



**Regional Workforce Skills Planning Initiative  
Request for Qualifications for Regional Planning in Berkshire County  
July 30, 2018**

MA Governor Charlie Baker has created a Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC) comprised of the Executive Offices of Labor and Workforce Development, Education, and Housing and Economic Development. The WSC is seeking to build collaborative solutions by aligning economic, workforce, and education systems in Massachusetts with the skill needs of regional economies. A Regional Planning process has been developed to bring together regional partners to collectively determine high priority regional career pathways and to craft collaborative solutions to meet the region's and the Commonwealth's jobseeker and employer needs. The goal is to ensure that regional employers, educators, economic development entities, regional planning organizations and workforce training officials are coordinated in a way that creates strong talent pipelines, for both middle-skilled and highly skilled jobs.

The planning process for the Berkshire region is driven by the region's workforce investment board: The Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc. (BCREB) who coordinated the development of the Berkshire Workforce Blueprint during FY2018 which can be found at [www.bcreb.com](http://www.bcreb.com). The Berkshire Regional Skills Team worked diligently to develop priority industry sectors/occupations and strategies (Attachment B) and strategies to address the workforce, education and economic needs of the region (Attachment C).

An estimated \$25,000 is available to support of the implementation of the Berkshire Workforce Blueprint for FY2019 and coordination of the Berkshire Regional Team which consists of 15 Berkshire professionals representing education, workforce and economic development entities.

The BCREB is seeking staffing/consultant from an organization, an individual, or a collaboration of individuals to be responsible for the following deliverables, to be concluded by June 15, 2019:

- Convene and facilitate at least 3 in-person regional sessions (Berkshire Regional Skills Team).
- Maintain continuous communication and joint accountability related to regional plan implementation.
- Coordinate Blueprint announcement and relevant marketing efforts to promote the work of regional partners.
- Oversee the coordination of a joint application for grant funds with economic development, education, and workforce partners to meet priority. industry/occupational talent goals articulated in the Blueprint. (Possibly Skills Capital Grants; High Quality College and Career Pathway Grant; Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund).
- Continuous communication with regional and state-level industry organizing entities.

- Identification of and engagement with businesses within the identified high priority industries/occupations.
- Direct implementation of strategies in approve Blueprint.
- Coordinate with state-level activities.
- Complete mid-year report November 30, 2018 and Final report June 15, 2019.

The staffing/consultant hired will report to the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc. and will coordinate activities between education, workforce and economic development partners. The BCREB will provide assistance to this process through:

1. Additional labor market research and analysis,
2. Outreach to businesses for real-time data, and
3. Editing/proofreading of the final document.

The BCREB will be liaison between all parties and coordinate activities.

Please submit the following by noon on August 22, 2018:

1. A cover sheet listing the organization and the name, phone and email of the lead on the project,
2. A work plan and timeline for completing the deliverables for 2018-19 including anticipated hours/week. Please include staff experience with facilitating meetings, consensus building activities, coordinating activities, communication strategies with multiple partners, engaging businesses, implementation strategies, career pathway development, work in priority industry sectors/occupations, and any grant writing experience,
3. Please describe your experience working with multiple organizations with complimentary/competing interests and how you would ensure this important project gets notoriety and the recognition it deserves.
4. Please describe your experience completing reports and adhering to deadlines. Please describe two similar projects completed by the organization and provide two references with contact information that can attest to your work.

The total submission should not exceed 5 pages (excluding the cover sheet).

SCHEDULE: The following is the schedule of events, subject to change:

| <b>DATE(s)</b>                     | <b>EVENT</b>  |
|------------------------------------|---|
| July 30, 2018                      | Release of RFQ  |
| August 20, 2018,<br>12:00 noon     | Deadline for submitting written questions via email to <a href="mailto:Heather@BCREB.com">Heather@BCREB.com</a> . Responses will be posted on BCREB.com website weekly. |
| August 22, 2018,<br>12:00 noon     | Responses to RFQ due. Please submit the application by email to: Heather Boulger at the BCREB at <a href="mailto:Heather@BCREB.com">Heather@BCREB.com</a>               |
| September 3-5 <sup>th</sup> , 2018 | Review of responses   |
| September 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2018  | Notification sent to all responders   |

|                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| September 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2018 | The BCREB must receive any appeal(s) of the final selection decision |
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The successful bidder will enter into a contract with the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc. that will begin as early as September 13, 2018 and conclude on June 30, 2019.

**APPEAL PROCESS:**

An unsuccessful bidder may appeal a decision of the BCREB in which the unsuccessful bidder has reason to believe that the selection process has been violated in a manner that affected the outcome of the procurement decision. Generalized allegations of impropriety or dissatisfaction with the results of the process are not grounds for appeal. An unsuccessful bidder who wishes to appeal must send a written statement that completely describes the grounds for the appeal by the date noted above.

Appeal request statements must be sent by overnight mail, or delivered in person, to:

Eva Sheridan, BCREB Chair  
Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc.  
66 Allen Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Upon receipt of the appeal, the BCREB Chair will conduct an investigation and review of the decision and will notify the appellant(s) via overnight mail within ten (10) working days after receipt of the appeal.

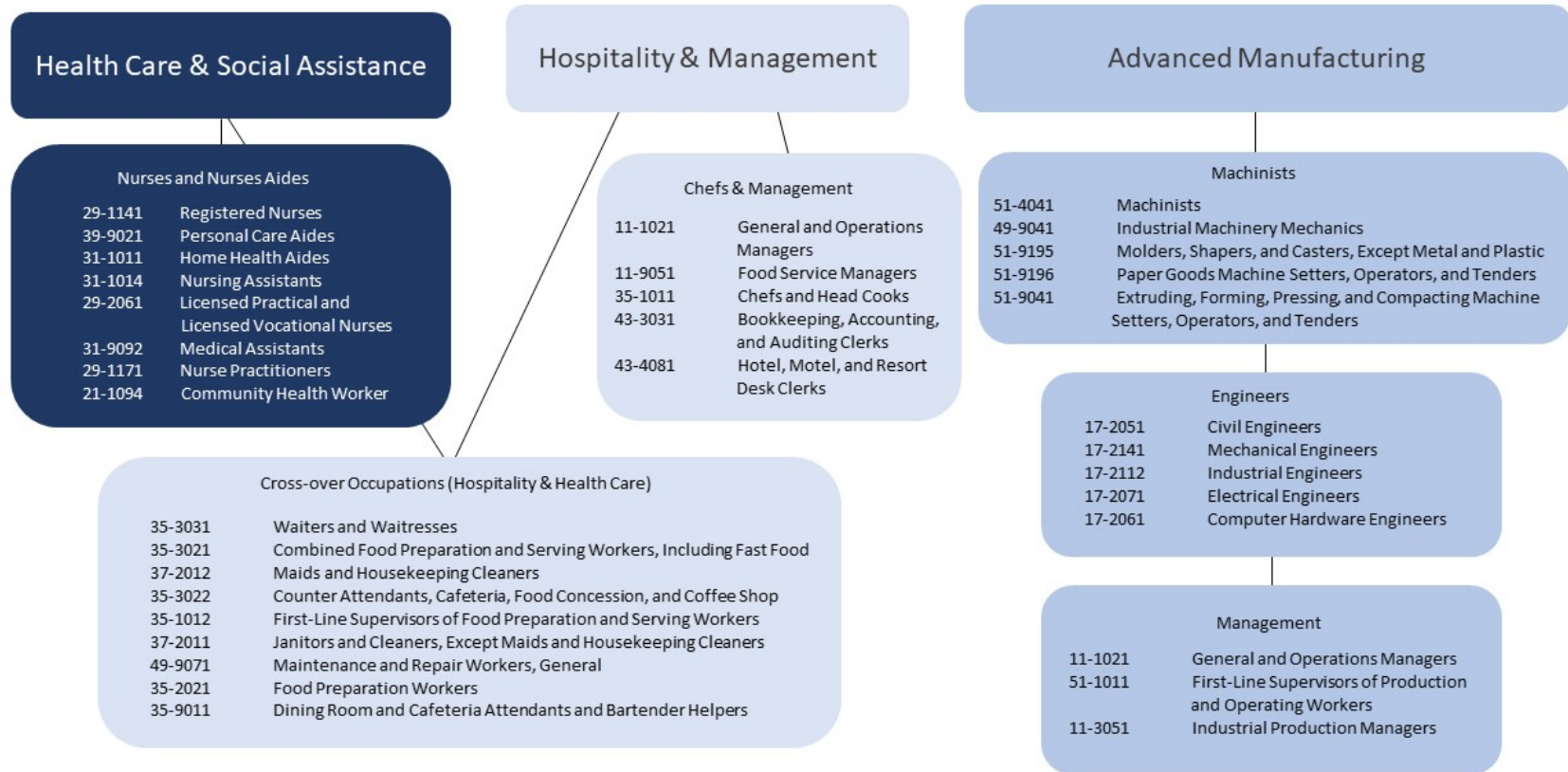
**OPEN PROCESS:**

Please note that the BCREB will adhere to all state and federal policies that are consistent with WIOA secs. 106(a)(2)(B)-(C) and § 679.550(b) whereas the local planning region will provide adequate opportunity for public input and comment before submitting the plan to the Governor.

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**Attachment B**

**Berkshire Region – Priority Industries & Occupations**



Attachment C

| Berkshire Region - Workforce Development Blueprint |  |                              |   |        |
|--|--|------------------------------|---|--------|
|  | Goal   | Timeframe                    | Strategies  | Lead   |
| Foundational - All Industries                      | 1. Conduct asset inventory of workforce, economic, and education initiatives to identify partners, gaps, and duplications and align stakeholders<br><br>2. To identify baseline metrics and realistic timeline in order to measure success | 2018                         | 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     |
|  |  |                              | 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<br><br>5. Increase the labor force participation rate and employment share in priority industries   | 2020<br><br>2022<br><br>2022 | 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     |
|  |  |                              | b. Support 1Berkshire Initiatives in attracting/retaining millennials   | WD/EDU |

|  |      |  |    |
|--|------|--|----|
| 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.   | 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                            | 2018      | 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% | 2022      | e. Look for opportunities to connect career pathways between hospitality and healthcare for careers in food service/preparation, facility services, housecleaning.  | WD   |
|                                  | 10. Reduce supply gap ratio of priority occupations by 10%                          | 2022      | f. Increase marketing for career pathways to inform potential entrants about future opportunities.  | WD   |
|                                  |   |           | 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   |

|   |  |  |     |
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|   |  | i. Increase number of grant applications to the state for funding related to internship and apprenticeships. Leverage other resources to address training gaps   | WD  |
|   |  |  |     |
| <p>11. Become more intentionally connected to the Massachusetts and Tri-State innovation economy</p> <p>12. Decrease the average age of those working in the manufacturing sector</p> | 2020   | 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  |
|   |  | d. Implement Berkshire Initiative for Growth recommendations   | ED  |
|   | 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  |     |
|   |  |  |     |
| <p>13. Decrease the number of job openings unfilled for longer than 6 months</p> <p>14. Stabilize the economy to position the county to grow total number of jobs</p>                 | 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  |
|   |  | c. Create a user friendly job opportunities webpage that connects to 1Berkshire and other initiatives.   | ED  |

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