



June 10, 2022

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz, Chair, House Ways and Means
The Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues, Chair, Senate Ways and Means
The Honorable Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Vice Chair, House Ways and Means
The Honorable Cindy F. Friedman, Vice Chair, Senate Ways and Means
The Honorable Todd M. Smola, Ranking Member, House Ways and Means
The Honorable Patrick O'Connor, Ranking Member, Senate Ways and Means

Dear Chair Michlewitz, Chair Rodrigues, Vice Chair Ferrante, Vice Chair Friedman, Ranking Member Smola, and Ranking Member O'Connor:

On behalf of our members, we write to express our appreciation for the many investments in job training, adult education, skill development, career pathways, apprenticeship, and other industry based-sector partnerships in the FY23 budget.

The Massachusetts Workforce Association (MWA) is a statewide membership association that leads, advocates, and convenes on behalf of the state's workforce development system. MWA provides a unified voice for the state's regionally-led workforce development system to ensure it is responsive to the dynamic demands of businesses, job seekers, incumbent workers, and youth throughout the Commonwealth.

We want to thank both the House and Senate for their strong investments in workforce and economic development, education, and other key spending priorities in their respective FY23 budget proposals. These investments will make a significant difference for those seeking education and training opportunities, those re-entering the labor force, and for employers looking for the talent they need to sustain and grow their companies.

As the conference committee deliberates to create a final FY23 budget, the funding recommendations below will provide the strongest support for workforce development in the FY23 budget:

- **MassHire Career Centers (7003-0803):** *MWA supports the House appropriation of \$15 million for operation of the MassHire Career Centers.* The MassHire Career Centers, located in every region throughout the Commonwealth, are the "front door" of the state's workforce development system. Located within the 16 MassHire Workforce regions, Career Centers serve as a vital link between job seekers and businesses to bring about economic opportunity for residents and employers alike.
- **Advanced Manufacturing (7002-0020):** *MWA supports the Senate appropriation of \$2.5 million for a manufacturing program administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development.* This program supports four regional consortiums focused on meeting manufacturers' needs through a fully coordinated manufacturing training system across the state. In addition, the training focuses on those who are unemployed, underemployed, and underrepresented populations including veterans, minorities, and women. Despite the pandemic,



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manufacturers around the state are still seeking skilled workers to maintain their competitiveness.

In addition, while we have always known that childcare is a barrier to participation in training programs and employment, the issues around access, affordability, and quality of childcare have been exacerbated by the pandemic. In fact, issues around childcare are becoming an increasingly significant barrier to accessing job training opportunities. As such, MWA recommends the conference committee adopt the recommendations below in its final FY23 budget:

- **Early Education Workforce Rate Reserve & Childcare (3000-1042):** *MWA supports the House appropriation of \$70 million to address reimbursement rates.*
- **Operational Grants (3000-1045):** *MWA supports the Senate appropriation of \$250 million for C3 grants.*
- **EEC Administration (3000-1000):** *MWA supports the Senate appropriation of \$10 million to be moved into the EEC Administration line item (3000-1000).*
- **CCR&R Funding (3000-2000):** *MWA supports the Senate appropriation of \$5 million to be moved into the Access Management line item (3000-2000).*
- **Early Educator Scholarships (7070-0065):** *MWA supports the Senate appropriation of \$5 million for early educator scholarship funding.*

As we begin to emerge from this public health crisis, we must be intentional with investments and policies to ensure a just and equitable recovery. Now more than ever, we need to invest in workforce development to ensure residents and businesses successfully emerge from this recession. Thank you for your partnership and support of the state's workforce development system. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tonja Mettlach', written in a cursive style.

Tonja Mettlach
Executive Director
Massachusetts Workforce Association