

## From the SkillWorks Director...

Welcome to the first edition of the SkillWorks e-newsletter! I hope that this helps to keep everyone in the initiative better connected. Each issue, we will feature partnership updates, policy updates, and initiative information. And don't forget to check the website [www.skill-works.org](http://www.skill-works.org) for new information!

This month, website updates include downloads from the June 29<sup>th</sup> "Building a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Workforce" gubernatorial forum and resources and materials from SkillWorks' career coaching training.

A special thanks to Elisabeth Houston, SkillWorks intern, for her work on putting this inaugural edition of the newsletter together.

As always, feel free to contact me at [lohsze.leung@tbf.org](mailto:lohsze.leung@tbf.org) or 617-338-4377 with any questions or feedback or if you have a great idea for a newsletter article!

Warmly,

Loh-Sze Leung

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## Upcoming Events...

### **For SkillWorks partnerships and funders**

9/14	SkillWorks Grantee Meeting
9/19	SkillWorks Funders Group Meeting, 3-5 pm, The Boston Foundation
9/22	Third Year re-funding applications due
9/26	Business Value Assessment Meeting with Aspen Institute, 11:30-1:30 pm, The Boston Foundation
9/27	SkillWorks Capacity Building Committee Meeting; next round of capacity building applications due
10/17	SkillWorks Funders Group Meeting, 3-5 pm, The Boston Foundation

## On the Hill...

### *The Economic Stimulus Bill*

The recently-passed Economic Stimulus Bill provides **\$24.5 million in new state funding for workforce development** and access to up to \$20 million in federal funds. More detail on the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund; the Food Stamp Employment and Training program; and the Educational Rewards program is provided below. The legislation is effective immediately.

### **What are the provisions of the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund?**

- The Stimulus Bill appropriates **\$11 million** to the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund; there is no deadline for when the legislature needs to spend the money.
- **The Trust Fund will provide grants of up to \$500,000 over 3 years.**
- \$1 million of the \$11 million will be set aside for programs which benefit older adults. An unspecified amount will fund programs which address travel, tourism, and health care workforce issues.
- An **Advisory Committee** will be appointed. The committee decides which industries are "high-demand" and how much funding each region of the state will receive.

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## On the Hill...

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- The advisory committee will be made up of at least two members representing Workforce Investment Boards, at least two members representing labor, the Director of Workforce Development, and an unspecified number of representatives of other workforce development constituencies.
- An advisory committee report is due by December 31, 2006.
- The Trust Fund will be administered by the Commonwealth Corporation.

## The Economic Stimulus Bill



### How will the Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) Program benefit MA?

- FSET is a program administered by the US Department of Agriculture that allows states to draw down a dollar-for-dollar match on what they spend in education and job training for non-welfare food stamp recipients.
- Last year, Wisconsin drew down \$20 million in FSET funds, while Massachusetts drew down a meager \$150,000.
- The new legislation in the Economic Stimulus Bill authorizes the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to draw down up to **\$20 million in federal money**.
- The Workforce Solutions Group will be working with Jobs for the Future and with SkillWorks partnerships as well as other partners and allies to make recommendations to DTA about how to implement this program.
- **This legislation should make it possible for community-based organizations to access new funds by documenting the non-federal dollars they already spend on job training and education for non-welfare food stamp recipients.**

### What are the guidelines for Educational Rewards grants?

- \$1.5 million in grants will be made available to students in vocational technology programs or associate degree programs at state or community colleges studying for targeted high demand occupations.
- At least 2/3 of the grant will be reserved for students enrolled half-time or less.
- Grant recipients will be limited to dislocated workers or those workers with incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
- Each student may receive up to \$3,000 per year to pay for tuition, fees, and books; thirty percent of the grant may be applied to fund living expenses.

### How can partnerships voice their opinions about the Economic Stimulus Bill to state officials?

- The Workforce Solutions Group has gathered information from regional meetings on workforce development and implementing the Trust Fund. WSG will be compiling the information and sending it to their partners (including SkillWorks partnerships) for feedback. If partnerships have additional perspectives on how the trust fund should be implemented, please contact Dan Kobayashi at [dkobayashi@critwomensunion.org](mailto:dkobayashi@critwomensunion.org) or at 617-536-5651 x 160.
- SkillWorks partnership perspectives will be included in discussions with DTA on FSET implementation. WSG will be scheduling meetings with the SkillWorks Partnerships in the near future to address the Trust Fund and other Stimulus Bill items.

### SkillWorks Hosts Gubernatorial Forum on Workforce

On June 29, 2006, SkillWorks sponsored a gubernatorial forum entitled, "Building a 21st Century Workforce," in partnership with the Workforce Solutions Group and Jobs for the Future at Roxbury Community College. More than five hundred workers, employers, educators, and community members attended.

Massachusetts gubernatorial candidates Chris Gabrieli, Kerry Healey, Christy Mihos, Deval Patrick, Tom Reilly, and Grace Ross addressed the critical need to develop and retain a well educated and well trained workforce in order to sustain economic development in the Commonwealth. Moderated by Janet Wu, the forum provided all six candidates for governor with the platform to individually present his or her strategy for job creation, job training, and education.

Speakers representing workers, labor and business also participated in the forum. Workers Amos Wanjiru, Margarita Restrepo, and Grace Toledo discussed their experiences in training programs along with Mike Fadel, Executive Vice President for 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, and the President of Brigham and Women's Hospital, Dr. Gary Gottlieb. Paul Grogan, President and CEO of the Boston Foundation and Ada Riggins, a member of Brockton Interfaith Community and the Workforce Solutions Group, helped provide context for the issues. Transcripts and photos are available at [www.skill-works.org/forum.html](http://www.skill-works.org/forum.html).



Dressed in crisp suits and skirts, feet wedged in high heels and shiny loafers, the students sit attentively. Samira Elazraoui, the student speaker, stands at the podium and thanks the staff at Hotel Career Center. The students have just completed a rigorous six-week hospitality training program through the Hotel Career Center, HCC – and it's graduation day. HCC is a partnership of The International Institute of Boston, which serves immigrant and refugees in Boston, and the Hilton Hotel Corporation.

Trust and reliability make the relationship work, says Hillary Baumman the Human Resources Manager at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel. "I know I can rely on the judgment of the [HCC] staff. I don't feel that they push unqualified workers. They're open and honest with their feedback."

Moreover, Baumman says that the caliber of the applicants trained through HCC distinguishes them from the larger applicant pool. The HCC applicants are "more motivated and have a true understanding of what it takes to succeed in this business," explains Baumman. "Because they do shadows, have tours, they know what to expect. They understand what's involved."

HCC's Samira Elazraoui, the student speaker, arrived in United States from Morocco in 2003. Before entering HCC, she says she was "a diamond in the rough." She had already had many of the skills that hotels were looking for, but before HCC's training program, she had interviewed with little success.

HCC's training program addressed aspects of the hotel application process and employment of which Elazraoui had been unaware. She shadowed hotel staff and toured local hotels. She learned industry-specific computer skills and customer service skills, and she attended ESOL classes. She also endured rigorous simulation interviews complete with the video camera and worked with the staff to analyze the weaknesses in the interview. "HCC polished my skills," Elazraoui says. "The staff points out every problem and goes over it again and again and again, until it is fixed," she explains.



Elazraoui was recently hired as the Night Audit Supervisor at the Hotel at MIT.

At the luncheon following graduation, the recent graduates were eager to display their exceptional hospitality skills by serving chocolate cake to their teachers and to Baumman, who would be interviewing some of the students following graduation at the Park Plaza Hotel. It is clear that many of the HCC graduates in Elazaroui's class also have bright futures.

## On the web...

<http://www.mass.gov/dwd/>  
The Department of Workforce Development website

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/07budget/senate/index.htm>  
Massachusetts Senate 2007 Budget Website

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/07budget/house/>  
Massachusetts House 2007 Budget Website

## Workforce policy and legislation sites

<http://www.statehousenews.com/public/>  
Beacon Hill news updates. Sign up for a weekly round-up email of news and events

[www.workforcealliance.org](http://www.workforcealliance.org)  
Federal and state workforce policy information

[www.massworkforce.com](http://www.massworkforce.com)  
Mass Workforce Investment Board Association website, and host of the Workforce Solutions Group website

# Partnership Notes...

## Building Services Career Path Project

*Building Services Career Path Project is a partnership of labor and management which aims to improve English language skills among a large immigrant workforce and to provide them with more advanced training in facility maintenance and skilled trades.*



- One employer will pay workers who have been trained as trainers a higher rate while providing training, both recognizing the skill and institutionalizing a premium for that skill.
- Discussion is underway at a higher wage location requiring higher skills to formalize a fair process for selecting workers from lower wage locations for new entrants and for promotions.
- Two employers will implement an advancement program adopting new career ladders.

## Partners in Automotive Career Education

*PACE promotes skill advancement among African Americans and immigrants by training new employees and current entry-level workers in automotive skills, English language skills, and math skills customized to the automotive industry.*

- One company is looking to PACE for consultation and training to create an environment where people from diverse racial and cultural background can work together and thrive.
- 13 students completed the June Cycle of Module 1, and six have already been placed.
- PACE was featured in the June *Auto Dealer*, a publication of the Mass. State Auto Dealers Association.
- PACE welcomes Brian Dillon, a new career coach, and Angela Crawford Ervin, the Urban League liaison to PACE.

## Health Care and Research Training Institute

*HCRTI provides a pipeline from neighborhoods around the Longwood area into health care and research; the institute offers training, education, and support to front-line workers in the who are interested in advancing into areas of skill shortages.*



- In late June, HCRTI graduated a number of students mainly from ESOL, health care skills, GED, and Math and English courses.
- HCRTI introduced the Surgical Technologist Program in partnership with PCWD.
- Participants in the Nursing Program have moved into clinical rotations.
- HCRTI welcomes their new director, Lucy Meadows, who started this month.

## Hotel Career Center

*HCC provides job-specific language and skills training to job seekers, many of whom are recent immigrants or refugees, and places them in positions with growth potential at Hilton and other partner hotels.*

- Eleven students from Hotel Training Program (HTP) graduated in July. Two have already been placed, one at the Park Plaza Hotel and the other at the Hotel at MIT. See related story on page three.
- HCC will be piloting a new class focused on preparing line-level employees to become supervisors in the next cycle of classes at the hotels and take an exam at the end.
- The Hotel Career Center (HCC) was highlighted in WIRED, an initiative of the federal government.
- HCC welcomes Katherine Hamm and Russell Fenton. Katherine joined the Hotel Career Center team as an Instructor/Employment Specialist in May. Russell started in June as a new Instructor/Career Coach.

## Partners in Career and Workforce Development

*PCWD addresses labor shortages in nursing and other technical health care occupations by providing opportunities for low-income Boston residents to begin a career in the industry and advance professionally.*



- Three pre-employment graduates now employed at Partners Healthcare were awarded One Family Scholars Program Scholarships. The program, sponsored by the Fireman Foundation, provides financial support for higher education to women who are homeless or formerly homeless with children
- Eight pre-employment participants graduated in May.
- PCWD welcomes Dena Simons to the PCWD team. Simons is the new PCWD Career Development Coordinator.

In April 2006, **Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)** received a \$50,000 planning grant from SkillWorks. Community health workers provide a wide-range of health care services for underserved communities.. ABCD is leading a planning effort which will improve employer investment in training and promotion of community health workers; develop and recognize career pathways in the field; and establish a postsecondary program for community health workers.

SkillWorks' Community Health Worker Advancement Initiative is funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

For more information, visit [www.bostonabcd.org](http://www.bostonabcd.org)

## SkillWorks in the Spotlight

- Angel Bermudez, chair of the SkillWorks Funders Group, participated in a planning meeting in May for a National Fund for Workforce Partnerships.
- Conny Doty, director of the Mayor's Office for Jobs and Community Services, represented SkillWorks at a Council on Foundations meeting in June in Washington, D.C.
- Angel Bermudez and Conny Doty will team up to give a presentation about SkillWorks at the Council on Foundations conference for community foundations here in Boston in September.

## SkillWorks in the News

SkillWorks has been featured or mentioned in many places recently, including:

Editorial, "Jobs with a Future," *The Boston Globe*, July 11, 2006

"Study: Young Workers Leaving New England," *Mass High Tech*, July 7, 2006

"Gov candidates gang up on Mitt's job-training veto," *Boston Herald*, June 30, 2006

"Back-to-back forums for gubernatorial candidates," *The Boston Globe (AP article)*, June 29, 2006

Bob Herbert, "Untapped Talent," *New York Times*, June 5, 2006

SkillWorks is also being mentioned in a Partners HealthCare underwriting tagline on WBUR through the end of July:

"Partners HealthCare, Collaborating with SkillWorks, to help low-income Bostonians move to family-sustaining jobs in health care. On the web at [www.skill-works.org](http://www.skill-works.org)."

Find a complete list of articles at [www.skill-works.org/media.html](http://www.skill-works.org/media.html)

## SkillWorks Funders

The Annie E. Casey Foundation  
Bank of America Charitable Gift Fund and Frank W. and Carl S. Adams Memorial Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee Boston 2004  
The Boston Foundation  
City of Boston Neighborhood Jobs Trust  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Paul and Phyllis Fireman Foundation  
The William Randolph Hearst Foundation  
The Hyams Foundation  
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
The John Merck Fund  
The Rockefeller Foundation  
State Street Community Foundation  
United Way of Massachusetts Bay

## SkillWorks Partnerships

Boston Community Health Worker Initiative  
Boston Health Care and Research Training Institute  
Building Services Career Path Project  
Hotel Career Center  
Partners in Career and Workforce Development  
Partnership for Automotive Career Education  
The Workforce Solutions Group

## SkillWorks Staff

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Elisabeth Houston, Summer Intern

## SkillWorks Funders Group

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Sue Beaton, One Family Campaign/Fireman Foundation  
Angel H. Bermudez, The Boston Foundation  
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