation - Construction
37. Williams College – Education

28% Manufacturing
14% Education
8% Retail

19% Health Care/Social Assistance
8% Travel/Tourism & Culture
5% Finance

18% other (Transportation, wholesale, technology/entrepreneurial, etc.)

Attachment E – EOLWD Comments

The following template reflects comments on your region's Labor Market Blueprint on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Department of Career Services, Commonwealth Corporation, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, MassTech, Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative, Executive Office of Education, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Higher Education, and Adult and Community Learning Services.

Blueprint Review Comment Summary

Region Name	Berkshire	
Overall Comments and Evaluation of Plan	The Berkshire Regional Labor Market Blueprint reflects collaborations between economic development, education, and workforce partners and deep knowledge and commitment to closing skill gaps in the region. There are several unique and robust strategies outlined to meet the goals.	
	This blueprint is on track for approval at the end of March, with areas for consideration noted throughout this document. Overall, the plan could be strengthened with consideration of baseline metrics to track to goals and strategy development.	
Comments on Plan	*For your consideration*	*Response or revision requested*
I. Introduction: Describe the process of creating a regional plan.	Strong engagement and commitment of multi-sector partners is clear throughout the document.	It might be helpful to list or describe the 36 businesses consulted, perhaps in an appendix...were they service industry, financial, health services, manufacturing? Large or small? Local or not? This helps inform the reader as to the types of companies that influenced the plan.
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	The BIC was mentioned in future plans, which is great; for development of the plan itself, it doesn't appear that the BIC or any accelerators, incubators or other elements of the innovation/new venture community were consulted. These might be important inputs to the plan or a good partner during Y1 of implementation, as potential sources of future economic resurgence.	

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II. Where are we now? Describe the current state of your region, including an analysis of industries, occupations, demographic shifts, and gaps between employer demand and employee supply.

Section demonstrates picture of the gaps between employer demand and employee supply and deep understanding/commitment of and to the region.

What is referred to as "Advanced Manufacturing" does not really appear to be "Advanced", it appears on page 14 to be traditional machinists etc. positions. It may be helpful to stratify manufacturing into the sector you describe that I would call "traditional", vs. truly "advanced" where the job requirements rely more in training in analytics, IT/cybersecurity, automation, artificial intelligence, robotics, Lean and other operational methods. This might inform a different look at industry requirements.

P5 past and current high-level industry trends. Given the demographics of the region (primarily white), has there been any discussion incorporated into the work of retaining and recruiting young adults about strategies for attracting and supporting non-white young residents, in particular those who come to the region as high school or college students?

P6 past and current high-level industry trends. Other than engineers, are there other occupations within Professional,

P5 regional demographics – will the projected increase in White Hispanic and Black non-hispanic residents help mitigate the decline in working age residents? In other words, what is the projected age of these new residents?

P7 There seems to be a disconnect between the statements associated with the challenge of the Rising Cost of Doing Business and the statements associated with the opportunities available related to a growing entrepreneurial spirit – affordable space, ...focusing efforts on communication, infrastructure.... Are the challenges more specifically related to transportation and broadband?

P8/12. Justification for manufacturing as priority sector isn't as strong as it could be – For example, data related to the number of replacement positions needed would be helpful, especially since it is the region's 5th largest sector, behind Education and Business and Finance.

P9. There seems to be a missing connection between identifying retail professionals as a priority occupation with the decline of retail jobs referenced on page 6.

P10 What is the background supporting the statement that there is "a growing culture of

Scientific and Technical Services that are projected to grow at a significant rate?

relying on social assistance?" Does this refer to cliff effect challenges? Does this region have a lower labor force participation rate than other regions in the state? If so, is there a particular age group or educational attainment group for whom this is the case? It is difficult to develop a strategy to address this issue without more specific data.

Would be helpful to clarify why the largest amount of unemployed workers are in Retail, Manufacturing, and Construction...but the most significant shortages are in the same or similar industries, particularly Manufacturing and Retail. Why is that?

P8 – with respect to manufacturing, has there been any discussion or discovery about whether the average wage might decline as older workers with substantially more skills and, therefore, productive capacity, retire and new workers have not yet had the time to develop sufficient proficiency to support higher level wages that can be paid to a more productive worker?

P8. Why is engineering referred to as a sector - was this intended to be a reference to Professional, Scientific and Business services, with a specific concentration on Engineering firms? Or was something else intended? What more do we know about the specific sectors where these occupations are employed?

III. Where do we want to go? Describe the collectively developed criteria, industry and occupational priorities, vision, mission, and goals for your region.

Consider:

- Did the region adequately describe their rationale for prioritizing their set of industries/occupations?

Really strong and engaging vision and mission. One typo on p. 16 (focus on aligning is crossed out).

P16. It is unclear how it would be possible to measure an increase in labor force participation rate in priority industries.

Pages 21 through 30 Attachment A Credential Asset Mapping Tool. All of these reference credentials that are portable but for which acceptance may vary by employer. Should this issue appear on the gaps section on each of the relevant Asset Maps?

P 15 non-credential asset and gap analysis. Not clear how a "locally recognized certificate" is required for priority cross over

occupations when it is not recognized by all employers in the region (see comment just above this comment); would be useful to explain this further.

P16. Unclear what is meant by "attract and retain the number of those ages 22-40 in Berkshire Workforce (might just be wording).

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P16. Would be helpful to define what is meant by "atypical career center customer"

Pages 16 and 17. I appreciate the stakeholders' focus on specific metrics for some of the goals. It would be helpful to have baseline data for these metrics. For example – "Increase engagement of employers with are K-12 schools, colleges and graduates by 5% each year" What is the current level of engagement? And how is it measured? Or "Decrease the number of job openings unfilled for longer than 6 months" What is the current number? Is there are target (either percentage or actual)? If it is not possible to access this data in the blueprint it should be part of Y1 of implementation.

IV. How do we get there? Describe the strategies you will jointly employ to align the work of multiple systems around your shared vision, mission, and goals.	May be useful to consider how UMass Amherst might participate. Not in the Berkshires, but it is probably the closest major university and largest potential	See previous comment: Overall, this section could be stronger if there was more specificity re: baseline metrics, targets and trajectories over the next five years. There

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Consider:

- Will the strategies ensure that the region meets its goals?
- Do you know exactly what the region is planning to do next?
- Has the region articulated how it will maintain communication across systems and sub-regions?

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source of college graduates in western Mass.

Williams is one of the most prestigious colleges in the nation, yet the document notes that only 8% of its students stay in the Berkshires. Could there be a marketing campaign to keep them? They represent a valuable group in terms of age, education, innovativeness and entrepreneurship; they spent 4 years in the Berkshires and are already familiar with it. Could a stronger partnership with Williams be established?

There are $ billions of investment in Albany/Malta area in semiconductor and nanotechnology research, development and manufacturing. Is there some way to incorporate some thinking about this into the plan? For example, could the Berkshires be marketed as the innovation bridge that connects Albany and Greater Boston with respect to semiconductor and nanotechnology innovation...perhaps spawning new businesses that would value the location as connectivity to both?

Is there an opportunity to leverage the intersection of the creative/innovation sector and the hospitality sector to promote the region to millennials through tourism and highlight "next generation"

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are instances where the strategies to meet stated goals were too vague. e.g. p. 18-19.

We have been hearing throughout the state that the level of preparation required for CNA certification (state certification) is insufficient to prepare completers for employment in acute care settings as well as rehab settings. Did this come up during the discussions with employers? And if so, will this be addressed in the CNA day program to be established?

If there are multiple programs for priority occupations that are granting credentials that are not recognized by all employers in the region, should there be a strategy to address this?

One of the top three challenges identified on page 7 is "Employees lack the essential job skills, work readiness skills and overall work ethic and motivation to be successful in many of the jobs available within Berkshire County." What are the strategies related to this issue? And how might it be connected to the issue noted above about credentials not being recognized by all employers in the region?

Similar to note in goals and at the beginning of this section - If there is an emphasis on increasing internship opportunities,

careers? Engineering, design, entrepreneurism and cross-disciplinary collaboration could be a theme promoted through tourism of this emerging sector.

The state's investment in the Manufacturing College and the Manufacturing Workforce System, should infuse additional support into manufacturing career pathways, that will support their regional goals.

M212 has been discussing having a center for AIM Photonics manufacturing training at BCC.

I suggest that the stakeholders undertake a project to get a better understanding of the entry-level wages that are available for recent graduates/completers in the priority occupations. This will support more transparent communication about the career path and trajectory for job seekers and new entrants to the labor force in making decisions about their investment of time and financial resources in programs. For example, if they are told that the average wage for CNC machinists is $25 per hour but the entry-level wage is $16 and it might take several years to get to the $30 hour mark they will have more realistic expectations. This is likely to be

shouldn't there be baseline data for each program and growth targets associated with each of them? Maybe establishing the baseline, targets and more detailed strategies for this component could be a workplan activity for the first year.

P18. Please elaborate on how the regional planning team will continue to strengthen the spirit of collaboration among and between the different sectors. What specific work will happen to do this?

In the appendix the Credentials asset mapping for Engineering, the gaps should note a specific gap in bachelor degree programs. (This section seems to just have placeholder language in it in all the templates, but there are clearly gaps that could be noted).

How does this region plan to use data to check progress on vacancies and pipeline etc?

the case for several of the other priority occupations.

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p. 18: Education—references a middle school effort, but there doesn't seem to be anything to strengthen high school programming in the region, either at McCann or in the comprehensive high schools; piquing interest in MS only makes sense if there are HS options, and those options need to be credible and closely aligned with regional needs.

There is also a role for the Partnership to play in strengthening secondary-postsecondary pathways to employment in key industries/occupations; there is mention on p. 19 to "Engage regional colleges around engineering training…" Engagement should be with secondary schools as well, bringing both the table, and could be broader than a STEM focus.

Regional partnership and/or WIBs should be involved in vetting Chapter 74 new program applications in the context of regional needs.

In the mapping for machinists doesn't note the issue of scale. They have the programs, but they don't have the capacity to fulfil the needs of industry.