



DRAFT SCOPE

To: Tom Evans, Executive Director, Cambridge Redevelopment Authority
Ellen Semonoff, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, City of Cambridge
Sue Walsh, Assistant Director for Adult and Family Services, City of Cambridge
From: Mark Melnik, Director of Economic and Public Policy Research, UMass Donahue Institute
Subject: Cambridge Workforce Development Study-Scope
Date: July 12, 2018

OVERVIEW

The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) and the City of Cambridge (the City) are interested in engaging the Economic and Public Policy Research group (EPPR) at the UMass Donahue Institute (UMDI) and the Center for Social Policy at UMass Boston to conduct a study concerning several issues regarding the City's workforce development system. In particular, CRA and City officials are interested in developing a better understanding of:

- The population of Cambridge residents with limited skills, education, and training;
- Who the City is serving and not serving right now in the workforce development system; and
- How residents could better benefit from City workforce development services.

There is a tremendous amount of interest in workforce development in Cambridge right now, ranging from the activities surrounding the Envision Cambridge Citywide Masterplan to the ramifications of the major redevelopment projects taking place at the Volpe Center and Foundry Building near Kendall Square. CRA and City officials are expressing a particular interest in identifying low-income, disconnected individuals and families who may not be benefiting from the strong economic growth experienced in the Boston and Cambridge region over the last several years. Other core issues include understanding who might not be ready for workforce training and what may be holding them back in the labor market, as well as identifying different types of training offerings that may be attractive to Cambridge residents.

APPROACH AND KEY TASKS

In a meeting on May 10th, which included eight CRA and City staff members, several important concepts were discussed in detail to inform the analytical approach and information gathering that will form the basis of the study. The study will be multi-pronged, combining secondary data analysis and primary data collection. The core research approach will incorporate:

- Secondary data from the American Community Survey (via American Fact Finder and the Public Use Microdata Sample files) analyzing the key characteristics of the population of Cambridge residents who may need workforce development support (e.g., unemployed and underemployed);

- Secondary labor market data on employment opportunities and related job requirements in the local labor market; and
- A collection of focus groups and interviews with potential workforce development clients, workforce training professionals, and local employers. Together, this effort will allow the research team to assess qualitatively some of the issues faced by workers and employers in terms of training opportunities and aligning available workers with job opportunities.

The following sections frame the core concepts and approaches UMDI and CSP would undertake in these analyses.

Task 1-Profile of unemployed/underemployed population in Cambridge

Utilizing available secondary data, most notably the American Community Survey (ACS) and the American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS PUMS), the research team will develop a profile of the unemployed, underemployed, and “disconnected” workforce-aged population in Cambridge. This analysis may include such characteristics as:

- Age
- Race and Ethnicity
- Gender
- Educational attainment
- School enrollment
- Nativity status
- Previous industry/occupation
- Poverty status
- Income/wages
- Family status

The research team recommends, due to limited sample sizes in the ACS, that this work utilize the latest version of the 5-year ACS. The research team will also assess the best ways to report and analyze the data considering sample size issues.

Core questions to consider in consultation with the CRA and the City will include how to define “underemployed” and “disconnected” populations in Cambridge. In addition, there may be certain populations to specifically feature in this analysis (e.g., young adults, immigrants). Further guidance would be helpful from the CRA and the City in defining key populations and the parameters of this analysis.

Task 2-Labor Market data for the region

Utilizing data from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and other sources, the research team will provide an overview of employment opportunities (job growth and replacement openings) in the Greater Boston region, with a particular focus on those opportunities requiring limited educational attainment and training. Similar analyses have already been completed by the research team for Envision Cambridge, the City of Boston, and the Commonwealth’s Regional Workforce Skills Planning Initiative (UMDI worked on the blueprint for Greater

Boston, which included the Metro North Regional Employment Board). Our previous work in this area would be leveraged and updated for this study.

Task 3-Focus groups and key stakeholder interviews

While available secondary data provides details about the population of unemployed and underemployed residents in Cambridge, they, alone, cannot inform us on the full host of issues and challenges facing the potential clients of the workforce development system, the system itself, and the needs of employers of low-to-middle skill labor. With that in mind, UMDI and CSP propose conducting a series of focus groups and key informant interviews. These focus groups and interviews would cover a cross section of clients and potential clients of the workforce development system, workforce training professionals, and local employers to assess some of the core challenges in the workforce development system in terms of:

- Training offerings
- Skill and educational deficiency issues not measured in secondary data
- Barriers to participating in the workforce development system
- Barriers to employment for clients and potential clients in the workforce development system
- Employers' perspectives on hiring staff through City-run or supported job training programs, as well as the hiring of low-to-middle skill workers

CRA and City officials expressed interest in segmenting the focus groups and interviews, and the subsequent analysis, into some key demographic and industry groups. Examples include:

- Young adults
- Immigrants or particular immigrant groups
- American born blacks
- Individuals with disabilities
- Families with children
- Those with a criminal history
- Employers in advanced manufacturing, light industrial, high technology, or life sciences

UMDI and CSP propose conducting focus groups with between four and six of these segments (to be finalized in consultation with CRA and City officials). In addition, the research team proposes in-depth interviews with up to five local employers in a cross-section of key industries. The research team would expect the CRA and the City to help populate the focus groups as well as identify and secure key informants for interviews. In discussing this approach with CRA and City staff, there were already some ideas on how to conduct outreach in the city to include residents that have utilized and have not utilized training services (e.g., outreach to individuals in public housing, subsidized housing, MassHealth, or with child care vouchers).

Task 4-Final Product

The final product of this work would include a written report of the three key elements outlined in detail (demographic profile, labor market, and focus groups/interviews). The report would likely include a discussion

of public policy issues and considerations (e.g., best practices, cliff effects, etc...). The research would also compose some career pathways information directed to residents who are out of the labor market. The research team will develop and submit a draft report to the City. We request the CRA and the City return a consolidated set of comments, edits and suggestions to UMDI/CSP. We have budgeted for an initial round of review by the CRA and the City of the draft report and then a final round of review of the revised draft final report. The final report will include data visualization, where appropriate. As part of the final product, the research team will make itself available for a final presentation to CRA and City staff on the data and report results.

TIME FRAME AND BUDGET

The total cost, inclusive of all labor and travel is \$63,000-\$70,000. The lower price option is for four focus groups. The higher price option is for six focus groups. With a start date of August 1st, we estimate the project will take approximately 8-9 months to complete. A draft version of the report will be supplied to the CRA and City in February-March 2019, with a final version returned within two weeks of receiving feedback from the CRA and City.

Budget by task:

Task 1 Profile of unemployed/underemployed population in Cambridge- \$10K

Task 2-Labor Market data for the region- \$11K

Task 3-Focus groups and key stakeholder interviews- \$27K-\$34K

Task 4-Final Product- \$15K