

Cambridge Workforce Development Study

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Cambridge Workforce Study

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Contents

Foreword	vi
Executive Summary	xii
Cambridge Demographic Overview	xiii
Greater Boston Labor Market.....	xiv
Interviews, Stakeholder Meetings, and Priority Population Focus Groups - Findings Summary.....	xv
Recommendations.....	xvi
Increase Workforce Diversity and Inclusion.....	xvi
Access to Services.....	xvii
Young Adults	xvii
Support for Career Planning and College Completion.....	xvii
Employment Services, Skills Training and Certificate Programs	xvii
Employer	xviii
Research and Evaluation	xviii
Policy	xviii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1. Cambridge Demographic Overview	4
Priority Population	10
Focusing on Women with Children.....	15
Summary.....	18
Chapter 2. The Greater Boston Labor Market	19
Industry Analysis	20
Occupational Analysis.....	23
Job Postings Analysis	24
Summary of Labor Market Data	27
Chapter 3. Overview of the Employer Perspective	29



Types of Entry Level Jobs and Skills Required	29
Recruitment and Hiring Challenges.....	30
Strategies to Address Recruiting and Hiring Challenges.....	31
Chapter 4. Stakeholder Meetings	33
Key Stakeholder Summary.....	33
Chapter 5. Priority Population Focus Group Summaries	35
Overall Summary of Combined Focus Groups.....	35
American-Born Blacks	37
Low-Income Mothers	40
Young Adults	43
Chapter 6. Connecting the Qualitative Data and Qualitative Observations.....	46
Chapter 7. Recommendations	48
Increase Workforce Diversity and Inclusion	48
Access to a Continuum of Services.....	49
Young Adults.....	49
Support for Career Planning and College Completion.....	50
Employment Services, Skills Training and Certificate Programs	50
Employer.....	50
Research and Evaluation	50
Policy	51
Appendix A: Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Categories	52
Appendix B: Programmatic Data.....	53
Cambridge Employment Program (CEP)	53
Cambridge Works Program (CW)	53
Cambridge Learning Center (CLC)	53
Just-A-Start Programs.....	54
Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP)	54
Next Up	55

Per Scholas Program.....	55
DPW 9-Week Program.....	55
Appendix C: List of Stakeholders	66
Appendix D: Focus Group Outreach Materials.....	67
Focus Group Methodology.....	72
Cambridge Residents Focus Group Protocol	74
Demographic Survey - Summary of findings.....	75



List of Dashboards/Figures

Unemployment Dashboard 1. Cambridge Unemploymentvii

Unemployment Dashboard 2. Cambridge Unemployment Claimant Profile, Claims since March 14, 2020.....**Error! Bookmark not defined.**

Dashboard 1. Cambridge Compared to Massachusetts6

Dashboard 2. Cambridge Workforce9

Dashboard 3. Cambridge Employed Population, 16+ Compared with Priority Population..... 14

Dashboard 4. Characteristics of Mothers in the Priority Population 17

Figure 5. Employment Change and Location Quotients for Industries in Greater Boston..... 22

List of Tables

Table 1. Cambridge Priority Population- Poverty by Race and Ethnicity 15

Table 2. Jobs and Job Growth by Industry in Greater Boston 20

Table 3. Top 15 Entry and Mid-Level Jobs in Greater Boston 24

Table 4. Job Postings in Greater Boston by Top Industries..... 25

Table 5. Top Companies Hiring in Greater Boston, All Levels Versus Entry Level..... 26

Table 6. Top 15 Hard Skills Requested in Job Postings (all levels) 27

Table 7. Combined Focus Group Self-Reported Demographics (Survey)..... 35

Foreword

Since the initial completion of this report, the country and the Commonwealth have experienced an unprecedented public health crisis with COVID-19 that ultimately lead to massive economic devastation, particularly in the leisure, hospitality, and personal service industries. The unemployment rate virtually exploded overnight, with the statewide rate going from three percent in March to 16 percent in April. For much of the summer, Massachusetts had one of the highest, unemployment rates in the country. At its peak, the weekly initial unemployment claims rose to 165,138 claims filed within a single week in mid-March 2020. The highest number of weekly unemployment claims ever filed during the Great Recession was 22,000 in December 2009. Weekly claims exceeded that number for 25 weeks since the beginning of the pandemic. As of March 2021, over 1.8 million residents have made unemployment claims. Massachusetts' unemployment rate peaked at 16.3 percent in April 2020 and sits at 6.6 percent as of March 2021.

While the decline in unemployment is certainly a positive sign, the unemployment rate is still quite high. Massachusetts has been relatively successful in its vaccination campaign, and while there are promises of reduced restrictions and a return to a more normal environment over the summer, the economy is certainly not in the clear. Further, the workers most impacted by the economic downturn triggered by COVID-19, young workers, individuals with limited educational attainment, people of color, and women are the precise population the City of Cambridge identified as “priority populations” in our examination of the City’s workforce development system. With this in mind, this foreword is intended to highlight the impacts of COVID-19 on the Cambridge workforce. We feel confident that the analytical work and recommendations conducted before the pandemic still stand in their focus on equity and priority populations in Cambridge. What is different now is the precise level of exposure and vulnerability for workers in leisure, hospitality, and personal service industries, including people of color, workers with limited educational attainment, young workers, and women. While current trends point to a reopening of the economy as soon as mid-summer, there is continued uncertainty about vaccination rates and COVID-19 variants. It is important to continue to focus on how to best provide support and services to workers who end up disconnected from the labor market during this global pandemic.

Unemployment Dashboard 1 below summarizes unemployment in Cambridge both before and during the pandemic, in terms of unemployment rates and unemployment claims. The state unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) for March 2021 stood at 6.6 percent, which is down from a peak of 16.3 percent in April but up from 3.1 percent compared to February and March 2020. Cambridge’s unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) in March was 3.7 percent compared to its peak of 8.3 percent in June. Still, it is important to note that Cambridge’s unemployment rate has not yet recovered to pre-COVID levels and remains at nearly double the annual rate of 1.9 percent for 2019.

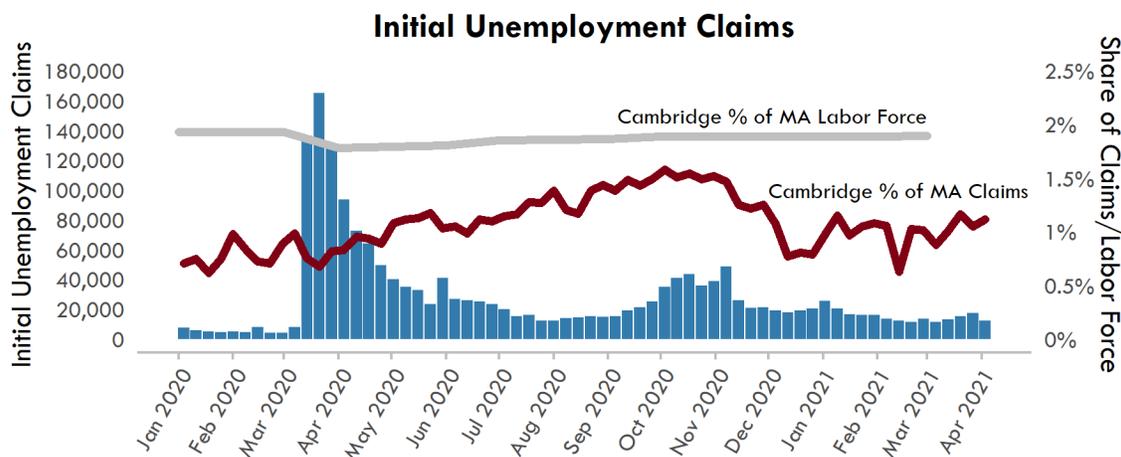
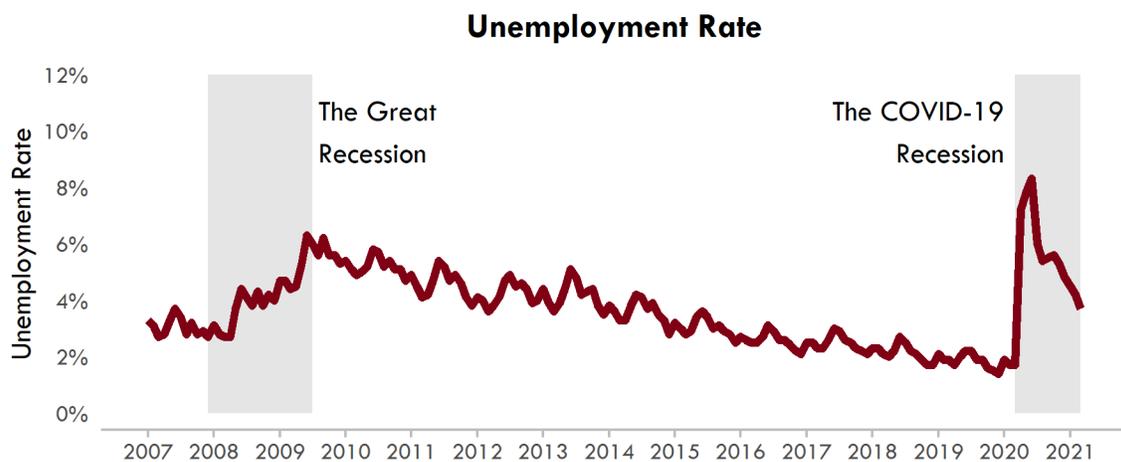
Initial unemployment claims data from the state’s Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development show a similar picture of the historically high unemployment experienced in Cambridge due to the pandemic. The week ending March 14, 2020 marked the highest weekly jump in initial unemployment claims in the city, with 1,030 claims. Another 1,118 claims were filed in the following week—the highest number of unemployment claims filed in a single week in the city’s recorded history.



From the week ending March 14, 2020 through the week ending April 3rd, 2021, 18,942 initial unemployment claims have been filed by Cambridge residents. This is approximately 27 percent of the total labor force in the city as of March 2021.

Despite the record high unemployment in Cambridge, the city has fared better than most places in the Commonwealth. Unemployment claims in Cambridge represented a proportionally smaller share of the state’s total claims compared to Cambridge’s share of the state’s total labor force. Claims filed in Cambridge ranged from 0.6 percent to 1.6 percent of the state’s overall claims over March 14, 2020 to April 3, 2021, while the labor force in Cambridge typically represents 1.8 or 1.9 percent of the state’s total.

Unemployment Dashboard 1. Cambridge Unemployment



Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Local Area Unemployment (LAU) Statistics and Unemployment Claims; UMDI and City of Cambridge Community Development Department analysis.

Note: Unemployment claims represent initial unemployment claims filed from the week ending January 4, 2020 and the week ending April 3, 2021. Unemployment rates and claims data are not seasonally adjusted.

Unemployment Dashboard 2 below illustrates that Cambridge pandemic-era unemployment claims have come in two distinct waves. Wave 1 begins with the first spike of 1,118 claims for the week ending March 14, 2020. Wave 2 begins with the week ending July 25, 2020, when initial claims reached a low of 156 and then began another rise to the Wave 2 high of 712 claims for the week ending November 7, 2020. Total claims for these two periods are almost the same: 9,449 for Wave 1 (20 weeks) and 9,493 for Wave 2 (36 weeks through April 3, 2021). The characteristics of the Wave 1 and Wave 2 claimants show important differences, as shown in the charts in **Dashboard 2**.

There is a stark difference in the **average weekly wages** prior to claim for Wave 1 and Wave 2, with Wave 1 claimants making about half the wages of the Wave 2 group before filing for unemployment. The Wave 1 average of about \$800/week translates to an annual wage of \$41,600, well below the average annual wage in Cambridge, \$94,044. This difference is reflected in the **industries and occupations** that dominate each wave. The industries most impacted by business closures were concentrated in sectors requiring more in-person transactions and less likely to be in industries where remote work is feasible.

In Wave 1, the Accommodation & Food Services industry was the largest group by far, representing 16% of claims. Other industries that could not transition to remote work, such as Health Care & Social Assistance and Retail Trade, were the city's second and third hardest hit industries, respectively. These are all industries that tend to rely heavily on workers of color, immigrants, young adults, and female workers. For occupations, Food Preparation & Serving Related Occupations were the second largest group in Wave 1 at 14%, with Sales and Related Occupations at 12%. Management occupations were the largest group in Wave 1, also at 14%, perhaps not an expected result, though these are likely to have been managers in the hardest-hit industries.

Wave 2 peaked in fall 2020, and the composition of industries and occupations changed considerably. This likely reflects the fact that most employees who worked in the hardest-hit industries had already lost their jobs, and the economic consequences of the pandemic began to spread to other fields. The industries with the most claims in Wave 2 are Professional Scientific Technical Services (17%) and Educational Services (15%), while Accommodation & Food Services and Retail Trade dropped to 7% and 6%, respectively. For occupations, Management occupations were still the largest group, but by a much greater margin, with 37% of Wave 2 claims. Food Preparation & Serving Related occupations fell to 6%.

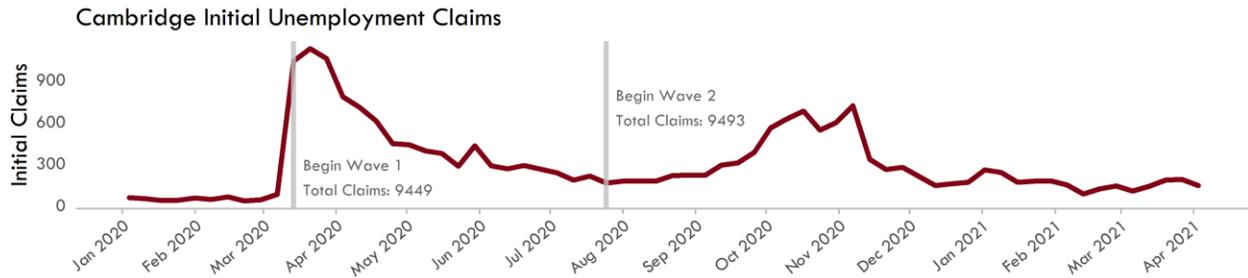
The **demographic characteristics** of Wave 1 and Wave 2 are also quite different. Looking at educational attainment, in Wave 1, 22% of claimants had a high school diploma or GED and 32% had a bachelor's degree. Almost all the change for Wave 2 is among those two groups, with high school/GED claimants falling to 14% and those with a bachelor's degree increasing to 42%. Both waves differ from Cambridge's employed resident population aged 16 years and over, 84% of whom have a bachelor's degree or greater. In Wave 1, 49% had that level of education, compared to 71% in Wave 2. Women, who make up 49% of the Cambridge resident labor force, are over-represented in Wave 1 with 52% of claims. In Wave 2, women's share of claims fell to 47%. There are large differences by race in the two waves. About 10% of the Cambridge labor force is Black or African American – yet they represented 26% of unemployment claims in Wave 1 and were still over-represented at 12% in Wave 2. Asians, about 17% of the Cambridge labor force, fared relatively well, comprising 11% of claims in Wave 1 and 5% in Wave 2. Whites, 68% of the labor force, made only 48% of claims in Wave 1, but their share grew considerably to 70% in Wave 2.

Hispanics represent 8% of the Cambridge labor force but 10% of the Wave 1 claims. By Wave 2, Hispanics declined to 5% of claims.

While not constituting an obvious third wave, since mid-December 2020 there are signs that the characteristics of the laid off labor force are again shifting. After the average weekly wage of laid off workers peaked at \$2,750 the week of October 24, or \$143,000 per year, the income of those who lost a job rapidly dropped. By the week of December 12 this figure dropped down to \$865, or \$44,980 per year. Looking at layoffs beginning that week through the week of April 3, the average weekly wage of laid off workers was \$969, or \$50,388, suggesting that middle skilled workers were now suffering more. This is borne out by declining education levels among the newly unemployed. African-American claimants during this period climbed back up to 17% while the proportions of Whites and Asians both dropped. Hispanics climbed back to 7% though the share of claims from men and women held steady at 52.5% and 47.5% respectively. Layoffs continue at an average of 170 per week, almost four times the rate pre-pandemic.

As this section has demonstrated, the recent public health and economic crises have exacerbated challenges with engaging younger workers, people of color, women, and individuals with limited educational attainment—workers with high representation in industries that cannot easily transition to remote work were the hardest hit in the first wave of unemployment during the pandemic and continued to make up a large share of claims in the second wave. Employees with higher incomes and education in less susceptible industries and occupations made up a larger share of claimants in Wave 2. The economic effects of the pandemic took longer to reach these workers and it is likely that they will have an easier time returning to the workforce as the economy reopens. Since late fall the dynamics of the labor market have again shifted and are again likely affecting the types of jobs sought by the target populations of this report. It is within this context that we present our findings on Cambridge's workforce to help inform strategies to reconnect the hardest-hit segments of workers to the labor force and illuminate paths to the city's—and state's—economic recovery.

Unemployment Dashboard 2. Cambridge Unemployment Claimant Profile, Claims since March 14, 2020



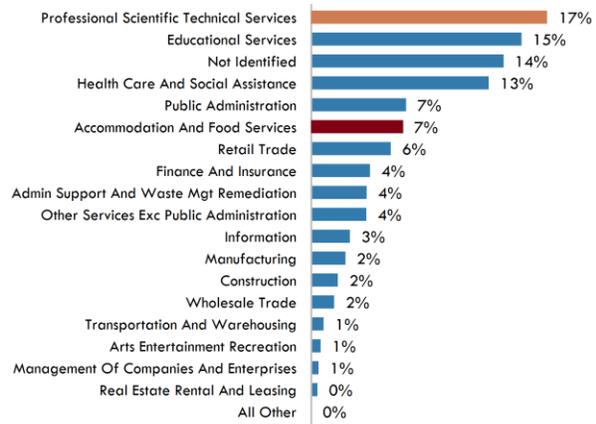
Wave 1

Wave 2

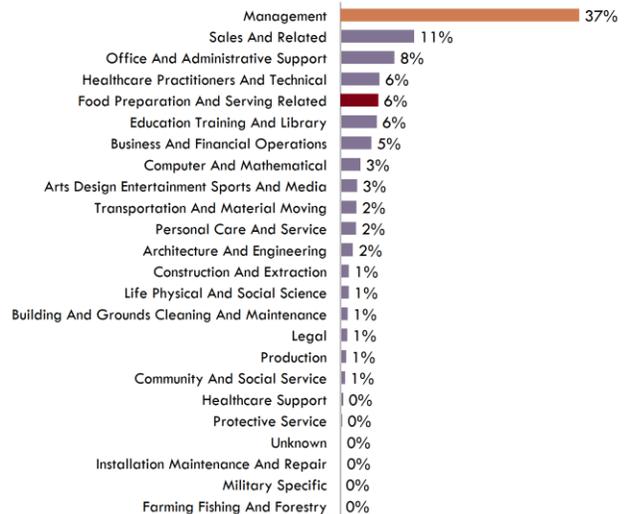
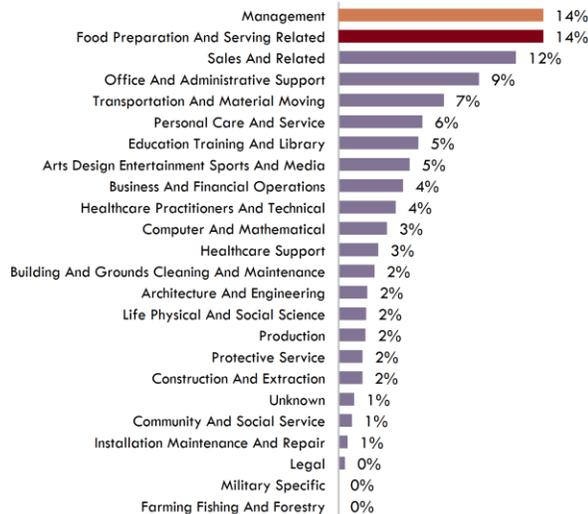
Avg. weekly wages prior to claim: \$792.93

Avg. weekly wages prior to claim: \$1,502.40

Claims by Industry



Claims by Occupation

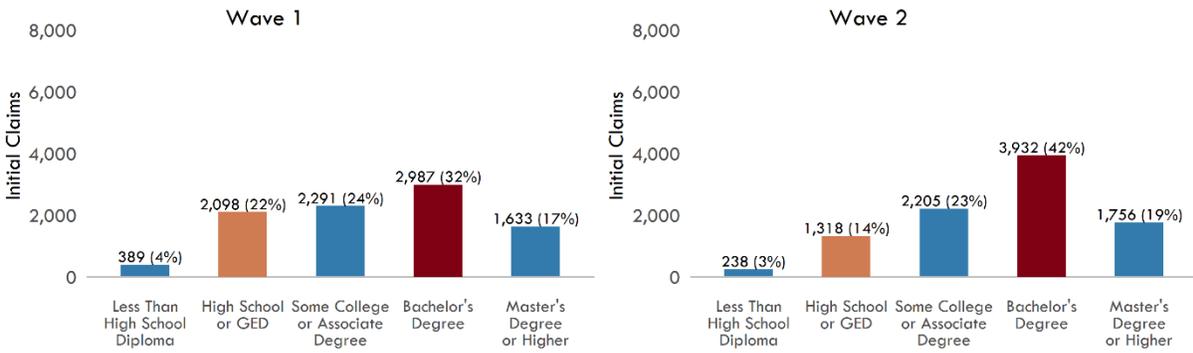


Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development Unemployment Claims; UMDI and City of Cambridge Community Development Department analysis.

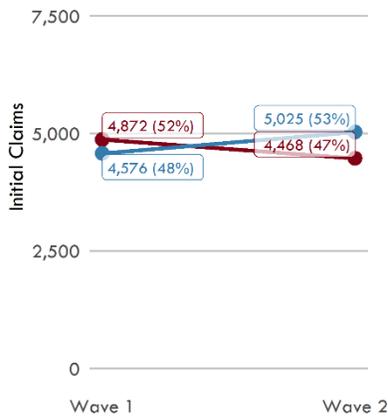
Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding error. Unemployment claims data represent initial unemployment claims in Cambridge from the week ending January 4, 2020 and the week ending April 3, 2021. Claims are not seasonally adjusted. All Other industries include: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting; Mining; and Utilities.



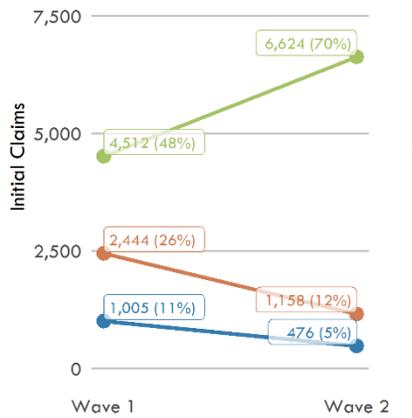
Education



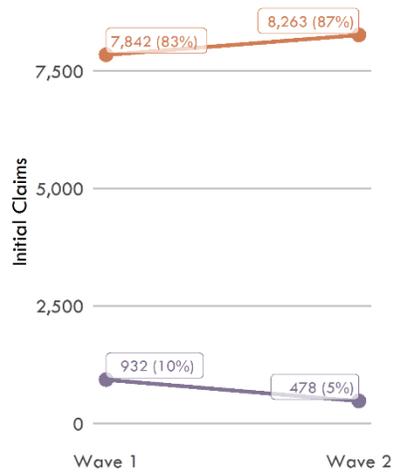
Gender



Race



Ethnicity



Female Male

Asian Black or African American White

Hispanic Not Hispanic

Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development Unemployment Claims; UMDI and City of Cambridge Community Development Department analysis.

Note: Unemployment claims data represent initial unemployment claims in Cambridge from the week ending January 4, 2020 and the week ending April 3, 2021. Claims are not seasonally adjusted. Education charts do not show claims where education is unknown (0.1% of total claims). Race chart does not show claims for American Indians or Alaska Natives (0.5%), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders (0.03%), or where claimant race is unknown (13%). Ethnicity chart does not show claims where ethnicity is unknown (8%).



Executive Summary

Message to readers: Note that this study took place over a period between late 2018 and early 2020, prior to the escalating workforce and joblessness issues related to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic that became increasingly clear and urgent in Cambridge, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the nation in March 2020. Expectations are for the economy to shrink in the second and third quarters of 2020 prior to beginning any sort of a recovery. The conditions wrought by the virus will exacerbate hardships already experienced by many Cambridge residents—many of whom are the focus of this study. In particular, hourly employees and workers in service industries like hotels, restaurants, and retail are being affected, a fact that is borne out by sharply rising unemployment claims in these sectors. Even with buttressed unemployment assistance, low-wage earners are and will be facing challenges in income security and access to sufficient healthcare. A surge in economic activity may occur in late 2020 or early 2021 as people return to work and some semblance of normalcy following the peak of the coronavirus. Such a change of events would be welcome and help assuage the deepening challenges now being experienced by Cambridge residents, especially those featured in this analysis. All said, the findings and recommendations detailed within this study, are expected to hold relevant and true in the aftermath of the current pandemic crisis. The groups highlighted in the report, as demonstrated in the Foreword, will continue to be those that would benefit from workforce development and the strategic recommendations can play an important role in helping disconnected workers achieve success in the labor market.

The city of Cambridge—at the heart of the economically vibrant Greater Boston region—has experienced robust jobs growth in the decade following the last recession. Employment opportunities, in combination with the presence of major academic institutions and a recognized world-leading industry cluster in life sciences and research, have afforded many of the city’s residents with higher wage jobs. That said, many residents in the city’s working age population are low income or disconnected to the otherwise thriving job market altogether. Even with a range of both City and non-profit programs to assist people with jobs skills and matching them with employers, many people are not tapping into these support systems. Therefore, the Economic and Public Policy Research group (EPPR) at the UMass Donahue Institute (UMDI), with support from the Center for Social Policy (CSP) at UMass Boston, worked closely with City and Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) officials to develop an improved understanding of the following:

- Which populations in Cambridge are disconnected from the labor market;
- Who is or is not being served within the local workforce development system; and
- How residents could better benefit from workforce development services.

The results of this work combine a deep look into the demographics of the Cambridge working age population to identify characteristics of groups (“priority populations”) most in need of workforce development services, and the ability of the Greater Boston labor market to provide occupational and industry growth opportunities.

These analyses, in turn, informed a series of interviews or focus groups with workforce service providers, community development leaders, and employers followed by focus groups with the priority populations. The result of this work is a series of recommendations for the City to consider to better engage these populations in workforce development activities.

The main findings of the report are as follows:

Cambridge Demographic Overview

A core element of this study is to better understand which Cambridge residents could benefit from more workforce development assistance. The demographic overview focuses on defining the “priority population”, focused specifically on individuals who are unemployed, out of the labor market for economic reasons (i.e., discouraged workers), or underemployed.

- The employed workforce in the city is slightly less racially and ethnically diverse than the city overall.
- There is greater income disparity in Cambridge by race as compared to Massachusetts as a whole.
- Cambridge tends to be much younger, more racially varied, and more educated than the state overall.
- Nearly 40 percent of the city is non-white, compared to 28 percent statewide. In particular, Cambridge has significant concentrations of Black/African American and Asian residents.
- Cambridge has a large immigrant community, with nearly 30 percent of the population born outside of the U.S.
- While Massachusetts has the most educated population in the country, with 43 percent of the state (25 or older) with a college degree, 77 percent of Cambridge holds a college degree.
- There are high average incomes in the city, but there is still a significant low-income population in Cambridge.

In order to identify a target population for the study, the research team used U.S. Census to pull data on Cambridge residents with a number of shared characteristics, including those with less than a college degree, not living in group quarters (to remove those living in dorms), unemployed, not in the labor force, and underemployed (working households that remain low income).

- The priority population makes up just over 4,000 Cambridge Residents. This population is identified as those without a college degree, the unemployed, and two categories defined below: “discouraged workers”, and people working but struggling to make ends meet.
- Households struggling to make ends meet is defined as households making two times the poverty level or less. This represents 46 percent of the priority population.
- “Discouraged workers” are defined as prime working age adults who are not working and without a work-limiting situation (e.g., disabled, retired, enrolled in school, etc.). A third of the priority population fall in this category.
- 68 percent of the priority population are people of color.
- People of color in the priority population have a greater likelihood to be below the poverty line than their white counterparts.
- Nearly half (43 percent) of the priority population is foreign-born.
- The priority population is overwhelmingly female (59 percent).
- Over a quarter (27 percent) of the priority population between 25 and 64 lacks a high school diploma.

- The priority population has a significant concentration of adults between the ages of 35-54 and 55-64. The combined 35 to 64 age group represents 47 percent of the priority population compared to 37 percent for the Cambridge employed population, overall.

An additional deeper analysis focuses on women with children (“priority mothers”).¹ Women are more likely than men to experience interruptions in their work histories to serve as a family caregiver. The criteria for this population included less than a bachelor’s degree, unemployed, out of the labor force, and underemployed. The analysis found:

- The priority mother population has a higher level of post-secondary training than the priority population at large.
- Of 842 priority population mothers, 59 percent are single mothers.
- Over 80 percent are women of color, including 62 percent Black/African American.
- For single mothers, in particular, the rates of underemployment are high.

Based on the demographic analysis and interviews with local workforce development professionals, the research team identified three priority populations to engage in focus groups: American-born Blacks, low-income mothers, and young adults. These groups tend to be the most impacted by the lack of adequate work or income, and are among the largest populations to be drawn from the target population analysis.

Greater Boston Labor Market

The Greater Boston labor market analysis highlights employment opportunities available to Cambridge residents, particularly for jobs requiring less than a college education and limited training and previous experience.

- The economy in Greater Boston is currently robust. From 2010 to 2018, regional employment grew by 14 percent- a net increase of 352,000 jobs. By 2023, there will be an estimated 142,000 new jobs added to the regional economy. The context of growth helps to provide greater opportunity for Cambridge and regional residents.
- The strong and growing industries in Greater Boston are Health Care and Social Service Assistance, Professional, Scientific, Technical Services, and Educational Services. The entry and mid-level jobs/occupations that are growing reflect these industry needs.
- The research team identified 15 occupational titles in Greater Boston that are concentrated in the region, have a lower barrier of initial entry in terms of credentials and experience, and offer potential connections to other career pathways.
- Health care and social assistance, computer support, and other office support occupations stood out among this group. Since 2016, there has been an average of 18,000 monthly postings in these types of jobs in the region, with over one-third in either Cambridge or Boston.

¹ Note that the initial definition of the priority population intentionally removed women with children who were not in the labor force to avoid including individuals who were voluntarily not working.

- Additional widely seen occupational titles growing, with low barriers to entry and potential for upward economic mobility include: Personal Care Aides, Nursing Assistants, Home Health Aides, Computer User Support Specialists, and Secretaries and Executive Assistants. These occupations present possibilities for immediate employment and some upward mobility.

Interviews, Stakeholder Meetings, and Priority Population Focus Groups - Findings Summary

The research team conducted a number of interviews, meetings, and focus groups with service providers, employers, and priority populations to better understand the challenges and needs of individuals to secure gainful employment. The service providers included a number of entities providing either workforce or social services to Cambridge residents. The employers included a number of Cambridge businesses providing jobs to individuals living in the city. Lastly, focus groups were held with the priority populations - American-born Blacks, low-income mothers, and young adults. Several themes emerged concerning the workforce development priority population.

- The rising costs of living in Cambridge, especially in regards to housing, is pushing long-time residents out of the city.
- There is considerable income inequality; higher income families thrive in stark contrast with those who are struggling.
- Many residents reported being stuck in jobs that are not only low-paying, but also low quality due to having unpredictable hours and schedules, temporary employment status, lack of flexibility, and lack of benefits.
- The high costs and low quality of jobs means that many residents in the priority group rely on public benefits to make ends meet. Concerns of losing these benefits, or facing increases in rent if their pay goes up, was a worry expressed by participants in the priority groups.
- 50 percent of all focus group participants reported difficulty in paying rent or mortgage on time in the past year.
- While the strongest growth in Greater Boston is in the industries of Health Care and Social Service Assistance, Professional, Scientific, Technical Services, and Educational Services, focus group participants were more likely to have experience in Retail and Food Services, which see low wages and low job quality.
- “In demand” jobs for entry and mid-level occupations in Greater Boston’s growth industries tend to be female dominated. This could account for challenges that American-born Black men in our focus group reported in accessing desired jobs in the city or schools, and their perceptions that women were more likely to access available job opportunities.
- The reported job experiences of focus group participants suggest that the priority population lacks the specific in-demand hard skills found in growing industries, such as those needed for home care and dementia care, and accounting skills such as billing and accounts payable.
- Participants reported that not having a degree was a major factor holding them back from accessing high paying jobs.
- Focus group participants noted frustration about their inability to complete a degree, and thus reluctance, to pursue further education. The rate of “some college, no degree” for priority mothers is especially high.

- Participants expressed interest in and often applied for jobs at local companies, but were not selected for interviews. They perceived that issues such as lack of degree, older age, and other barriers such as criminal history were preventing them from gaining access to some local employers, particularly in knowledge-based sectors.
- While employers expressed an interest in hiring locally, they reported scant numbers of Cambridge residents on their staff and interviewing few local applicants.
- Employers in our focus group seemed willing to: (1) find ways to provide opportunities for applicants who do not fit the organization's typical profile (e.g., not present well in writing); and (2) partner with workforce and education providers.
- Focus group participants, especially American-born Blacks, reported that criminal history was a barrier in accessing jobs.
- Priority focus group participants noted that they wanted more specific training on completing online applications, how to interview, network with employers, and access higher quality jobs.
- As a result of negative experiences with navigating the job market, youth and those with criminal history expressed interested in entrepreneurship training.
- The cost of childcare, indirect costs (e.g., lost wages) and direct costs of training (e.g., tuition fees, childcare, and transportation) create a barrier to training access for many.

Recommendations

Based on the primary and secondary research, the recommendations developed for this study are intended to increase access for underserved, underemployed, and unemployed Cambridge residents who are less likely to have a bachelor's degree. The recommendations, within a workforce development context, address:

- Racial equity and inclusion
- Recognition of structural inequality in the economy
- Increasing opportunity for all Cambridge residents, across the income and education spectrum
- Support for mothers in, or attempting to rejoin, the labor force
- Support for middle-aged and older workers facing challenges reconnecting to the labor market

The recommendations, listed below (and shown in more detail in a separate Recommendations section at the end of this report), should be further explored, vetted for feasibility, and prioritized by the City of Cambridge, the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA), and its key partners.

Increase Workforce Diversity and Inclusion

- Provide priority service in education, training, and job search programs to American-born Black men, who are disproportionately impacted by racism and unemployment.
- Partner with city and regional business associations and industry groups on diversity and inclusion efforts.
- Create facilitated peer support groups of like populations to help those communities overcome specific challenges facing them.

- Educate employers, non-profit training programs, and other stakeholders on the value of hiring older workers
- Consider partnerships and ways to leverage existing programs to increase City of Cambridge services to older adults.

Access to Services

- In partnership with non-profit and education providers and other key stakeholders, create a map of the workforce development ecosystem in Cambridge.
- Determine the optimal roles of City services vis-à-vis the non-profit provider community.
- Develop a referral and career navigation system to raise awareness among residents of City and other training and employment providers.
- Provide career navigation and coaching so that residents are provided support to succeed through graduation, placement, and retention.
- Further coordinate the Workforce Development Consortium.
- Conduct regular outreach so that all residents are aware of the breadth of training and employment programs.
- Develop “just-in-time” coaching services for residents navigating job search websites and online job applications.
- Ensure that bias is reduced for those with Criminal Offender Record Information (CORIs) and returning citizens wanting to access programs and services.
- Create facilitated peer support groups of like populations to help overcome specific challenges and gain mutual support in a structured manner.

Young Adults

- Explore a tiered system whereby younger low-income teens first work in community and City jobs, including the Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP), and then “graduate” into opportunities for future summer jobs with private employers or deeper experiences with non-profit and other public sector partners.
- Provide varied opportunities for youth to learn about the regional labor market, including degree requirements for jobs and the associated pay.
- Incorporate labor rights and reporting trainings into all youth workforce development programs.

Support for Career Planning and College Completion

- Expand the City’s College Success Initiative (CSI) to increase college completion for youth and adults with some college credit, but no credential.
- Provide career coaching for students currently enrolled at local colleges.

Employment Services, Skills Training and Certificate Programs

- Provide stipends so residents can participate in training programs without a loss of income.
- Explore paid apprenticeship models for in-demand occupations such as in health care and IT.

- Conduct outreach to local employers to encourage their participation in City and community workforce development programs.
- Encourage employers to conduct more face-to-face interviews with City and community employment program referrals.
- Incorporate labor rights and reporting training into all workforce development programs.

Employer

- Consider creating a “Hire Local” campaign in Cambridge.
- Explore the possibility of creating an employer-recognized credentials system.
- Convene major employers to increase efforts to hire Cambridge’s older teens, youth, and College Success students.
- Encourage employers to provide more opportunities to “earn and learn.”²
- Work with employers to improve the quality of low barrier to entry jobs.

Research and Evaluation

- Standardize outcome data for City and non-profit training providers, disaggregated by race, age, and gender.
- Develop an inventory of existing training programs accessible to Cambridge residents for the in-demand positions to determine how best to refer residents, expand existing programs, and/or create new programs.
- Collect data on workers in the 9-week DPW program to better understand their needs.

Policy

- Incentivize employers to provide demographic data about the members of their workforce who are Cambridge residents.
- Highlight employers who offer high quality employment opportunities for Cambridge residents.
- Fund community organizing and leadership development programs designed to help marginalized populations build leadership skills, develop relationships with mentors, identify issues of direct concern to them, and act collectively to create positive systemic change. This will put those directly affected by the problems surfaced in this study in the lead to address issues effectively and in a manner that will expand civic engagement in Cambridge.

² “Earn and learn” is a comprehensive approach to providing unemployed and underemployed individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs with the supports, skills, and credentials they need to gain and retain employment in high demand occupations.

Introduction

Cambridge is a vibrant city with a growing, relatively young, and well-educated population. The city is home to a booming economy, serving as the epicenter of some of the leading-edge industries in life sciences, high technology, and innovation. Cambridge is known for its politically engaged residents, world-class academic institutions, and vibrant cultural scene. Despite the city's long list of advantages, local economic success does not always benefit all the members of a community. Prior to COVID-19, the city had an extremely low unemployment rate, hovering close to two percent. Since the pandemic, the city's unemployment rate has risen dramatically, but still sits significantly lower than the state (six percent compared to 9.5 percent, respectively, in September 2020). That said, there are clear and specific populations in Cambridge that face challenges in the local economy, both before and during the pandemic. In particular, the growth of high skill, knowledge-based industries, coupled with the rising cost of housing in the region makes Cambridge a difficult place to make ends meet for middle and low-income families. A limited number of high-quality employment opportunities (i.e., sustainable wages, full-time hours, flexible schedules, and benefits) exacerbates challenges for individuals with limited educational attainment, credentials, or technical skills. These issues are even clearer as COVID-19 has ravaged the local, national, and global economies.

It is within this context that the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority (CRA) and the City of Cambridge (the City) engaged researchers at the Economic and Public Policy Research group (EPPR) at the UMass Donahue Institute (UMDI), with assistance from the Center for Social Policy (CSP) at UMass Boston, to analyze issues surrounding the workforce development system in Cambridge. In particular, CRA and City officials were interested in developing a better understanding of:

- Which populations in Cambridge are disconnected from the labor market;
- Who the City's and nonprofit's programs are serving and not serving right now within the local workforce development system; and
- How residents could better benefit from workforce development services.

There is a tremendous amount of interest in continuing to grow the workforce in Cambridge today, illustrated by the activities surrounding the Envision Cambridge Citywide plan completed in 2018, and the awareness of ramifications of major redevelopment and expansion projects throughout the city, particularly around Kendall Square. Paramount in these conversations is consideration of how development in Cambridge can be inclusive of all members of the community and ensure that Cambridge remains a city that is accessible to low and moderate-income residents. While this work took place before the pandemic, the analysis and recommendations still stand in their focus on equity in workforce development strategies in the city. What is different now is the precise level of exposure and vulnerability for workers in leisure, hospitality, and personal service industries, including people of color, workers with limited educational attainment, young workers, and women.

In terms of the current work, CRA and City officials specifically wanted to explore how Cambridge's workforce development system can better identify and support Cambridge residents and families that

may currently be falling through the cracks within Greater Boston's economy. To that end, the research team at UMDI and CSP developed a study in three parts:

1. A demographic profile of Cambridge, its labor force, and the population most in need of municipal and community workforce development services

Central to this research was to identify and describe the population in Cambridge most likely to need workforce training services and how that population differs from the city population overall and its resident labor force. In particular, with a large college-aged population, as well as an extraordinarily well-educated population (77 percent of the city's population 25 years of age or older has a college degree, including 49 percent with a graduate degree), there is a large portion of the city that is less likely to need workforce development services. With few exceptions, the development needs of highly educated Cambridge residents were not included as the audience for this study. Working closely with City staff, the research team developed a demographic profile of unemployed, underemployed, and disconnected workers without a college degree in Cambridge. The research refers to this group as the workforce development system's "priority population". This group is much more likely to be young, non-white, have not completed high school, and living in a household in poverty as compared to the overall Cambridge population and labor force. At the City's request, the research team also completed a specific data module for mothers out of the labor force, a group that faces a set of unique challenges to secure employment, complete schooling, and return to the job market.

2. An overview of the Greater Boston labor market

While this study is commissioned by the CRA and City of Cambridge, it would be shortsighted to focus on employment opportunities solely in Cambridge itself. In reality, all labor markets are regional and Cambridge residents (and others in the surrounding communities) regularly cross municipal borders to find work. Setting aside some of the broader challenges in Greater Boston around transportation infrastructure and congestion, this research acknowledges that Cambridge residents can work anywhere in the Greater Boston region and the City's workforce development system should be prepared to help train Cambridge residents for job opportunities both inside and outside of Cambridge proper. This section of the report shows examples of industry and occupational growth in the region. As the preceding demographic section focuses on unemployed, underemployed, and disconnected workers with limited educational attainment as part of defining the priority population, the labor market analysis specifically focuses on entry and mid-level job opportunities in the region that may be suitable for this specific population. Notable entry opportunities exist in the Greater Boston region in healthcare, particularly as personal care aides, nursing assistants, home health aides, and medical assistants. Computer-use support specialists and electricians are also expected to be in high demand and are roles that could transition into other career pathways in information technology or engineering.

3. A series of focus groups and key stakeholder interviews to understand the issues and challenges facing Cambridge residents in the labor market

The information and data in the first two parts of the report helped inform plans for key stakeholder interviews and focus groups, which provided source data regarding difficulties experienced by specific groups in Cambridge. Prior to conducting the focus groups, the research team interviewed local community and workforce development stakeholders as part of an effort to better understand needs and programs as they relate to the City's priority populations. Based on information gathered from these interviews, as well as the demographic analysis in the first section of the report, the research team (in consultation with City officials) held focus groups with American-born Blacks, low-income mothers, and young adults, as well as with local employers. The results of the interviews and focus groups are covered in the last sections of the report, including recommendations for the City to consider.

Cambridge leaders, the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, and community members are deeply aware of the opportunity and skills gaps that exist for people in Cambridge and are actively working to eliminate those gaps. As Envision Cambridge continues to be implemented, the City will need to spotlight and address the challenges in the local labor market to help enhance the quality of life of Cambridge residents across the socioeconomic spectrum.

Chapter 1. Cambridge Demographic Overview

At the beginning of 2020, Massachusetts stands out among northeastern states in terms of population and job growth. Between 2010 and 2019, the total population in the Commonwealth grew 5.3 percent. While this lags slightly below the U.S. average of 6.1 percent, Massachusetts is the only northeast state to have grown more than 3.3 percent. Several northeast states, including New York, New Jersey, and Rhode Island, experienced flat population growth during the same period. Vermont and Connecticut were among only four states to actually lose population since 2010. Similarly, job growth in Massachusetts stands out among northeast states. Since 2010, employment in the state has grown 13 percent. While that lags slightly behind the U.S. (at just over 14 percent), it places Massachusetts on par with New York state and far ahead of the remaining northeastern states, ranging from four to nine percent over the same time period.

What marks this period of sustained population and job growth is the expanding primacy of Greater Boston as the social and economic center of the state. Between 2010 and 2018, the Greater Boston region grew by 7.3 percent and accounted for approximately 85 percent of population growth statewide. Similarly, the region accounted for nearly 75 percent of the state's employment growth over the same period. Central drivers for this population and job growth in the region is the concentration of elite higher education institutions, the expanding knowledge and innovation-based sectors in the economy, growing investment in various aspects of research and development (both through federal sources and venture capital), a well-educated labor force, and the state's growing immigrant communities.

In combination with Boston, Cambridge stands at the epicenter of the state and region's booming economy. The city is growing, diverse, and well educated. The city has a significant concentration of knowledge and innovation-based industries, particularly around higher education, life sciences, and technology. While all of these indicators signal a thriving city, the expanding local economy has not benefited everyone. Population growth in the region has put pressure on housing prices in the city. This has created a significant affordability burden on middle and low-income residents in Cambridge. Further, the growth of high skill, knowledge-based industries has helped to generate well-paid job opportunities for workers all around Greater Boston, but there are limited quality opportunities for individuals without a college credential in the region.

Concerns about building a community that allows all members to thrive across the socioeconomic spectrum were central themes throughout the development of Envision Cambridge, the City's Strategic Plan process that took place between 2016 and 2018. In particular, how can the City help to ensure that Cambridge is open and accessible for all members of the community? How can the City help enable all individuals in the community to capitalize on the growing local economy? These core issues are at the heart of the current research project.

CRA and City officials specifically wanted to explore how the workforce development system can better identify and support Cambridge residents and families. Central to that goal was identifying

the population in Cambridge most in need of workforce development services and, ultimately, better understanding the issues and challenges facing Cambridge residents in the labor market.

The first step in this project was to identify the “priority population” for the City’s workforce development system and understand how that population is distinct from the city’s overall population and resident labor force. While the workforce development system is available to anyone in need of services, there are segments of the population that would especially benefit from accessing workforce development services. To help understand these populations, the research team worked closely with the City to develop a framework for identifying and describing the priority communities for the workforce development system. In order to help summarize the priority populations, as well as the overall Cambridge population and labor force, the research team developed four dashboards displaying some of the key demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of different populations in the city:

- Cambridge compared to Massachusetts
- The Cambridge workforce
- The Cambridge workforce compared to the workforce development system’s priority populations

The following sections highlight these key characteristics of the city, the labor force, and the workforce development system’s priority populations. Ultimately, the key characteristics observed for the priority population helped the research team identify future focus groups for this study, as well as establish policy recommendations for the City going forward.

Dashboard 1 examines the total population of Cambridge compared to the state. Overall, Cambridge tends to be much younger, more racially varied, and more educated than the state overall. Half of Cambridge’s total population is between the ages of 16 and 34, compared to just 27 percent for the state. This is not surprising as the city is home to three private universities and over 30,000 students. Nearly 40 percent of the city is non-white, compared to 28 percent statewide. In particular, Cambridge has significant concentrations of Black/African American and Asian residents. The Asian population is almost three times as concentrated in Cambridge as compared to the state. Related, Cambridge has a large immigrant community, with nearly 30 percent of the population born outside of the U.S.

The city’s population is uniquely well educated. While Massachusetts has the most educated population in the country, with 43 percent of the state (25 or older) with a college degree, a staggering 77 percent of Cambridge holds a college degree. Nearly half of the city (49 percent) has earned a graduate degree. The median household income for the city is high (\$97,000 for the city, compared to \$79,000 for the state).

Notably, though, the poverty rates in Cambridge are quite similar to the state overall (13 percent compared to 11 percent, respectively). This suggests that, despite high average incomes in the city, there is still a significant low-income population in Cambridge. This is evident too in examining household incomes more closely, as the median household income levels of Black/African-American

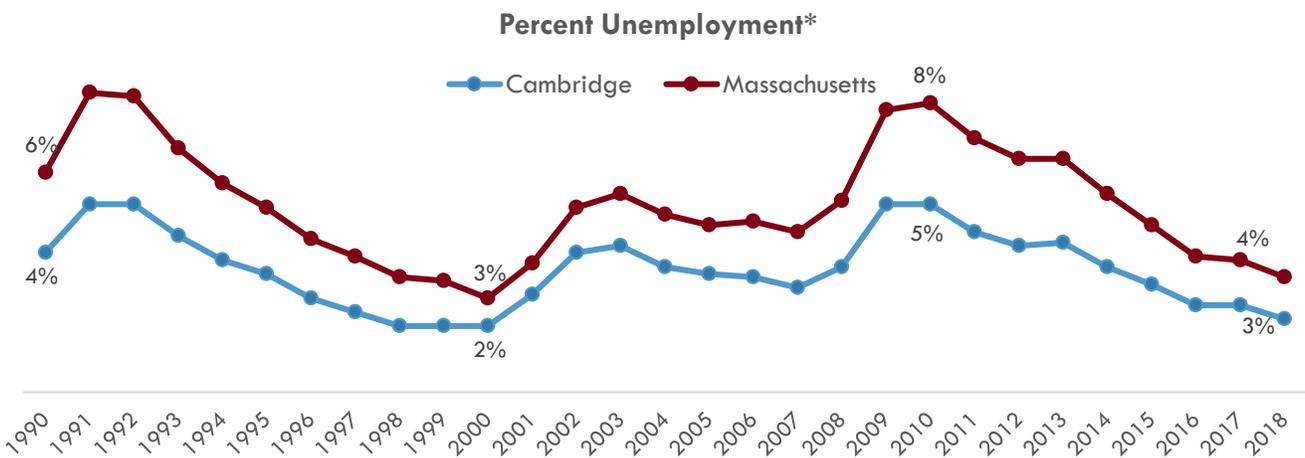
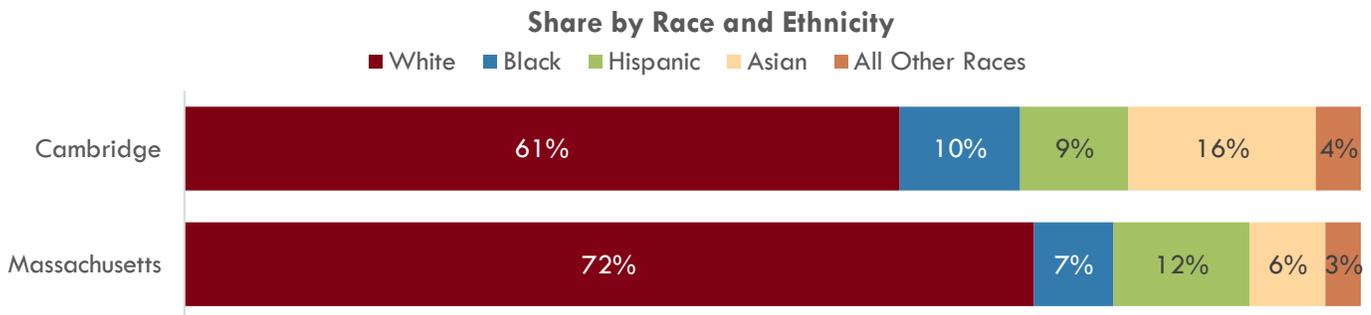
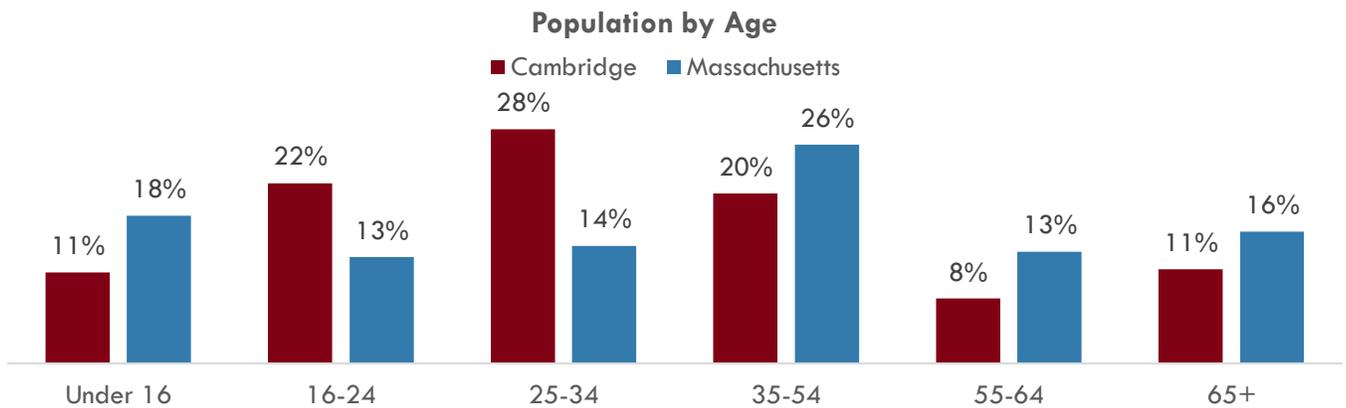
are significantly lower than the state median. While the median household income for Hispanic households in Cambridge is higher than for Hispanics households statewide (\$65,000 compared to \$42,000), this level is still quite a bit lower than the state and city medians overall. These numbers highlight that, while the city is thriving economically, there are populations with significant economic challenges.

Dashboard 1. Cambridge Compared to Massachusetts

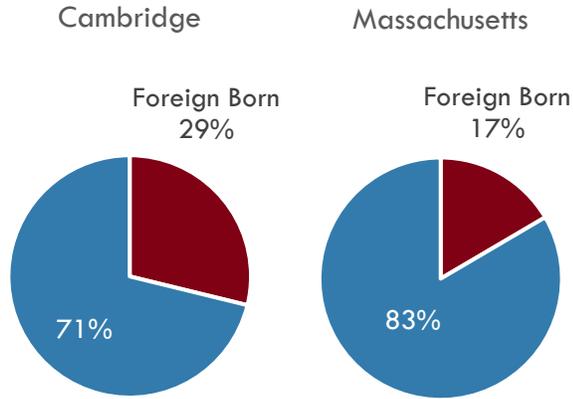
Cambridge Total Population 2018: 118,977*

Population Growth since 2010: 13%

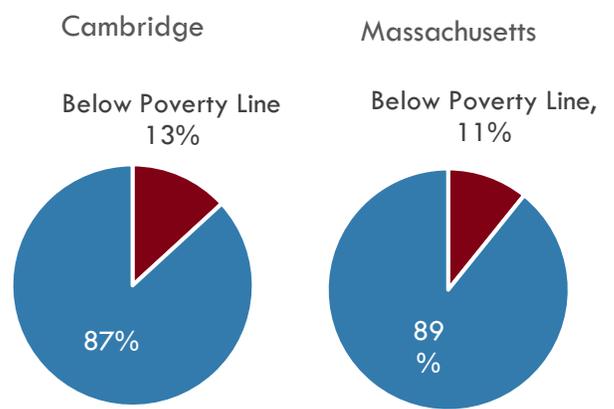
Percent Enrolled in School: 35%



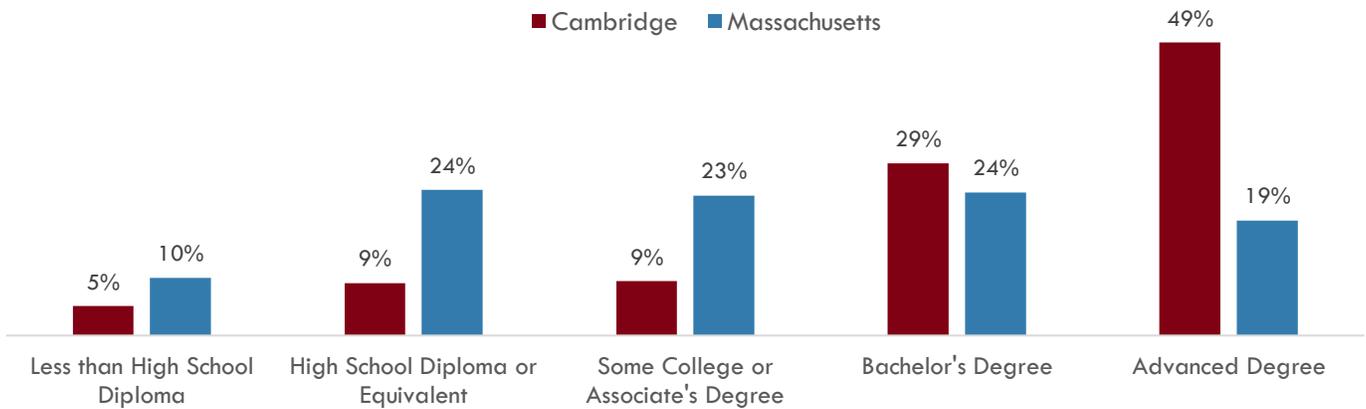
Share Foreign Born



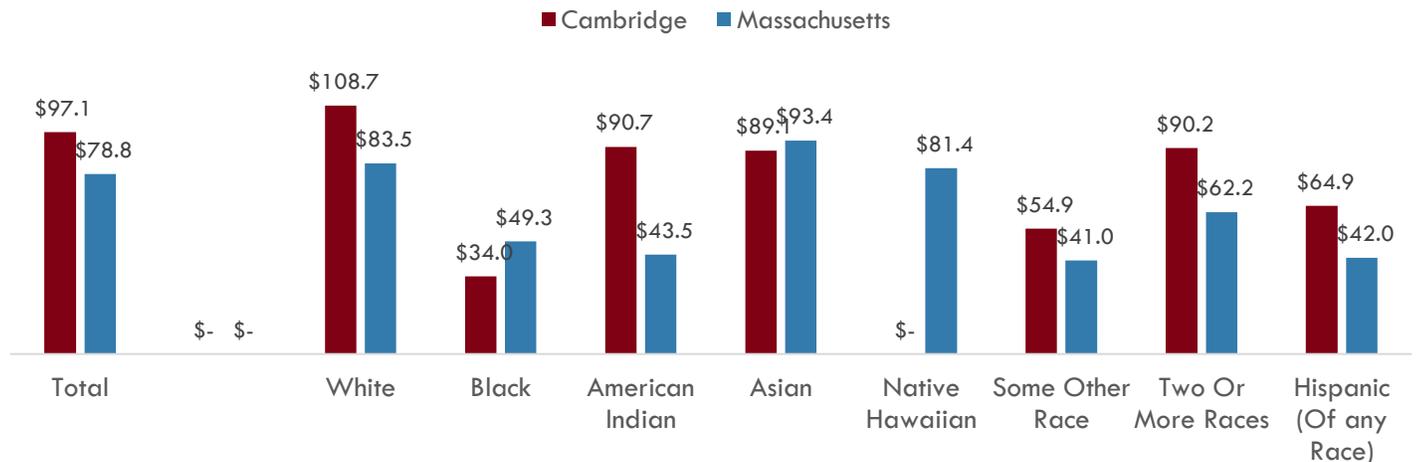
Share in Poverty



Educational Attainment, 25+



Median Income For Households in 2018 by Race and Ethnicity (2019 \$'s in Thousands)



Source: 2018 ACS 5-YR Tables unless otherwise noted. UMDI analysis.

*Note: Total Population is from the 2018 Census City & Town Population Estimate, population change is calculated compared to the 2010 Decennial Census. Unemployment is from the BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics and is not seasonally adjusted.



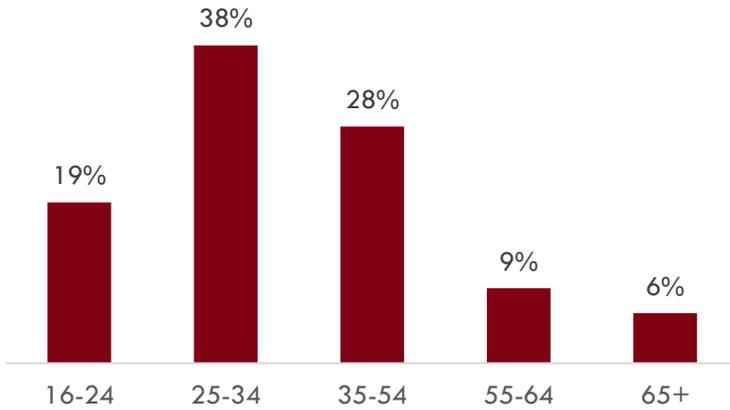
Dashboard 2 displays the key characteristics of the “resident employed workforce” in Cambridge. The “resident employed workforce” refers specifically to those individuals who live in Cambridge and are currently employed. These workers can be working inside or outside of Cambridge proper. Consistent with the city’s overall population, the resident employed workforce in Cambridge is quite young. Nearly 60 percent of the city’s employed workforce is under the age of 35. The resident employed workforce is extremely well educated, with 84 percent of the employed workers between the ages of 25-64 having at least a 4-year college degree.

The employed workforce in the city has a slightly higher concentration of whites than the overall population. As shown in **Dashboard 1**, 61 percent of the city identifies as white, compared to 65 percent of the employed workforce. Interestingly, while the employed workforce in the city is slightly less racially and ethnically diverse than the city overall, Cambridge’s employed workforce has a slightly higher concentration of immigrants than the overall population (30 percent and 29 percent, respectively). Lastly, as noted elsewhere in this report, Cambridge has a large number of college students in the city. Nearly a quarter of all resident workers in Cambridge are currently enrolled in school.

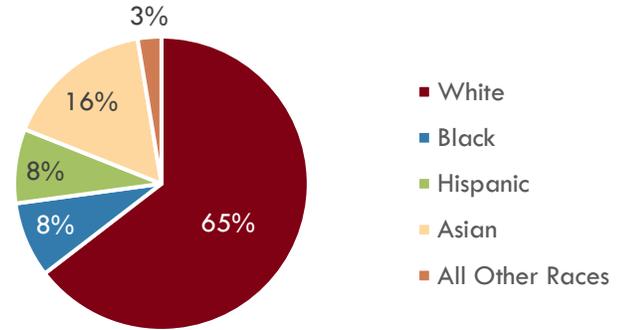
Dashboard 2. Cambridge Workforce

Total Employed Residents 16+: 68,616

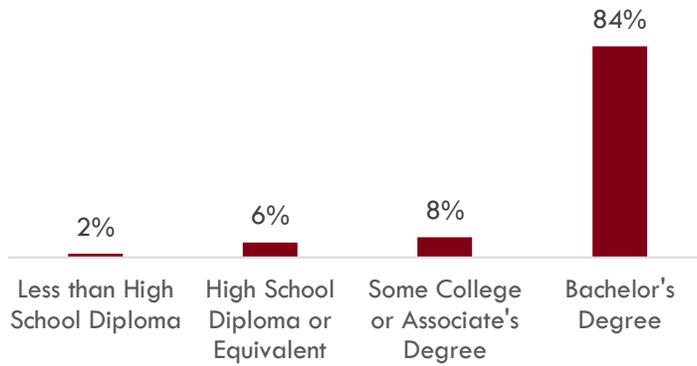
Share by Age, 16+



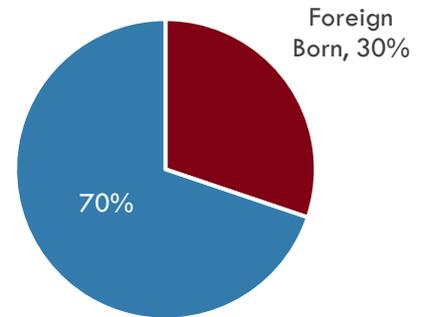
Share by Race and Hispanic Ethnicity, 16+



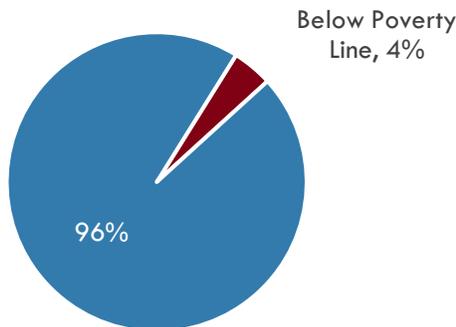
Share by Educational Attainment, 25-64



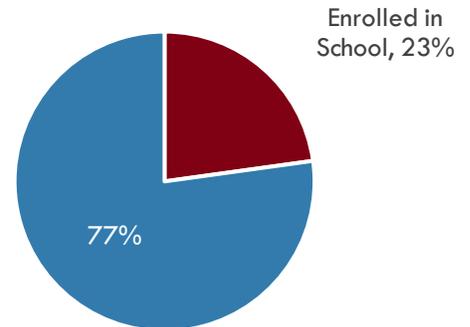
Share Foreign Born, 16+



Share below Poverty, 16+



Share in School, 16+



Source: 2018 ACS 5-YR Tables and ACS 2018 5YR via IPUMS unless otherwise noted. UMDI analysis.

Priority Population

A core element of this study is to help the City of Cambridge better understand which Cambridge residents could benefit from workforce development assistance to access jobs and advance in their careers. Municipal and Cambridge-based nonprofit workforce development programs do not currently cater to the entire residential workforce. Limitations in resources, interests in meeting greatest needs, and practical labor market considerations lead workforce development programs to focus on specific segments of the population. Workers with advanced education or otherwise highly compensated skills are not the focus of job training programs generally. Municipal and community workforce development programs tend to focus on those populations most likely to be disconnected from the labor market, including those that are unemployed or underemployed, those with limited educational attainment and training credentials, and other vulnerable groups (e.g., young adults, individuals with limited education or English skills, etc.). While workforce development and other public policy officials at the City were knowledgeable about the population they were serving in their various programs, it was not clear if the workforce development system's client base adequately represented all populations who could benefit from workforce development services in Cambridge. As a result, defining the "priority population" for the workforce development system serves as an important initial step in this research.

Based on a series of conversation with local officials, the research team considered data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) to help identify the most appropriate target population for this study. The analytical process yielded a set of Cambridge residents with the following characteristics:

- People who live in residential housing (not including group quarters³); AND
- People who have less than a college degree; AND
- People who identify as unemployed (ages 16+); OR
- People who are not in the labor force, ages 16-64, and are:
 - Not disabled
 - Not enrolled in school
 - Not retired
 - Not a woman with children; OR
- Individuals ages 16-64 who are underemployed, meaning:
 - Working less than 40 hours a week; AND
 - Living in a household earning less than or equal to two times the poverty line.

³ The Census Bureau defines "group quarters" as "a place where people live or stay, in a group living arrangement that is owned or managed by an entity or organization providing housing and/or services for the residents." There are two types of group quarters: institutional and non-institutional group quarters. Institutional group quarters refer to places like correctional facilities, nursing homes, or mental hospitals. Non-institutional group quarters are places like college dorms, military barracks, and shelters. With its large college population, Cambridge has a significant population living in dorms.

The priority population definition and identification process, as detailed above, focused on those **without a college degree** by intent, and captured Cambridge residents with the three following types of relationships with the jobs marketplace:

- **Unemployed residents**
- **“Discouraged workers”** or individuals in prime-working age, but not in the labor force. The definition was constructed to exclude individuals who may be out of the labor force for non-economic reasons, such as being a family caregiver, being enrolled in school, or having a disability.⁴
- **Individuals who are working, but struggling to make ends meet.** These are individuals working less than full-time and living in households at or less than two times the federal poverty line. This approach accounts for the household financial situation in considering if part-time workers (with less than a college education) may be interested in working more hours. The report will refer to this group as **“underemployed”**.^{5 6}

It is important to underscore that while this population, with the characteristics described above, is identified as the “priority population” of the workforce development system for the purposes of this study, this group is not the sole priority of the workforce development system, overall. There are workforce development programs and services for a wide variety of workers, both within the above definition, as well as with other populations. Again, the purpose of the priority population definition was to identify and understand the key characteristics of those Cambridge residents who may benefit most from workforce development assistance. Those key characteristics are displayed for the priority population in **Dashboard 3**.

As part of this project, the City and CRA also instructed the research team to create data profiles separate from the priority population on mothers with children under the age of 18 who would otherwise have been in the priority population. Mothers, in the priority population analysis, had initially been excluded as their separation from the labor market is often voluntary. The separate analysis allows mothers, sharing certain work and income characteristics, to be brought back into the analysis.

⁴ Individuals from these “not in the labor force” groups will show up in our priority population if they self-identified as “unemployed” or were working and defined as “underemployed”.

⁵ There is no uniform way for defining “underemployed”. This study considered a number of definitions for this group, but opted for a more inclusive definition that included all non-full time workers and used household income as the core defining feature. This seems particularly salient in Cambridge given the rising housing costs and local concerns about lower income families being “priced out” of the city.

⁶ In the case of both discouraged workers and underemployed, the current definition attempts to capture those individuals who are either discouraged or underemployed for “economic reasons”. While it is not possible to know exactly why these individuals are out of the labor force or working part-time, the definition works on the basic assumption that these are individuals that presumably would need or want to work more than their current status.

Dashboard 3 compares Cambridge’s resident employed workforce with the priority population. Again, as defined above, the priority population are Cambridge residents living in residential housing (i.e., not group quarters), without a college degree, who are either unemployed, discouraged (in prime working age and otherwise likely to work), or underemployed. By this definition, the priority population is just over 4,000 residents of Cambridge. There are a number of demographic characteristics that stand out in this population. First, a plurality of the priority population is working (46 percent), but living in a household struggling to make ends meet (households making two times the poverty line or less). This particular group of people can also be referred to as “the working poor”—people experiencing low earnings and unstable and/or part-time employment even as they remain connected to the labor market. A third of the priority population is what we define as “discouraged”, or prime working age adults who are not working and without a work-limiting situation (e.g., disabled, retired, enrolled in school, etc.). The remaining 20 percent are unemployed.

Conspicuously, the priority population in Cambridge is far more racially and ethnically varied than the resident employed workforce. As noted earlier, 65 percent of the resident workforce in Cambridge is white. For the priority population, that statistic is completely inversed—68 percent of the priority population in Cambridge are people of color. The Black/African American population makes up a large portion of the priority population, accounting for 41 percent of the entire group. Also, nearly half (43 percent) of the priority population is foreign-born. Importantly, nine percent of the priority population reports speaking English less than “well”, compared to just one percent of the resident workforce. Together, these data highlight the multiplicity of the priority population in Cambridge and underscores some potential labor market barriers for foreign-born residents, notably English-language skills.

In terms of gender, the priority population is overwhelmingly female. This is particularly noteworthy, as the initial definition for the priority population was structured to exclude individuals who were out of the labor force for reasons, such as being a family caregiver, being enrolled in school, or having a disability. One such group excluded were women out of the labor force who had children under 18. This was done to avoid counting people in the priority group who may voluntarily be out of the labor force. Even with this approach, nearly 60 percent of the target population is female, compared to an even split in the resident employed workforce. Further, 17 percent of the females who fell into the priority population category have children under 18,⁷ compared to just 15 percent for the entire female resident employed workforce. This highlights family-care obligations as a factor that can be associated with labor market connectivity in Cambridge.

Looking at educational attainment, two important trends emerge concerning educational attainment and age. First, over a quarter (27 percent) of the priority population between 25 and 64 lacks a high school diploma. This speaks to some of the basic credentialing and skills barriers that may be limiting labor market participation for this group. As noted earlier in this report, the Massachusetts economy is doing very well, with unemployment rates under three percent in many places. However,

⁷ As noted earlier, women who identified as unemployed or who were classified as “underemployed” and have children were still included in the priority population. We only excluded women with children who were “out of the labor force”. Again, the intention was to not include people in the priority population who may be voluntarily not working.

despite this strong economy, the unemployment rate for individuals with less than a high school education is still elevated in the state (over eight percent) and has come down more slowly than the rate for the other education levels since the last recession. This signals some of the skills mismatch issues that can linger in the labor market. On the other hand, 40 percent of the priority population has at least some college credits or an associate's degree. This is an important finding as it demonstrates some significant post-secondary credentials in the priority population.

The age profile of the priority population is also noteworthy. Keep in mind that the structure of the priority population definition would yield a small number of residents over the age of 64. The definition excludes people who are out of the labor force and over 64 years old if they are retired or disabled. It only includes people over 64 if they identify as unemployed. Despite a definition that limits the number of older residents, the actual median age (32) for the priority population is still the same as the resident workforce. So, while over a third (34 percent) of the priority population is between the ages of 16-24 (a population of critical focus for most workforce development systems), the priority population has a significant concentration of adults between the ages of 35-54 and 55-64, bringing up the median age for the entire priority population. This suggests the population has somewhat of a bimodal distribution, with significant needs for both young adults and more middle-aged workers.

Dashboard 3. Cambridge Employed Population, 16+ Compared with Priority Population

Measure	Cambridge Employed Population	Share	Priority Population	Share
Population	68,616		4,145	
Work Status (16+, Includes Armed Forces)				
Employed	68,616	100%	-	-
Unemployed	-	-	813	20%
Not in Labor Force	-	-	1,423	34%
Underemployed**	X	X	1,909	46%
Sex				
Male	34,970	51%	1,700	41%
Female	33,646	49%	2,445	59%
Females that are Parents of Children under 18	5,109*	15%*	416	17%
Age				
Median Age	32.0 *		32.0	
16-24	13,143	19%	1,392	34%
25-34	25,954	38%	821	20%
35-54	19,332	28%	1,308	32%
55-64	6,096	9%	611	15%
65+	4,091	6%	13	0%
Race and Ethnicity				
White	44,035*	65%*	1,320	32%
Black	5,659*	8%*	1,719	41%
Hispanic	5,585*	8%*	625	15%
Asian	11,160*	16%*	392	9%
All Other Races	1,773*	3%*	89	2%
People of Color	24,177*	35%*	2,825	68%
Foreign-born	20,714	30%	1,798	43%
Total Population Who Speak English less than "Well"	576*	1%*	393	9%
Enrolled in School	15,649*	23%*	1,110	27%
Education				
Highest Level of School Completed (25-64)	51,382		2,740	
Less than High School Diploma	813	2%	729	27%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	3,073	6%	902	33%
Some College or Associate's Degree	4,122	8%	1,109	40%
Bachelor's Degree	43,374	84%	-	-
Advanced Degree				
Other characteristics				
Reporting a Disability (18-64)	1,810	3%	357	9%
Married (16+)	24,562*	36%*	812	20%
Single Parents of Children Under 18	1,833*	3%*	359	9%
With Children Under 18	10,557*	15%*	550	13%
Individually or as part of a family earning below 100% of poverty	2,988*	4%*	1,690	41%

Source: ACS 2018 5YR Tables via American Factfinder (AFF) and IPUMS, ACS 2018 5YR via IPUMS. UMDI analysis.

Notes: All Cambridge 16+ data is from AFF, unless otherwise noted. All Priority Population data is from IPUMS. X indicates that comparable data were unavailable from Factfinder, * indicates data was drawn from IPUMS to substitute for gaps in AFF data. **Underemployed is defined as < 40 hrs./wk., earning <= 200% of poverty alone or as part of a family.

Notably, within the priority population, there are racial disparities in the experience of poverty. People of color in the priority population are more likely to fall below the poverty line than their white counterparts (see **Table 1** below). This highlights that the labor force challenge experienced by the priority population are likely felt even more acutely by those who are of color.

Table 1. Cambridge Priority Population- Poverty by Race and Ethnicity

Count	White	People of Color
Below 100% of Poverty	497	1,193
At or Above 100% of Poverty	823	1,632
Share	White	People of Color
Below 100% of Poverty	38%	42%
At or Above 100% of Poverty	62%	58%

Source: ACS 2018 5YR via IPUMS. UMDI analysis.

Focusing on Women with Children

Workforce development officials for the City underscored an interest in examining women with children that would meet the priority population definition. Our initial definition of the priority population intentionally removed women with children who were not in the labor force to avoid including individuals who were voluntarily not working. Women are much likelier than men to experience interruptions in their work histories to serve as a family caregiver, such as childrearing or caring for a parent. These interruptions can prove challenging for female workers trying to reconnect to the labor market. Further, the financial and childrearing responsibilities, and the associated challenges of managing such households, compounded if the mother is single, are well-known by researchers and public policy advocates.

The following data examine women with children and single women with children in Cambridge who meet the remaining priority population criteria:

- Less than a bachelor’s degree
- Unemployed
- Out of the labor force for economic reasons (or “discouraged”)
- Underemployed

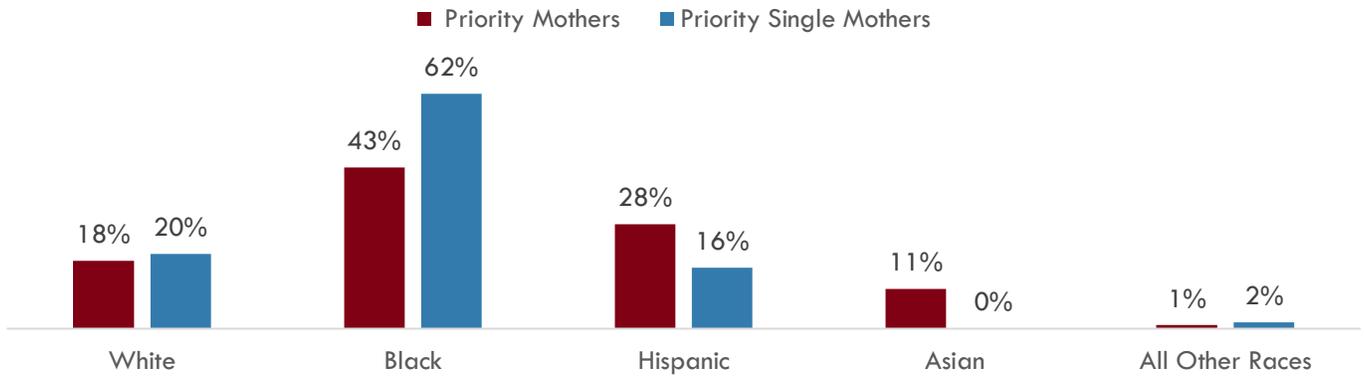
Dashboard 4 displays a number of interesting characteristics of the women with children in Cambridge that fit into the priority population definition. This is a population of 842 women, 59 percent of which are single mothers. The first and most striking trait about this population is the high concentration of women of color. As shown in **Dashboard 3**, the workforce development priority population is significantly more racially and ethnically diverse than the city’s resident workforce overall. This is even more the case when looking at women with children and single women with children (referred to going forward as “priority mothers”), with Black/African American women comprising 62 percent of the single mother group followed by Hispanic women at 16 percent. The

priority mother population has a higher level of post-secondary training than the priority population at large. This is particularly the case for single mothers, with 56 percent having some college credit or an associate's degree.

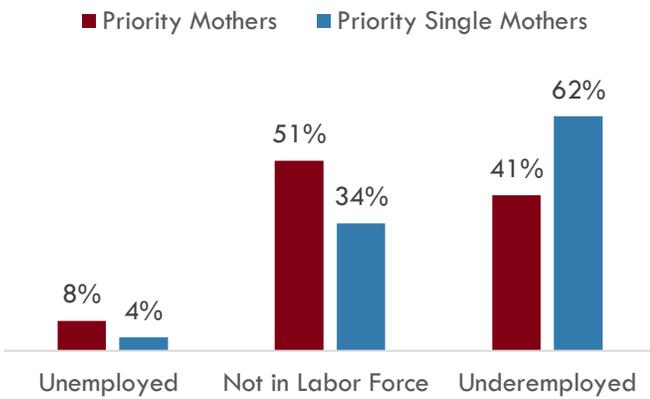
Underemployment also stands out among priority mothers. As shown earlier, 46 percent of the priority population is underemployed (as opposed to unemployed or discouraged). For priority mothers, this number is lower, at 41 percent. But for single mothers, that number rises to 62 percent. Intuitively, this makes sense as single mothers may lack other forms of financial support and may need to work, even at reduced hours and low wages. Married mothers, on the other hand, are much more likely to be "out of the labor force". Again, this segment would have been excluded from our original priority population analysis.

Dashboard 4. Characteristics of Mothers in the Priority Population

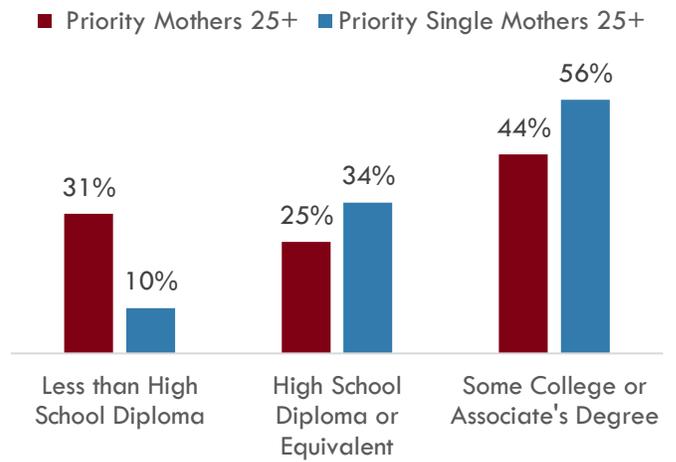
Share of Cambridge by Race and Ethnicity



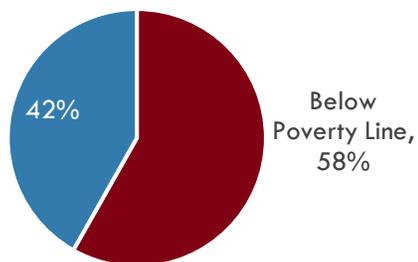
Employment Status



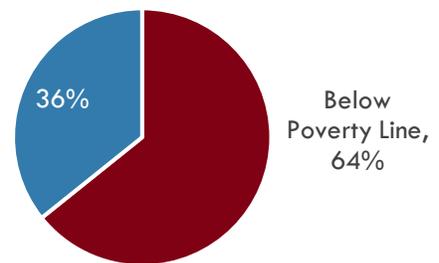
Share by Educational Attainment



Priority Mothers



Priority Single Mothers



Source: 2018 ACS 5-YR PUMS Series Microdata. UMDI analysis.

Summary

A core element of this study is to help the City of Cambridge and the CRA better understand which Cambridge residents could benefit from more workforce development assistance. As a result, defining the “priority population” for the workforce development system serves as an important initial step in this research, focused specifically on individuals who are unemployed, out of the labor market for economic reasons (i.e., discouraged workers), or underemployed. This group is defined as:

- People who live in residential housing (not including group quarters); AND
- People who have less than a college degree; AND
- People who identify as unemployed (ages 16+); OR
- People who are not in the labor force, ages 16-64, and are:
 - Not disabled
 - Not enrolled in school
 - Not retired
 - Not a woman with children; OR
- Individuals ages 16-64 who are underemployed, meaning:
 - Working less than 40 hours a week
 - Living in a household earning less than or equal to two times the poverty line

This section also examined the characteristics of women with children who meet the priority population characteristics, are out of the labor force, and may want to work.

The analysis shows a **significant concentration of people of color** in the priority population group (68 percent). For example, 41 percent of the priority population is Black/African American, compared to just eight percent in the resident employed labor force in the city. The priority population has a **high concentration of women** (59 percent) even while excluding mothers with children who are out of the labor force from the initial analysis. A deep dive on women with children without a college degree and either unemployed, out of the labor force, or underemployed, showed an even greater concentration of women of color (82 percent). Further, the priority population demonstrated an intriguing age profile, with the plurality of **young adults** 16-24 years age, but significant concentrations still among workers 35-54 and 55-64.

Based on these data, coupled with interviews with local workforce development professionals, the research team conducted focus groups with American-born Black residents, low-income mothers, and young adults, as well as with local employers. The findings from the focus groups will be discussed in Chapter 3 of this report. The next chapter will examine the local labor market in more detail and highlight some of the key industry and occupational opportunities for workers in Greater Boston, especially for workers with less than a college education—a common characteristic for many of the Cambridge population segments that would benefit from workforce development programs and initiatives.

Chapter 2. The Greater Boston Labor Market

This next section of the report examines the Greater Boston labor market and considers the employment opportunities available to Cambridge residents, particular for jobs requiring less than a college education and limited training and previous experience. As mentioned previously in this report, the current study is geared to inform public policy and workforce development planning. Strategically identifying occupations that unemployed workers can slot in to quickly is critically important. To that end, this chapter identifies occupations that are in demand in the region and have modest barriers of entry in terms of credentialing and training time.

The economy in Greater Boston is booming. From 2010 to 2018, regional employment grew by 14 percent- a net increase of 352,000 jobs. By 2023, there will be an estimated 142,000 new jobs added to the regional economy.⁸ At three percent, Massachusetts has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the country, and in Greater Boston, this rate shrinks to 2.4 percent, down from nearly 7.5 percent in 2010 in the aftermath of the Great Recession.⁹ With an average of 350,000 job openings (a combination of new and replacement jobs)¹⁰ annually, there is a wide range of opportunities for workers at various levels of the skills scale across a diverse set of industries.

Despite this wide range of opportunities, the growth trajectory of industries in the region have also helped to exacerbate inequality. Greater Boston has experienced robust job growth in traditionally higher wage sectors like Health Care¹¹ and Professional and Technical Services, as well as lower wage sectors such as Accommodation and Food Services and Arts Entertainment, and Recreation. The region's low unemployment rate, particularly for residents with advanced education and training has resulted in a skills gap between workers and employers, as some high skill industries in the region struggle to find qualified candidates to fill openings.

For example, a recent study from MassBioEd found that 65 percent of organizations in the life sciences, one of the fastest growing industries in the state, took an average of 10 weeks to fill job openings. The national average for the life sciences industry is 30 days.¹²

In this chapter, we identify both the industries and occupations responsible for Greater Boston's growing labor market, later narrowing in on potential entry points for lower and middle education workers who may benefit from workforce development programs in Cambridge.

⁸ Greater Boston is defined as the Boston-Cambridge-Newton MA-NH Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).

⁹ Bureau of Labor Statistics

¹⁰ "New" jobs are those created through economic growth. Replacement jobs are those that are made available from individuals permanently leaving a position, most commonly through retirement or a career change.

¹¹ Most data include "Social Assistance" with Health Care. Social Assistance typically pays lower wages than the rest of Health Care.

¹² *2018 Job Trends Forecast for Life Sciences Industry in Massachusetts*. MassBioEd, 2018.

Industry Analysis

To better understand the potential mismatch between workers and employers, we first look at employment change over time to identify where the economy is expanding, and what industries are most responsible for this growth. **Table 2** illustrates the number of jobs and growth rate by industry in Greater Boston. Since 2001, employment in the region has increased by ten percent, adding a net of 280,000 jobs. By and large, jobs in Health Care and Social Assistance and jobs in Professional and Technical Services (legal services, accounting, architecture, IT and software engineering, advertising, R&D) dominate the regional labor market, the latter particularly amplified by the tech boom in Kendall Square, the Seaport, and municipalities outside of Boston-Cambridge (like Waltham and Framingham). These two industries have seen a collective increase of 225,300 jobs since 2001 and are projected to account for 55 percent of all job growth in the region by 2023.

Table 2. Jobs and Job Growth by Industry in Greater Boston

Industry (2-digit NAICS code) ¹³	2001 Jobs	2018 Jobs	Job Growth (2001 - 2018)	Average Wage (2018)
62 Health Care and Social Assistance	305,278	455,537	49%	\$73,337
54 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	244,522	319,606	31%	\$163,018
90 Government	313,944	318,300	1%	\$96,416
44 Retail Trade	261,025	264,168	1%	\$44,308
72 Accommodation and Food Services	170,833	233,701	37%	\$31,005
61 Educational Services	134,559	186,323	38%	\$63,372
31 Manufacturing	271,118	177,685	-34%	\$119,682
56 Administrative and Waste Services	143,035	155,488	9%	\$66,306
52 Finance and Insurance	164,154	151,167	-8%	\$200,834
23 Construction	134,152	141,596	6%	\$100,393
81 Other Services (excl. Public Administration)	112,316	134,694	20%	\$44,761
42 Wholesale Trade	107,847	86,903	-19%	\$120,322
51 Information	96,551	82,570	-14%	\$156,370
48 Transportation and Warehousing	65,552	68,206	4%	\$69,925
55 Management of Companies and Enterprises	55,454	61,393	11%	\$166,290
71 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	37,914	57,037	50%	\$54,164
53 Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	43,951	47,749	9%	\$100,187
11 Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	5,962	8,110	36%	\$74,976
22 Utilities	8,056	6,452	-20%	\$183,817
21 Mining, Quarrying, and Oil/Gas Extraction	891	581	-35%	\$83,460
99 Unclassified Industry	146	104	-29%	\$53,851
Total	2,677,260	2,957,368	10%	\$94,044

Source: Emsi, UMDI analysis.

The expansion of some industries in Greater Boston reflect broader national employment trends, particularly in terms of Health Care and Social Assistance, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, and Educational Services. That said, there are concentration and growth patterns in Greater Boston that certainly give context to the economic condition of the region overall. To assess each

¹³ NAICS refers to the North American Industry Classification System, a federal standard from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

industry sector's importance to the region's economic success, we use *Location Quotients (LQs)*; a way of quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to some larger geography, such as comparing a distribution of characteristics of a region to the state or the nation.

LQs are calculated by taking the percent a certain characteristic makes up in one location divided by the percent that same characteristic makes up in a larger geography. Thinking of the economy, the LQ for an industry in Greater Boston would be calculated by dividing the percent that industry makes up locally by the percent it makes up nationally.¹⁴ An LQ **greater than 1.0** indicates a higher concentration of that particular industry in the local economy compared to the nation. An **LQ of 1.0** means that the regional and national economies are equally specialized in a certain industry. An **LQ less than 1.0** implies that the industry is less specialized to the region.

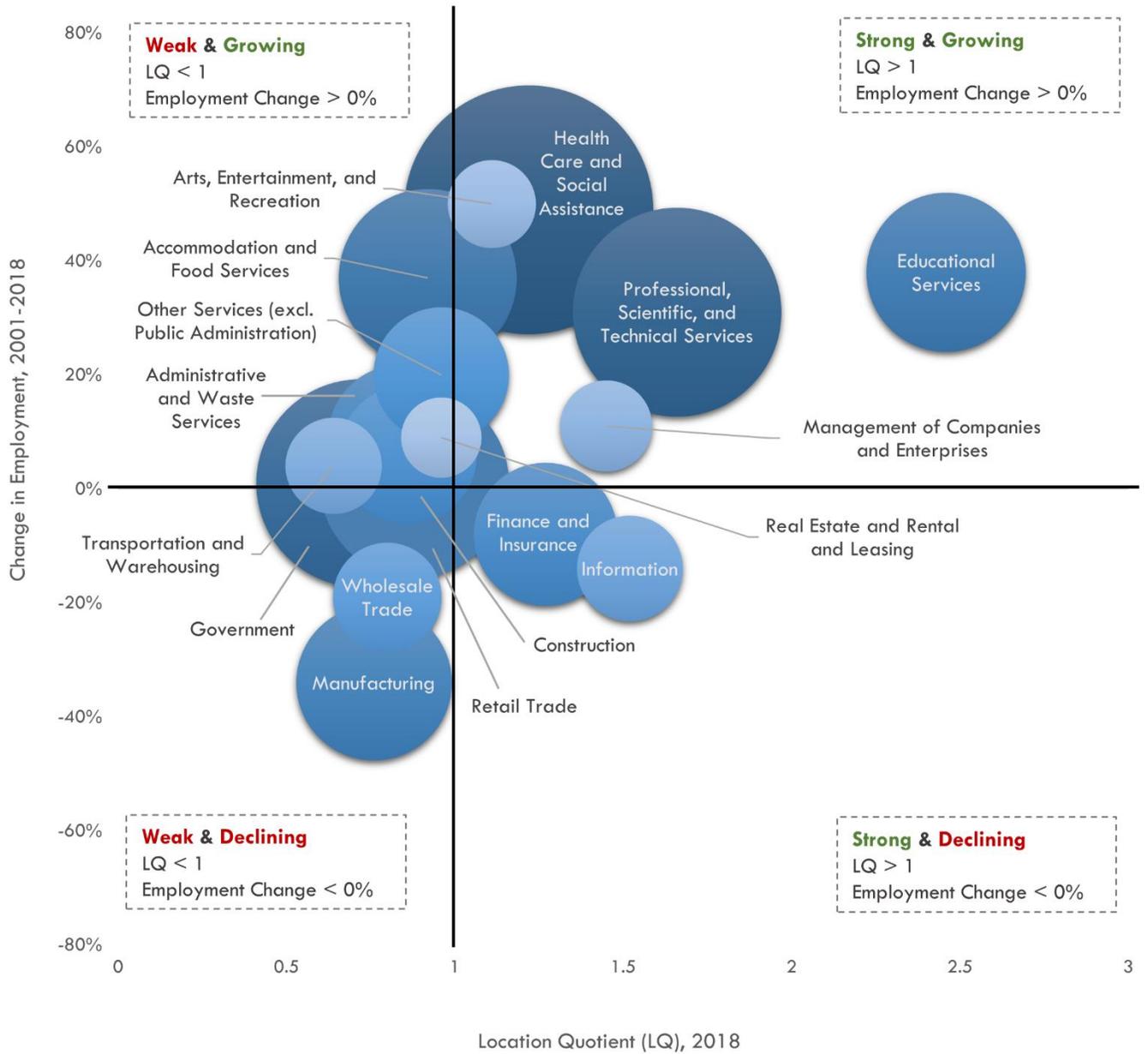
Figure 5 combines LQs and employment growth to compare industries in the region that are most concentrated and fastest growing. It shows three dimensions of employment by industry: the LQs of each industry, plotted along the horizontal axis; the change in employment from 2010 to 2018, along the vertical axis; and the share of each industry in the regional economy by the size of each bubble. The graphic is divided into four quadrants, indicative of industry sector relative importance and performance in Greater Boston.

- **Strong and Growing:** Industries that are adding jobs and are concentrated in Greater Boston.
- **Weak and Growing:** Industries that are adding jobs but are not concentrated in Greater Boston.
- **Strong and Declining:** Industries that are losing jobs but are concentrated in Greater Boston.
- **Weak and Declining:** Industries that are losing jobs and are not concentrated in Greater Boston.

Due to the large concentration of colleges and universities in Greater Boston, Educational Services has the highest LQ (2.46); meaning jobs in this industry are nearly two and half times more concentrated in the region than in the nation, overall. Since Educational Services constitutes a smaller share of the region's total employment, the industry's bubble is smaller than the ones for Health Care and Social Assistance and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services as Educational Services.

¹⁴ The same analysis can be conducted comparing a regional economy to the state.

Figure 5. Employment Change and Location Quotients for Industries in Greater Boston



Source: Emsi, UMDI analysis.

Some industries like Finance and Insurance are particularly concentrated in Greater Boston with an LQ higher than 1.0, yet the industry's share of overall regional employment is declining. This is due to both declines in employment in Finance and Insurance and the expansion of large sectors like Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (driven by subsectors such as software development, R&D, biotechnology, management consulting, and accounting) and Health Care and Social Assistance. Particularly noteworthy in these industries is the growth of biotechnology and life sciences, which largely reside with the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services supersector. With LQs higher than 1.0, and rapid job growth since 2001 (31 percent and 49 percent, respectively) Professional, Scientific and Technical Services and Health Care and Social Assistance stand out as leaders in the local economy. The job growth and employment concentration imply the competitive strength of these industries in the region, but also that these industries are export-oriented and bring significant wealth to Greater Boston and its surrounding area.

While a growing economy can bring considerable opportunities to workers of all skill levels, it can also introduce significant challenges for job seekers trying to access jobs that require specific credentials, skills, experiences, or professional networks. According to Emsi projections (a labor market analytics tool), Health Care and Social Assistance (buoyed in part by an aging population), and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sectors are projected to grow 17 percent over the next 10 years. As the demand for workers increases during a record low unemployment, so does the need for substantial skills and training to help fill employer need.

Next, we turn to an analysis of specific occupations where openings are plentiful, with a particular focus on opportunities with low or modest barriers to entry for job seekers. As noted earlier in this report, one of the goals of the project is to better identify and support Cambridge residents and families that may currently be falling through the cracks within Greater Boston's robust and booming economy. Central to this theme is identifying job opportunities that require limited educational attainment and training and are expected to be in demand in the near future. Providing workforce development professionals with a road map for understanding employment opportunities with limited barriers of entry can help officials strategically deploy resources to get job seekers into high demand opportunities as quickly as possible.

Occupational Analysis

While the industries are the drivers of the economy and form its structure, it is the types of jobs they offer, and their accompanying requirements, which are primary considerations in workforce development. Further, while industries provide a structure for thinking about the economy, the reality is that there are a number of job opportunities that cut across industry. For example, computer support occupations or various types of office support specialists exist in virtually all industries. From a workforce development perspective, it is important to identify those opportunities that are in high demand, with low barriers to entry, and pay family sustaining wages (or put individuals on a pathway towards such wages).

These opportunities may exist within particular industries (such as various health care jobs) or cut across industries (such as computer or office support occupations). Taking these points into consideration, the research team identified occupational titles that are concentrated in the Greater

Boston region, have a lower barrier of initial entry, and offer potential connections to other career pathways. **Table 3** illustrates 15 jobs with:

- 1) over 10,000 jobs in the region today;
- 2) typical entry level education of an Associate's degree or below;
- 3) little to no work experience required; and
- 4) potential pathways to upward economic mobility.

Despite lower earnings, jobs in healthcare are growing most dramatically, and include a high count of annual openings in the region. Employment as Personal Care Aides, Nursing Assistants, Home Health Aides and Medical Assistants could offer residents in Cambridge and its surrounds an entry point into a fast growing industry, with opportunities for upward mobility in the medical profession.

Other jobs like Computer User Support Specialists (who provide technical assistance to computer users) and Electricians, which are more scientific and technical, could be well suited for career pathways into IT or engineering.

Table 3. Top 15 Entry and Mid-Level Jobs in Greater Boston

SOC Code	Description	2018 Jobs	2018 - 2023 Change	Annual Openings	Annual Replacement Jobs	Average Annual Earnings
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	49,884	22%	9,971	7,717	\$29,844
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	47,184	0%	5,103	5,019	\$45,924
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	37,552	0%	4,174	4,135	\$46,534
25-9041	Teacher Assistants	27,774	6%	3,190	2,878	\$34,069
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	27,381	4%	3,329	3,096	\$33,225
15-1151	Computer User Support Specialists	19,747	7%	1,755	1,472	\$63,108
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	18,603	9%	2,373	2,050	\$43,401
43-4171	Receptionists and Information Clerks	17,578	6%	2,530	2,330	\$33,049
31-1011	Home Health Aides	17,483	27%	3,145	2,182	\$31,285
43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	17,100	-7%	1,759	1,759	\$62,422
25-2011	Preschool Teachers	13,803	7%	1,566	1,366	\$37,397
47-2111	Electricians	12,952	7%	1,634	1,457	\$64,363
21-1093	Social and Human Service Assistants	10,519	8%	1,450	1,269	\$37,065
31-9092	Medical Assistants	10,505	13%	1,430	1,165	\$39,167
25-3021	Self-Enrichment Education Teachers	10,193	10%	1,356	1,153	\$49,229

Source: Emsi, UMDI analysis.

While we know these 15 kinds of jobs are plentiful in the region, which companies are hiring for these positions? Using Emsi to analyze regional job postings over the past three years, we identify top hirers of entry and mid-level jobs, the skills they request, and where they are geographically located.

Job Postings Analysis

Since 2016, there have been 218,000 jobs posted in Greater Boston across various websites and forums, an average of 18,000 monthly postings. Average monthly hires fall short at 16,000, a discrepancy of 2,000 unfilled jobs per month. Of the top occupations requiring lower-to-middle levels

of education, postings for Computer User Support Specialists are the most abundant, with 28,000 job postings since 2016. When job postings are aggregated by industry, however, as **Table 4** shows below, Health Care and Social Assistance dominates, comprising 30 percent of all jobs posted.

Table 4. Job Postings in Greater Boston by Top Industries

NAICS	Industry	Postings	Share of Total Postings
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	53,009	30%
56	Administrative and Waste Services	46,268	27%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	17,228	10%
61	Educational Services	14,382	8%
31	Manufacturing	6,755	4%
44	Retail Trade	6,152	4%
51	Information	4,835	3%
52	Finance and Insurance	4,743	3%
81	Other Services (except Public Administration)	3,868	2%
23	Construction	3,576	2%
92	Public Administration	3,072	2%
72	Accommodation and Food Services	2,643	2%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2,277	1%
48	Transportation and Warehousing	1,869	1%
42	Wholesale Trade	1,249	1%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	886	1%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	555	0.3%
22	Utilities	288	0.2%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	227	0.1%

Source: Emsi, jobs posted between September 2016 and April 2019. UMDI analysis.

Table 5 illustrates the top companies hiring in Greater Boston by number of jobs posted for all levels versus entry level (defined as postings with a minimum experience requirement of 0-1 years). While some companies like Robert Half and Beacon Hill are staffing companies, which could indicate hiring for a number of job types and industries, other companies are more direct such as Urbansitter, a nanny site, Home Instead Senior Care, Partners Healthcare, Kindercare Learning, which all encompass some form of home care, medical care or childcare. In fact, of the top 20 companies posting for all levels, 55 percent are health, home, or childcare related. For entry level jobs, there is an even greater emphasis on healthcare, particularly in a hospital setting; 70 percent are health, home or childcare related, and three of the top 10 hirers of entry level jobs are large hospitals or medical centers (Beth Israel, Brigham and Women’s, Mass General).

It is noteworthy the importance of temporary and gig economy type labor on the overall openings in the region. This speaks to some of the bifurcation in the local economy in terms of wages and job quality. Further, readers should be cautious about interpreting job postings as new and/or open positions versus those postings that are essentially always advertised, particularly from staffing firms “fishing” for applicants. Some organizations will have listings that are always open and are less an indication of job growth or new openings.

Table 5. Top Companies Hiring in Greater Boston, All Levels Versus Entry Level

ALL LEVELS		ENTRY LEVEL	
Company	Job Postings	Company	Job Postings
Robert Half International Inc.	3,736	Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center	769
Urbansitter, Inc.	2,932	Robert Half International Inc.	733
Beacon Hill Staffing Group, LLC	1,994	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	710
Home Instead Senior Care	1,976	Vinfen Corporation	705
Partners Healthcare System, Inc.	1,947	Kindercare Learning Centers	681
Kindercare Learning Centers	1,749	The Brigham and Women's Hospital	483
Harvard University	1,723	Bridgewell Inc.	433
Teach For America, Inc.	1,651	Atrius Health, Inc.	378
Kforce Inc.	1,488	Lahey Health System, Inc.	366
Massachusetts General Hospital	1,478	Massachusetts General Hospital	356
Randstad Holding	1,475	Steward Health Care System LLC	354
CareInHomes.com	1,401	RANDSTAD HOLDING	349
Associated Homecare Inc.	1,222	Eliot Community Human Services, Inc.	337
The Brigham and Women's Hospital	1,221	Maxim Healthcare Services, Inc.	325
Atrius Health, Inc.	1,185	Partners Healthcare System, Inc.	309
Lahey Health System, Inc.	1,059	Boston University	288
Accountemps	988	Boston Medical Center Corporation	281
H&R Block, Inc.	918	Kforce Inc.	231
Bright Horizons Family Solutions Inc.	860	Riverside Community Care, Inc.	226
Vinfen Corporation	783	Quest Diagnostics Inc.	206

Source: Emsi, jobs posted between September 2016 and April 2019. UMDI analysis.

Geographically, jobs located in the city of Boston constitute 29 percent of postings; Cambridge, seven percent; Waltham, four percent; Framingham, three percent; and other cities and towns in the region collectively constituting the remaining 58 percent.

To better understand the desired skills for frequently posted jobs, **Table 6** below shows the top hard or specialized skills requested in postings for entry and mid-level jobs. Many of these are related to health and home care, but other requested skills include accounting, Microsoft Access (a database management system used in many IT settings), accounts payable, and operating systems (like Linux or Unix). Some of these skills could serve as a guide for curriculum development for future training programs.

Table 6. Top 15 Hard Skills Requested in Job Postings (all levels)

Skill	Frequency in Postings	Industry Demand for Skill
Home Care	18%	Health Care and Social Assistance
Dementia Care	17%	Health Care and Social Assistance
Caregiving	8%	Health Care and Social Assistance
Accounting	6%	Administrative and Support Services
Nursing	6%	Health Care and Social Assistance
Microsoft Access	5%	Professional, Scientific & Technical Services
Accounts Payable	4%	Administrative and Support Services
Experience with disabilities	4%	Health Care and Social Assistance
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	4%	Health Care and Social Assistance
Personal Care	4%	Health Care and Social Assistance
Good Driving Record	4%	Transportation and Warehousing
Billing	3%	Administrative and Support Services
Elderly Care	3%	Health Care and Social Assistance
Medical Assistance	3%	Health Care and Social Assistance
Operating Systems	3%	Information

Source: Emsi, UMDI analysis.

Summary of Labor Market Data

The economy in Greater Boston is booming. From 2010 to 2018, regional employment grew by 14 percent. Currently, the regional unemployment rate sits at 2.4 percent, down from nearly 7.5 percent a decade ago. Greater Boston’s recent economic success is owed in part to its well-educated labor force and the concentration of knowledge and innovation-based industries, particularly around higher education, life sciences, and technology. However, the growth trajectory of these industries in parallel with the growth of low wage sectors like Hospitality and Food Services, has also helped to exacerbate inequality in the region. With that, there is increased concern about a narrowing number of high-quality entry and mid-level positions for individuals with limited credentials, education, and previous direct experience.

The research team identified 15 occupational titles in Greater Boston that are concentrated in the region, have a lower barrier to initial entry in terms of credentials and experience, and offer potential connections to other career pathways. Health Care and Social Assistance, Computer Support, and Other Office Support occupations stood out among this group.

Notable opportunities include Personal Care Aides, Nursing Assistants, Home Health Aides, Computer User Support Specialists, and Secretaries and Executive Assistants. This does make sense as most of the occupations identified were particularly concentrated in growth industries today or are occupational titles that can cut across a number of different industries. These occupations present strong possibilities for immediate employment and potential upward social mobility with further

education and training. It should be noted that other local research on the workforce development system has similarly identified health care support and computer support positions as strategic focus areas for training displaced workers, including the Greater Boston Workforce Planning Blueprint completed for the Governor's Workforce Skills Cabinet in 2018.¹⁵

The following sections of the report represent the results of a combination of focus groups and key informant interviews with employers, workforce development professionals and stakeholders, and job seekers. The information collected from these interviews and facilitated discussions help to contextualize the demographic and labor market data laid out in the first sections of this report, as well as lead to the development of the policy recommendations shown at the conclusion of the report.

¹⁵ For more information, see https://www.bostonpic.org/assets/research/Greater-Boston-Workforce-Planning-Blueprint_Final.pdf

Chapter 3. Overview of the Employer Perspective

The previous section described the types of jobs and employers that may provide opportunities for Cambridge's target population and the workforce development programs that serve them. A focus group of Cambridge employers provided a first-hand look concerning their needs, hiring approaches, and the opportunities and challenges for Cambridge's underserved workforce population. The Cambridge Redevelopment Authority and the City recruited a group of employers from Kendall Square that had a stake in and could offer insights on recruiting underemployed and unemployed Cambridge residents. The employer group was a traditional convenience sample and consisted of those who responded to the invitation; it was not necessarily representative of Cambridge industries.¹⁶

The employers who participated in the focus group convened in October 2019 varied across industries, but they shared common challenges in terms of connecting with and including Cambridge's underserved population in the workforce. In total, four organizations were represented; five participants were present, with two participants representing the same organization. These organizations include traditional employers with company staff at varying levels and functions in the Construction, Health, and Hospitality industries, as well as an employer in the Event and Programming industry which offers co-working spaces or incubators for startups.

Types of Entry Level Jobs and Skills Required

The focus group findings revealed that entry-level jobs and the skills required by employers differed primarily by the type of industry. The Health Care employer reported a requirement for employees, both clinical and non-clinical, to possess some certification or training in a related field to enhance their entry into the industry. However, the Hospitality employer noted that entry-level positions exist for less educated and more educated workers. For instance, they offer entry level associate positions to workers without a degree and entry level manager positions to college graduates. Similarly, the Construction industry employer reported having entry-level jobs in the form of apprenticeships that run for a period of 4-years, while entry-level "professional" jobs are available to college graduates, often with engineering degrees. Combined, employers reported having jobs such as cooks, housekeepers, front desk attendants, call operators, customer service, apprenticeships, and technicians, as potential jobs for job seekers without college degrees. While these jobs can offer invaluable experience and provide pathways toward careers and living wages, many of them are likely to be thin on benefits, offer unstable hours, and relatively low levels of pay.

Employers shared that they are looking for committed employees who align with their core values. One employer explained, *"there are some core values that you want to see, the other things you can*

¹⁶ Further, in some instances, the observations made in this section by employers should be thought of as opinions and perceptions of local labor market and public policy conditions and not necessarily an exact portrayal of all local conditions. That said, these observations provide important context to the secondary data analysis in the previous sections.

teach. So, depending upon the position, they don't have to have all the skills but if they have the right core values, we can certainly work with some of the technical or other skill sets that they may need.”

An employer from the construction industry also added that they seek:

“individuals that are committed to a career in the trades and have the other attributes about willingness to work hard and show up on time and all that stuff that we all look for. And this kind of process of hiring we think is going to lead to more of a success in not just finding individuals but finding the ones that stick, that stay in and create a long-term career.”

Employers overwhelmingly expressed interest in hiring local candidates and/or less educated workers but revealed that it is challenging to find interested candidates that are a good fit for the organization (e.g., those that are available on weekends and holidays).

Recruitment and Hiring Challenges

Employers reported a number of challenges and barriers to recruitment and hiring. As one employer reported, *“my staff is not from Cambridge. I can count them on this hand how many actually live in Cambridge proper. So, to me, they're coming from everywhere else but here. It's the people in Cambridge, if they are unemployed or underemployed, they're certainly not getting their name in and applying.”*

They stated that the cost of living in Cambridge is narrowing the pool of potential candidate for entry level jobs. One employer noted, *“It's difficult because it's so expensive to live here. Once people do work here and learn the trades and they make a little money, I think it's hard for them to still stay here.”*

Employers stated that they recruit and hire through a combination of approaches including referrals from current employees, families and friends; online application processes; and partnerships with educational institutions, community programs, the City, and non-profits. While one employer reported they depend heavily on referrals, some employers reported relying mainly on the online application process. One employer defined online recruiting as *“all done behind the scenes until it gets pushed to our desk.”*¹⁷

Employers also reported that on the individual candidate level, applicants' ability to represent themselves through the application process impacts employers' perception of their skills and abilities. For example, one employer cited poorly written resumes or cover letters as impeding some applicants who might otherwise be capable of doing the job.

According to this employer,

¹⁷ All quotes in this section are from participants in the Employer Focus Group on October 2, 2019.

“that’s the portal through which they enter our organization, is to send their resume and cover letter and then communicate with the recruiter via email. Because of the kind of judgment calls that are made on the written word, if someone isn’t kind of presenting with things like grammatically correct sentences and composing emails in a way that has a kind of professional structure, then that kind of sets them back.”

Another employer, however, suggested, *“well and the problem to apply – you apply in an email with a resume and cover letter. That could be a barrier. And to me that shouldn’t be the barrier. There should be if there’s people that aren’t able to do it, is there somebody who can assist them to fill it out and do it because obviously they’re able to, if they had the technical ability, they might be able to do it.”*

Several employers expressed challenges in recruiting and hiring certain populations including those with criminal records, women, people of color, persons with disability, and older adults. They reported a desire to consider and include these different populations who are underrepresented in Cambridge’s workforce or in specific industries (e.g., such as women in Construction). For instance, one employer recalled, *“within the past year I’ve had a lot of conversations and reached out to people that I think have more experience in working with returning citizens and educated myself a lot on how to think about working with people who have criminal backgrounds.”*

Employers expressed uncertainty about hiring goals and compliance: *“I haven’t heard any companies getting pressure to say what are your stats on people with mental or physical disabilities...no one is saying that if someone was born with a disability which they didn’t choose, that companies have a responsibility to try to make a space for them.”*

Employers also reported the hiring goals for Construction obtained in Cambridge is not comparable to the City of Boston, which according to one employer, *“currently has much higher expectations in writing as far as not only residents but minorities, and women. So, we’re always looking to look out to the community and find a wide variety of people.”* This employer added, *“unfortunately in Cambridge, I think the residents that work in construction is something like 1%.”* Another employer further elaborated, *“If you work in Boston on the major construction projects, their goal is 50% residents and they hold you to it. It’s hard to meet that goal but we can come close. Like you said, in Cambridge it’s something like 1, 1 ½% of the residents. Yet, another employer added, “Well there is no Cambridge goal. There isn’t. And if there were, it’d be tough to meet something that was much higher.”*

Almost all employers in the focus group reported partnering in various degrees with education and workforce programs in the community. Programs specifically mentioned by employers were Year Up, Cambridge Rindge and Latin, Somerville High School, Massachusetts General Hospital Aspire program, Cambridge Works program, Jewish Vocational Services (JVS), Best Buddies, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

Strategies to Address Recruiting and Hiring Challenges

Employers largely reported they are actively working to improve their hiring processes to be more inclusive and allow for diversity in their workforce or, what one employer termed, the inclusion of

“certain folks that are coming from a different profile than our standard applicant.” Another employer describes their efforts as attempting “a holistic approach to how they’re thinking about an applicant.”, This employer reported training their recruiters to reach out as much as possible to an “applicant who is presenting with like a resume or written materials that aren’t really tight but they have useful skills like having worked with their hands or done IT support in some capacity.” Another is experimenting with working with people on the spectrum. This employer reported “autism is something where people don’t present well at an interview. When you bring them to an interview, the uneducated mind says well this person can’t fit into our culture. So, we’re on our fourth intern right now working through Mass General Hospital (MGH) and Aspire to bring in someone on the spectrum for a 6- to 12-week internship to work.”

Other employers reported rethinking how they advertise for job positions, particularly the job requirements and job descriptions advertised. According to one employer, they began asking questions, such as, *“How do we find people? How do we engage with people that were maybe getting put into the ‘no’ pile without us having a valid kind of more holistic approach to it? So that’s something we did with all of our job descriptions. So, I think that’s a change that’s allowed us to kind of break down barriers.”*

Employers also reported increasingly looking beyond formal education or skills. One employer noted, *“like what Google did recently was they removed the bachelor’s degree requirement from their job descriptions. So that was something that we have been also really committed to doing, and not just doing it in lip service but actually engaging and working with people who don’t have the kind of traditional requirements for a job. And that’s been especially helpful.”*

In addition, some employers reported offering tuition reimbursement, loan forgiveness, and trainings in multiple languages as ways to address hiring and retention challenges. One employer noted, *“we kind of nurture our own so we take people that have been interested in engineering in the hotel and have them take classes in like local high schools and community colleges to have some basic, you know, entry level skills.” Another said, “...because the market got so tight, and we don’t have deep pockets...So, we implemented a loan forgiveness program for RNs where if they’re full time, they can get \$600 a month and we ask for a 2-year commitment. They could extend it for a third year and get about \$800 a month. So, for someone working full time it’s about \$14,000 and change that they could get to help pay off their school loans.” This employer noted that providing these types of incentives are often contingent on funding, but “we’re fortunate to have a few donors who give money each year for staff development and growth for better jobs.”*

One overarching question that emerged from the employers was: are unemployed or underemployed Cambridge residents not getting their name in and applying or are they simple being weeded out in the application process? They also wanted to know if there were programs that helped connect adults (non-students) who are struggling with employment. Overall, there appeared to be a desire among employers to consider applicants who face barriers to employment. However, disconnects remain in the current workforce development system that hinder the connection between residents with barriers and successful employment.

Chapter 4. Stakeholder Meetings

Key Stakeholder Summary

Prior to conducting focus groups, the survey team conducted a series of interviews with key stakeholders in Cambridge to better understand the labor and economic dynamics of the City and the particular workforce-related issues faced by its citizens. These stakeholders, who consisted of leaders and program staff in City government agencies and non-profits, were identified by the City of Cambridge team. A list of stakeholders interviewed can be found in **Appendix C**.

Stakeholders described Cambridge as an innovation hotbed that leaves the poor behind instead of benefitting from an expanding economy. This is reflected by the shrinking middle class, who are getting priced out. Whereas the upper class can afford to live in Cambridge, many lower income residents need vouchers to provide housing stability. Many more struggle with basic needs. There is notable income inequality; higher income families thrive in stark contrast with those who are struggling. As one stakeholder put it *“some kids are going to France for the summer, other kids are working for the Mayor.(the Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program)”*

Stakeholders reported that there are many “working poor” in Cambridge, who are working several jobs and struggling to make ends meet. There are also some who are chronically underemployed, working for Uber and similar companies, jumping from gig to gig. Generally, these are people, with some assistance, who can advance economically, but many are not looking, and stick to the daily patterns of their current situation. Some others have an unrealistic expectation of accessing high paying jobs more quickly than practice shows, and can be reluctant to accept low-paying jobs even if that is the main option available to them without pursuing additional workforce development opportunities.

Stakeholders noted a number of barriers that prevented residents from being successfully served by job training programs:

- Cost of childcare, or lack of time to drop children off with a relative;
- Time cost of training and education, on top of their 2 or 3 other jobs;
- Lost wages by engaging in skills/job training;
- Language barriers;
- Lack of foundational skills, including life skills, English and math, interpersonal communication skills, and computer training (prevents applying for and getting jobs, finding public services and resources);
- Financial health and literacy: many are in debt, do not know how to budget, understand taxes, health insurance, concern about how income changes impact their public benefits (especially housing);
- Housing instability, financial challenges, and health issues lead to lack of program completion.

There is a need to improve outreach and locating people within the community with connections to underserved populations. This is the successful model of the City’s Community Engagement Team. It’s

important to go to the locations where the population interfaces with the community. One stakeholder noted a lack of deep connection in terms of resident engagement, in spite of the many services offered by the City.

Stakeholders noted the need for a stronger integration of public services by creating partnerships across agencies. The roles of the public and non-profit sectors should be clarified to break down silos and improve program development and implementation. One organization could refer people to other organizations to fulfill their needs and connect clients with needed resources. They could then follow up (or circle back) with these clients, and make sure they are making progress with their programs, and moving forward in a positive direction. Services should be provided for the full life cycle; from early childhood through elderly services. The family should be worked with as a whole.

Stakeholders noted three groups who are underserved by City services. First, American-born Black men are often disconnected and intentionally invisible¹⁸ from the system (especially fathers connected to a partner in public housing), thus they do not participate in programs. Single female heads of household are often working several jobs, taking care of kids, and they do not have time for job training programs. Third, there are youth who may have entered college, but didn't complete degrees. Many are first generation students, who may have had to drop out for financial and social reasons. Cross-cutting all groups is mental illness—many residents with anxiety and depression. In terms of who is well-served, stakeholders believed there is a sufficient number of programs targeted toward the growing immigrant population (e.g., Haitian or Ethiopian).

These reflections and recommendations from key stakeholders influenced the selection of the three priority populations to target for the focus groups.

¹⁸ Some men may be “hiding” from the system for reasons such as avoiding child support payments and/or being counted as a member of household receiving housing assistance (and thus disqualifying the family).

Chapter 5. Priority Population Focus Group Summaries

Overall Summary of Combined Focus Groups

Using the quantitative data as a guide, the Cambridge team selected three groups of populations represented in the study’s target universe to engage for deeper qualitative analysis: low-income mothers who want to work, American-born Black adults, and underemployed or unemployed young adults (ages 18-24). Twenty-seven Cambridge residents participated in the focus groups which were conducted in July and August of 2019. In addition to the qualitative focus groups, a survey was administered at the end of the session. The data from the survey are also reported below (due to some incomplete responses, the totals in some categories do not sum to the participant total).

Table 7. Combined Focus Group Self-Reported Demographics (Survey)

Focus groups	Moms	American Born-Blacks	Young Adult
# of Participants	10 participants	9 participants ¹⁹	7 participants
Gender	10 females	6 males 3 females	3 males 4 females
Race	2 Non-Hispanic White 4 Non-Hispanic Black 2 Mixed races 2 Hispanic or Latino	8 Non-Hispanic Black 1 Black American Indian	3 Non-Hispanic Black 1 Hispanic Black 2 Hispanic White 1 Black American Indian
Age range	28-51	25-80	18-23
Marital status	6 Never married 3 Married 1 Divorced	4 Never married 3 Married 1 Divorced 1 Widowed	7 Never married
Education²⁰	5 < High school 1 High school 3 Some college 1 Bachelor’s degree	2 < High school 2 High school 2 Some college 1 Bachelor’s degree 1 Graduate degree	1 < High school 3 High school 3 Some college

¹⁹ 10 participants attended the ABB focus group session, but 9 participants completed the demographic survey. The participant who did not complete the demographic survey left before the end of the session.

²⁰ One respondent did not answer the education question for the ABB focus group.

All three groups were asked about their strengths. These self-reported strengths varied across groups, but “*diversity, hard work, and volunteering*”²¹ are some of the overlapping strengths. Participants universally expressed concerns about the high costs of living in Cambridge, especially housing. Almost half of all participants (13) reported a challenge with paying their rent or mortgage on time in the past year, a finding pointing to housing instability. They reported that gentrification is resulting in people like them being pushed out of Cambridge in favor of primarily white, college-educated workers in the technology industries. Fifteen participants also agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they are concerned about losing benefits if their earnings increase (i.e., the “cliff effect”).²² Several provided specific concerns about losing healthcare or childcare.

For those employed, participants tended to work part-time, temporary, non-benefited, and/or multiple jobs. Common jobs among focus group participants included those in retail, cleaning, food services or restaurants. All groups expressed some level of dissatisfaction with pay and other work conditions. Young adults in particular felt that they were being exploited, harassed, and underpaid as a result of being a youth, and experiencing wage theft. The young adults also frequently noted that their pay was insufficient to make ends meet in Cambridge.

Across the board, participants expressed concerns about discrimination. Young adults largely reported discrimination due to their age. Mothers and American-born Blacks (ABB) reported discrimination due to being older, intersecting with their race, ethnicity, and gender. Black men in particular reported numerous experiences of being discriminated against because of their race and gender, exacerbated by lower education levels. Some participants in the American-Born Black group felt major challenges due to discrimination related to criminal records.

Participants across all groups expressed the desire for higher quality jobs. A need for higher pay was emphasized especially by American-Born Blacks and young adults, whereas the low-income mothers stressed a flexible schedule compatible with their children’s school, and access to childcare. Young adults also emphasized the importance of having schedules that are predictable and cognizant of their other responsibilities and school.

Some participants had participated in one or more job training programs offered by the City, but they suggested the job training programs needed to offer more help with how to access jobs. Many expressed the desire for assistance with resumes, cover letters, online application processes, networking, and access to employer interviews. They also communicated a need for a more realistic preview of the hiring process, so they could better navigate. They wanted the training to be free, short in duration, include work experience (internship) and lead to a good paying job. Several mothers and young adults expressed the need to better understand the financial implications of education, financial aid, the loan process, debt and credit, and tax assistance. Even with additional

²¹ All quotes in this section are from participants in the Mothers, American-Born Blacks, and Young Adult Focus Group. These quotes were largely representative and purposefully selected to reflect voices of participants who spoke to the themes and findings presented.

²² Cliff effects force individuals trying to improve their economic position to choose between increasing their earnings through work or face a reduction in the public benefits they rely on.

training, a number of participants were concerned that they could not meet the job requirements they see in position descriptions.²³

American-Born Blacks

The American-Born Black (ABB) focus group consisted of six men and four women. They ranged in age from 25 to 80. Their education varied widely, with two reporting that they did not finish high school, two with a high school diploma, two having some college but no degree, one with a bachelor's, and one with a graduate degree. The ABB group reported experience working as correction officers, social workers, case managers, security services, and in sales (accounts receivable). However only a few reported that they currently have a paying job.

American-born Blacks in the focus group considered themselves as bringing a valuable and distinct “aura” to the community. One participant said, *“it is different in communities where there are Black people and where there is none.”*²⁴ Another added, *“attitude is different outside the inner city and Cambridge’s diversity makes the city a very good city.”*

High Cost of Living. Participants expressed concerns with the rising costs of living in Cambridge. One participant in the ABB group noted, *“I grew up in Cambridge, I have lived in Cambridge for 25 years. Right now, they are trying to get most of the Blacks outside of Cambridge.”* Another added, *“I feel like as gentrification comes in and more people, more whites are coming into Cambridge specifically and like Kendall Square getting built up and all these jobs, I feel like some of the focus has kind of shifted and now the focus is to get all these young engineers.”* ABB participants also stress gentrification’s impact on affordable housing. Three participants reported in the survey that they had difficulty paying the rent or mortgage on time in the past year, and four expressed concerns with losing government benefits including housing and health benefit, if they earned more income.

Discrimination. American-born Blacks reported age discrimination in hiring. They noted that at about age 45 or 50, employers begin to consider a person to be too old. One participant who had experienced a series of layoffs said, *“you know, when you put your high school, the year you graduated and it’s in the ’70 or ’80s. I think by that point they think well what’s up with his career, why doesn’t he have a career already?”*

Another participant who spoke extensively on other ways to educate and prepare older people for the job market besides a formal degree added,

“one of the things that I’ve noticed is that like certain certifications and things have changed over the years. I think what needs to happen in communities especially in communities of color, is just like how they have

²³ Note that due to a planned but limited number of focus groups, the findings, while informative, should not be interpreted as representative of the perspectives of all Cambridge residents within the selected demographic groups.

²⁴ All quotes in this section are from participants in the American-Born Black (ABB) Adults Focus Group on July 29, 2019. These quotes were largely representative and purposefully selected to reflect voices of participants who spoke to the themes and findings presented.

done trade schools and things like that for younger kids. They should have things like that for people over a certain age. Start to retrain them. Microsoft, Excel, things like that because the more education you have, the better opportunities you have...

And I'm not even just talking about degrees but just simple like training programs for people like let's say 35 and up. You know, maybe someone who didn't get a chance to go to college because of ...whatever the case may be.... And there used to be such training, but I feel like a lot of people sitting here today feel like they've been forgotten in Cambridge."

Participants also noted the persistence of stereotypes and prejudice against Black men in the job market. This was a major concern reported by the ABB group as affecting their chances of getting or keeping reasonable jobs. One of the participants said he had heard over and over again such words like *"Black guys are lazy or the guys from the island...This is the stuff I heard over the years. [Co-workers would say] "Those n's, but not you because you're not like them. It's like what the hell does that mean?"* Another individual participating reported similar experiences, adding that white co-workers believe that *"[Black]...dudes, they never want to work."*

American-born Blacks did not necessarily consider race as a sole barrier, they instead reported economic status (being low-income) and gender (being male) combined with race are major challenges to employment opportunities. One of the participants in this group noted, *"If you don't have the right education- this transcends race, it is based on income. If your income is not right, you are at a disadvantage."*

There was agreement across participants that women were more likely to secure jobs. A few of the male participants in this group reported that women in their family tend to do better with schooling and getting a better paying job, where men were more likely to limit their formal education in order to get a paycheck sooner. One participant reported that *"being the oldest of like 9 kids, it's like money was important. That's not an excuse but I noticed all the girls always excelled educationally and most of the men in my family had to work."*

Another participant added, *"I mean there is definitely a ceiling. I've seen women excel in the same job that I did, Black women or women of color for whatever reason and they had no more skills than me."*

Another participant also reported how a younger co-worker, who is female, a person of color, and a recent immigrant was hired for a job they both applied for. He noted, *"So I told a co-worker of mine about the job, and she didn't even know about it. She's younger than me. She's about 22. She's not from here. Been in America maybe three years. Lives in Roxbury. She got that job."* In response, another participant noted, *"Because she got all the things going for her. She doesn't live here. She a female. And she a foreigner."*

Some participants in the American-born Black group reported negative experiences in securing City government jobs. They reported that it is hard to get hired for a City job if you are a Black male

Cambridge resident. A participant noted, “you hardly find Black men in city jobs except for job at DPW [Department of Public Works], Police department or Fire fighters, but not in other fields.” Another added, “look around your department and you’ll see a bunch of Cambridge females in that department. Their Employment Service office. There’s 25-27 women there and like one or two guys in the whole department.”

A participant speaking about his experience in an interview added, “when you’re in Cambridge, you have four women interviewing you... It’s not intimidating for me, but I couldn’t imagine being a woman sitting there and four guys are interviewing me. I mean, they’re different. There’s an Asian woman, white woman, Black woman, whatever. But it’s still four women. Why does it have to be four women? If I was a woman, they’d probably get what they want.” One participant added, “it’s a gender thing, if you are female, your chance of been hired is higher above men.”

Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI). Participants strongly agreed that criminal records, and CORI checks, present a huge barrier for employment and housing. Another participant in the same group said, “if you put somebody in jail and then they come out and they’ve done their time, then they should be able to vote, they should be able to get jobs, not McDonald’s but like actual jobs. But the reality is that once you’re in the system, it is really, really hard to get out.” This participant stressed that these issues are sometimes silenced because of the culture of Cambridge. Still in this group, another participant noted, “I’m not even in this league. A CORI gets in the way of me trying to get any good job. It’s the truth.”

Another participant in the same group added, “I’m 25 and I have a felony so getting a job is impossible. I have pharmacy experience, photo experience. Nothing works.” This participant added, “Yeah, the interview will go beautiful. I usually don’t tell them about the CORI ...if they want to do the research, they can do it. But I have all the experiences, but the CORI never checks out.”

Education. Participants mentioned the lack of education as a barrier to gaining employment. American-born Blacks expressed frustration about the degree requirement- One of the participants noted, “if all you have is a high school diploma that don’t go anywhere anymore, you just better drop that in the trash.” Another participant said, “the years of working or experience seems not to count, even though the job advert says 5 years’ experience or bachelors.”

The group emphasized that available jobs are often taken by young college graduates, foreigners, and non-Cambridge residents, while the older folks or those without college degrees are left behind. One of the participants said, “we have these experiences but still don’t get the job. The kids coming out of college are just taking the jobs.” Another participant added, “There’s service jobs and there’s high educated people jobs. So, when we fall into that educated people job, it doesn’t matter, age...But if you’re somebody like me who been to college, didn’t finish, got credits here, got experience there, they’re gonna be like why should I waste my time with him?”

Many expressed the belief that more education would open up better paying opportunities. One participant in this group who spoke strongly about education said, “Education was the thing that didn’t allow me to go up to the next loop...I mean, for me personally though, I don’t blame white man or this

person or that person. I know I should've finished my degree. Because when I'm looking at some of these teachers making \$85K-\$100K and I know that I can teach them kids better, I don't blame them. I blame myself. For whatever reason, I never completed what I started. I went to Cambridge College. I went to all these other places." Some ABBs seemed open to additional education, but the majority expressed that years of work experience should count in similar ways as education during hiring.

Access to Jobs and Training. Participants wanted help with the nuts and bolts of the job search and hiring. One participant said, *"I think they need to help you with your resumes and cover letters."*

Following discussion on face-to-face interviews, some ABB participants expressed concerns about technology, particularly how to navigate the process of online job search, online application without being screened out, and succeeding in phone interviews. One participant said, *"...But the computer thing is what's happening now...like right now if I open up my email. There's like about 150 things from Indeed. All kind of crazy stuff from Indeed. And it's a trick. It says so-and-so is interested in you. And I click on it, and it's a whole other different story."*

Beyond resume training, ABBs suggested it would be more useful if training programs can help to secure a face-to-face interview because employers are reviewing so many resumes. One noted *"When you're a person of color, you have to have that face-to-face so that you can present yourself."* Another participant added, *"...I think the face-to-face thing, I always got the job. When I got the interview, I got the job."*

A participant from the ABB group also noted, *"I live right there off the O'Brien Highway and I just wonder where the jobs are and what you have to do to get them."* This participant was concerned about how young people can access the opportunity in the city. He added, *"I think Harvard and MIT, I think the Biotechs should have like open houses. Or they should have training to give back to the city."*

Target Jobs. ABBs seem to be interested in city jobs and opportunity in Kendall Square. A few also mentioned entrepreneurship. One of the participants shared his experience trying to get a government job.

"but not being able to be employable, it's very frustrating. I know since I haven't worked since... 2017. I've been applying for jobs that don't pay near what I was making, and I don't know what the heck. I'm like am I being blackballed? At the Employment Center, the lady goes... Have you looked at any jobs with the state? She said let's put in your number, your username. She goes oh my God, 300 jobs you applied for. I said yeah, and 300 times they tell me thank you but no thank you. So, I don't know."

Another participant with a CORI believes business ownership is the best path forward. This participant noted, *"I've been going to meetings and stuff about entrepreneurship because that's the only way you can get around the job situation."*

Low-Income Mothers

The low-income mothers' focus group consisted of 10 racially and ethnically diverse women, ranging in age from 28 to 51. Four of the women identified as non-Hispanic Black, two as Hispanic, two as

mixed-race, and two as white. These mothers viewed their care giving responsibilities, especially taking care of their children or grandchildren to be a major strength and their contribution to the community. Their education levels varied, with five women reporting having less than a high school diploma. They also reported experience with jobs such as bus monitor, childcare, food service in shelters and fast food restaurants, and the municipal nine-week program (trash truck, cleaning cemetery, parks and recreation). Many of these mothers left their previous jobs or changed to a part-time job to care for their children and only a few reported that they currently have a paid job.

High Cost of Living. Participants expressed concerns with costs, especially housing. Six of the mothers reported that they had trouble paying the rent or mortgage on time in the last year. One mother who is “couch-surfing” with relatives also noted, *“I’ve moved so many times over the past couple years. I mean, I’m from Cambridge. I was born in Cambridge. A lot of my family lives in Cambridge and now I have to stay in Cambridge because I’m technically homeless. Everywhere is just super expensive. I mean, it went from a 2-bedroom being available for \$1,000 to now they want \$2,500 or \$3,000. Even I’ve seen places \$4,800. I’m like what is this?”*²⁵

In addition, they noted the line between income and benefits is often unclear, raising the potential for “cliff effects”. Seven expressed concerns with losing benefits as a result of increased income. One noted, *“I could not get a daycare voucher because I’m \$37 over. What I am supposed to be making to qualify?”*

Discrimination. Moms reported they begin to face discrimination either in hiring or qualifying to participate in job training programs from age 35 upward. A participant speaking about job training noted, *“I only did the nine weeks [municipal program]. I don’t qualify for any of the other programs. I aged out.”* Another participant immediately added, *“Yeah. Me, too.”* Yet, another participant reported, *“also that was my problem, is finding a job and getting training because of age.”* One of the white women in the focus group expressed having to fight perceived discrimination against her race when she tried to participate in a City workforce program: *“The first year I did it, they tried to say I was too old, and I was white. You can be any nationality but white is not... Like every race was on there, except for white.... I’m just white.”*

Training and Education. The women believed that more education would open up better paying opportunities, enabling them to move up from jobs such as cleaning. They were most interested to further their education especially if childcare and funding can be provided. One participant explained, *“I’ve been taking care of my kids full-time and I don’t have opportunities to go to school. I don’t have time. I’m always running. But now, maybe in the close future, I can take some classes. I’ve been thinking about the training for the PCA [Personal Care Aide] or something like that. But I think I better do it when my son starts school in September.”*

The women also suggested the trainings offered by the City or partners should be free, short in duration (e.g., 6-12 weeks), provide the opportunity to gain experience alongside the training, and, if

²⁵ All quotes in this section are from participants in the Mothers’ Focus Group, July 22, 2019. These quotes were largely representative and purposefully selected to reflect voices of participants who spoke to the themes and findings presented.

possible, paid (e.g., on-the-job training). They also wanted to make sure that the training would lead to a good job and help overcome barriers to employment. One of the participants noted, *“I’m coming to have a job, so, who wants to sit in a program for nine months and then you’re still not guaranteed a job, when you could’ve been looking for a job nine months ago. And you’ll probably get a job that has nothing to do with the training you just did.”*

Another participant noted, *“I went into the program with not enough experience. Even if you graduate, they want six months experience.”* Another participant also reported feeling like the training programs are more relevant for those with more education or qualification. She noted, *“...There’s still that barrier. I been up there for a couple orientations but then you’re feeling like when you got people across there saying well, I got this education and I do this and this, I’m like am I in the wrong building? I don’t have all that she has.”*

The mothers would like the City programs to offer more help with resumes, cover letters, and securing a face-to-face interview. One expressed it in this way: *“...it’s been so many years because after I started having children, I haven’t had like a fulltime job. So, I haven’t done like a good resume. And I’ve never been good at it... I don’t even know what happened to my resume because I haven’t used a resume for jobs and stuff. But that’s one thing, maybe like a silly barrier. But like oh gosh, I’d like to start applying but I don’t even have an updated resume. It’s been forever since I’ve had one and I don’t know where to begin.”*

The costs of training and education were an important concern, with mothers particularly expressing the need for free training. Some cited examples of debts they accrued from training and education. There was also some confusion about college loans and other funding opportunities like scholarships. A participant noted, *“we’re paying for the training and I don’t have a job...now I’m in debt with the money, so I have to pay.”*

They shared stories about accruing debt as a result of attending Bunker Hill Community College, regardless of whether they successfully completed a degree. One noted: *“They [speaking about her bank] froze my bank account and I’m like whoa. Bunker Hill does not play. And they don’t care if you don’t go. Once you sign that and take out the loans and they get their money, it doesn’t matter like what happens.”* Another participant added her belief that *“student loans affect your credit now, too, and that’s a huge problem... How can you even rent an apartment if you don’t have good credit? And don’t have the income.”* But several countered with different experiences, with one who also attend Bunker Hill but were able to attend at no cost to them. *“It’s free for me too. Yeah. It’s covered. I don’t know how.”* Overall, participants expressed a lack of understanding about the cost of attending college, how and whether to access student loans, and whether student loans impact credit scores.

Target Jobs. The mothers were particularly concerned with available working hours and schedules for potential jobs. They reported most jobs offer work hours that are not convenient given their caregiving responsibilities. The mothers emphasized the need to have a job schedule that is compatible with their caregiving responsibilities. Specifically, mothers want jobs between 10am-12pm (noon) or 9am-2pm—jobs that operate during school hours, so they do not have to worry about childcare. A participant who would love to return to her previous work, except that the hours don’t work for her

anymore noted, "...but yeah, I was there for ten years and I left when I was seven months pregnant with my twins. I loved it there. I want to go back but the hours, I just can't with my kids. I have no one to, you know... So, the hours just don't work."

One of the participants in the mothers' group noted, "for me, it's childcare. I have an issue with that because I have a 6-year-old, so I need afterschool. The afterschool can be very expensive and then I just had my daughter and daycare is really expensive. I can't even afford that. It's more expensive than rent. So, I mean I'm hoping that I'll be eligible for a voucher but I'm not sure. It is a process."

Another mom added, "I want to get [a job] in the school system. So, I can get mother's hours...So, I get the weekends off, I get holidays off, and I don't have to worry about childcare." Another mom noted, "the only flexibility I have is during school time because I can't afford the babysitter for them. I can't. I would like to afford the afterschool programs, but I can't. If I want to get something, it's during their school time."

Young Adults

The young adults' focus group consisted of seven youths, ranging in age from 18 to 23. Three of the young adults identified as non-Hispanic Black, one as Hispanic Black, one as Black American Indian, and two as Hispanic white. The young adults considered themselves to be open minded, people with fresh ideas, and the future of Cambridge. One participant noted, "we can make it better for ourselves and others coming forward."²⁶ Six out of the seven young adults have at least a high school diploma, three reported some college, and none has earned a bachelors' degree. A majority currently have a paying job. They reported work experience in convenience stores (7-Eleven, CVS), restaurants (McDonald's and Dunkin Donuts), clothing retailers (Hollister, American Eagle), or social services such as daycares and youth centers.

High Cost of Living. Participants expressed concern about the high cost of living and making ends meet. The survey data reflected housing instability: one moved in with others so family could make ends meet; one lived in a temporary or transitional home or shelter in the last 12 months. Four participants reported that they were unable to pay the rent or mortgage on time at least once in the last 12 months.

Several participants noted the need for multiple jobs to make ends meet: "if you're living in Cambridge, you have to work at least two, three jobs or a full-time and a part-time to live here and that's to pay for market rent. I'm not talking about subsidized low income. Like you need a lot of jobs."

Another participant stressed how her pay is often insufficient to meet her needs. She said, "during the school year, I don't think I get paid well at all and I get paid every week and I still have to cram in some other part-time and full-time job in order to make ends meet. I have bills. I got a phone bill, loans, and

²⁶ All quotes in this section are from participants in the Young Adults Focus Group, August 7, 2019. These quotes were largely representative and purposefully selected to reflect voices of participants who spoke to the themes and findings presented.

health insurance now, so it's like I have to pay for all of that and getting like \$250 a week come September is not gonna cut it for me. So, I have to find another job.”

Four of the young adults reported concerns about working more hours to meet needs and losing benefits as a result – i.e., the “cliff effect”. One participant noted, “I am concerned if I work too many hours, that I will lose health insurance. I work too many hours now, so now I have to pay for health insurance... I don't want to work too many hours because I don't want to lose anything, but I want to work enough so that I can meet my own goal. You know what I mean? Whether that's like paying your rent or like having enough money to go on vacation.”

Discrimination. Given their experiences, young adults in this focus group perceive they are disrespected at their jobs by co-workers due to their age “...especially in restaurant jobs. Like if you're not closer to their age, they just disrespect you more because they think you're stupid and young,” said one participant.

Workplace Harassment/Assault. Some young adults reported experiencing assault and harassment at work. One noted, “for a person who was an intern and was just there for nine weeks, I was harassed. And everybody knew that, and I got pissed and I quit. For some reasons, I was randomly picked on and I was just like wow, this is sad.” Another participant added, “I was assaulted by a co-worker at 5:00 in the morning. So, the worst thing about that is well there was only one customer but where he had hit me, the camera couldn't show that angle so I couldn't prosecute him if I wanted to.”

Job Quality and Pay. The young adults reported poor working conditions and non-flexible or unpredictable schedules as challenges. One participant reported how one of her previous work schedules made her choose between a job or school. She said, “I don't think I've ever had a real problem with a job besides a job that kind of made me choose school or money now. I chose money now because I needed it now. So, for them to not want to work with my schedule, again, being young, I had goals too or still do have goals and I wanted to and still do want to finish school.” This participant explained her challenge was getting to work on time because her scheduled time did not leave enough time for her to commute from school to work.

The young adults also reported dissatisfaction with the pay, exploitation, and wage theft. One participant described this saying, “sometimes people say okay you clean my kitchen and I'll give you \$50 and then when you finish the work, they will be like, I only got \$40 if you want to take it.” Another participant suggested this is not peculiar to cleaning jobs, “I've heard stories that had nothing to do with cleaning. It's just the age group. We're just so easy to be exploited.”

Most of the young adults agreed they were not receiving a fair wage for their time and labor. “I just think my time is worth a lot more than \$12 or \$11 or whatever.” A participant who worked as a Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC) technician added, “I was getting paid every week, which was good, but I wasn't getting paid determined on the work that I was doing. That's also another reason why I left. They were only paying me like \$400 a week and I was working Monday through Friday, 9:00-5:00.”

The young adults suggested a pay rate of \$15 or \$16 per hour would be ideal. According to one participant, *"I feel like a good pay for everybody would be like \$15. Maybe \$16."* Another participant echoed *"\$16, yeah,"* yet one participant added, *"depending if you're doing overnight. Make that \$19, \$20. But I feel like \$15, \$16 is like a good place."*

In addition, the young adults considered some job requirements as unrealistic and job descriptions unconnected to the actual job. One participant noted, *"...and the job requirements, let's not get started there. Five years of experience. I'm 21. Where do you think I'm gonna get five years of experience?"* Another added, *"I know someone who went for a job... it was in sales, right? The things he had to do was way off. Going door-to-door, that wasn't even described. So, the job description was not at all the job."*

Training and Education. Young adults were highly critical of the public-school system and felt unprepared for the job market. One participant said, *"they just need to reconfigure schools to this day and age."* Another participant added, *"I just think the whole system needs to be like turned over and redesigned. Break it down and redesign it."* When asked, how they would change the system. One participant replied, *"just reinventing and reimagining how we could like educate people."* Some others suggested mandating business class before high school graduation, so students can learn business related values including how to report your income for tax purposes. Others suggested offering *"classes maybe for your own professional development"* and afterschool that teaches *"coding or a business at a young age."*

Young adults considered the City programs as good but reported they do not provide them with all the necessary information they need to succeed in the job market. One participant noted, *"some of the programs in Cambridge, they're good but they're not enough; they don't tell you reality. Like the Mayor's program, they're good because kids want a job and make some money for the summer. But then they don't tell you how it really is when you go and apply [for actual jobs]."*

Given their experience young adults suggested job training programs should incorporate how to network, negotiate, brand yourself, understand paystubs and taxes, and professional dressing tips into the training programs. One participant noted, *"I remember I had a paid internship. But I had to go out there and get the networking that I needed. Programs like those [referring to the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program]—they don't teach you how to do that."*

They also suggested that training programs should create some form of internship or exposure to companies in the City. One participant noted, *"so what I think they should do for Mayor's [Summer Program], if they were to incorporate anything, is probably getting some of these youth inside like offices, in offices, learning how to do all that. Like mini interns for certain places."*

Young adults concluded by sharing their job and career interests. Many young adults reported they would like to create their own for-profit business or nonprofits. They were largely interested in making music; creating art; building companies, selling, investing, building real estate; and becoming part of a bigger thing, *"like helping turtles,"* said one participant.

Chapter 6. Connecting the Qualitative Data and Qualitative Observations

The Current Context in Cambridge

Several themes appeared across the stakeholder meetings, the focus groups, and in the quantitative analysis about the city and the workforce development priority population. First, the rising costs of living in Cambridge, especially in regards to housing, appears to be pushing long-time residents out of the city. There is considerable income inequality; higher income families thrive in stark contrast with those who are struggling. Related, many residents reported being stuck in jobs that are not only low-paying, but also low quality in terms of having unpredictable hours and schedules, temporary in duration, lacking flexibility, and not providing benefits. The high costs and low quality of jobs means that many residents in the priority group rely on public benefits to make ends meet. Concerns of losing these benefits, or facing increases in rent if their pay goes up, was a concern expressed by participants in the priority groups. In support of these findings, fully half (13) of all focus group participants reported difficulty in paying rent or mortgage on time in the past year.

Employment Opportunities and Skills Mismatch

As **Figure 5** (see **Chapter 2. The Greater Boston Labor Market**) shows, the strong and growing industries in Greater Boston are Health Care and Social Service Assistance, Professional, Scientific, Technical Services, and Educational Services. The entry and mid-level jobs generally reflect this trend, with only one occupation (Electrician) not largely associated with the growing industries in the region. By and large, focus group participants' experiences did not match that of the "in demand" jobs revealed in the labor market analysis. Participants were most likely to have experience in retail and food service, rather than healthcare and administration. It is also worth noting that the majority of the identified in-demand opportunities are traditionally female dominated roles. This could also account for challenges that American-born Black men reported in accessing desired jobs in the City or schools, and their perceptions that women were more likely to access available job opportunities. While focus group participants were not queried on their specific skill levels, their reported job experience suggests that the priority population is likely deficient in the specific in-demand hard skills such as home care and dementia care, and accounting skills such as billing and accounts payable. Thus, creating programs to close this experience and skills gap is critical to connect priority group residents with available job opportunities in Cambridge.

Education Gap

The initial data revealed that 22 percent of residents have less than a college degree in the city. This makes it especially hard for residents without a college credential, as they are often competing with students and post-college graduates. Participants reported that not having a degree was a major factor holding them back from accessing high paying jobs.

Further, 44 percent of the priority population reports that they have earned some college, but no degree. Thus, many of these residents are struggling with debt, as noted in several focus groups. They

also noted frustration about their inability to complete a degree, and thus reluctance, to pursue further education. The rate of “some college, no degree” for priority mothers is especially high. Thus, finding ways to assist with degree completion is a priority for increasing employment opportunities.

Recruiting and Hiring

There were differing perceptions between the employer focus group and the priority focus groups in terms of recruiting and hiring. While employers expressed an interest in hiring locally, they reported scant numbers of Cambridge residents on their staff and interviewing few local applicants. Priority group focus participants supported this finding but from a different perspective: They expressed interest in and often applied for jobs at local companies, but were not selected for interviews. Priority group participants perceived that issues such as lack of degree, older age, and other barriers such as criminal history were preventing them from gaining access to employers in Kendall Square. Generally, employers relied on online applications more than referrals, furthering the disconnect between the resident workforce and employment opportunities. Nevertheless, employers seemed willing to find ways to provide opportunities, such as opening opportunities to applicants who don't fit the organization's typical profile, considering candidates who do not present as well in writing, and partnering with workforce and education providers.

Equity Issues in Accessing Employment

There is a greater income disparity in Cambridge by race as compared to Massachusetts as a whole. Overall, whites are more likely to be accessing higher level jobs. The labor market data revealed that 68 percent of the priority population are people of color. Focus group participants reported difficulty accessing training and jobs, noting an intersectional nature of discrimination, not only race by age, but gender as well. In addition, participants, especially American-born Blacks, reported that criminal history was a barrier. The priority population has a significant concentration of adults between the ages of 35-54 and 55-64, bringing up the median age for the entire priority population. Thus, it is important to unpack and consider barriers to training and access to employment across the board, and to ensure that equity is incorporated into the design of all workforce development programs.

Workforce Development Requests from Focus Group Participants

Priority focus group participants noted that they wanted more specific training on completing online applications, how to interview, network with employers, and access higher quality jobs. They wanted to make sure they would qualify for training programs, and not be excluded due to any eligibility barriers such as race or age. As a result of their negative experiences with navigating the job market, youth and those with a criminal history expressed interested in entrepreneurship training. The cost of childcare and indirect (e.g., lost wages) and direct costs (e.g., tuition fees, childcare, and transportation) of training creates a barrier to training access for many. Thus, the requested short-term, convenient, and practical job training with a clear connection to employment in the target industry. Designing programs and outreach strategies in response to these needs is essential so that the City increases its ability to effectively serve the priority groups.

Chapter 7. Recommendations

As noted at the beginning of this report, the City of Cambridge recently completed an ambitious citywide strategic planning exercise, “Envision Cambridge”. The plan articulated a vision for the city as a “forward-thinking, welcoming, and diverse city. We enjoy a high quality of life and thrive in a sustainable, inclusive, and connected community”.²⁷ This broad vision for Cambridge provides the guiding principles for developing recommendations in the current work. The following policy recommendations are geared towards recognizing systemic and structural elements of inequity, inequality, and disenfranchisement in American social and economic life. In particular, the recommendations attempt *within a workforce development context*, to address:

- Racial equity and inclusion
- Recognition of structural inequality in the economy
- Increasing opportunity for young Cambridge residents, who are low income and disconnected from a career path
- Support for mothers in, or attempting to rejoin, the labor force
- Support for middle-aged and older workers facing challenges reconnecting to the labor market

In short, the recommendations offered below are intended to increase access for underserved, underemployed, and unemployed Cambridge residents who are less likely to have a bachelor’s degree. These recommendations should be further explored, vetted for feasibility, and prioritized by the City of Cambridge, CRA and key partners.

Increase Workforce Diversity and Inclusion

- Provide priority service in education, training, and job search programs to American-born Black men, who are disproportionately impacted by racism and unemployment. Develop formal systems to get their input into program design and outreach in an ongoing basis.
- Partner with city and regional business associations and industry groups like Kendall Square Association (KSA) and the Chamber of Commerce on diversity and inclusion efforts to determine how the City and CRA can work more closely with employers to train and place city residents with a specific emphasis on our priority populations. Offer opportunities for anti-bias training.
- Create facilitated peer support groups of like populations (e.g., women out of labor force, underemployed youth, American-born Blacks) to help those communities overcome specific challenges facing them and enable them to gain support from one another in structured ways.

²⁷ For more information Envision Cambridge, please visit <http://envision.cambridgema.gov/>

Allow opportunity for connection and support without immediately pressuring to enroll in training and education.

- Educate employers, non-profit training programs, and other stakeholders on value of hiring older workers
- Explore ways to leverage the federally funded *Senior Community Service Employment Program*, which offers paid stipends for older workers employed in community service activities.

Access to a Continuum of Services

- In partnership with non-profit and education providers and other key stakeholders, create a map of the workforce development ecosystem in Cambridge.
- Determine the best role and unique value of City services vis-à-vis the existing non-profit provider community to create a continuum of services.
- Develop a referral and career navigation system so that residents are aware of training and employment providers.
- Provide career navigation and coaching so that residents connect with the optimal programs and have support in placement and retention.
- Further coordinate the Workforce Development Consortium.
- Conduct regular consultations at different locations across the City so that all residents are aware of the breadth and scope of training and employment programs available to them.
- Develop “just-in-time” coaching services for residents attempting to navigate job search websites and online job applications. Residents can call/chat about their immediate concerns, without having to sign up for a longer-term program.
- Ensure that bias is reduced within the workforce development landscape, for those with Criminal Offender Record Information (CORIs) and returning citizens.
- Create facilitated peer support groups of like populations (e.g., women out of labor force, underemployed youth, American-born Blacks) to help those communities overcome specific challenges facing them and enable them to gain support from one another in structured ways. Allow opportunity for connection and support without immediately pressuring to enroll in training and education.

Young Adults

- Return to a tiered system whereby younger low-income teens first work in community and City jobs, and then “graduate” into opportunities with private, , and other sector employers in future summers.
- Provide varied opportunities for youth to learn about the regional labor market. Provide details about the degree requirements for jobs, and the associated pay.
- Incorporate labor rights and reporting trainings into all youth workforce development programs.

Support for Career Planning and College Completion

- Expand capacity of the City's College Success Initiative (CSI) - by exploring and potentially adopting a model such as the Graduate Network to increase college completion for youth and adults who started but did not finish college.
- Provide career coaching for low-income, first generation and/or American Born Black students currently enrolled at local colleges.

Employment Services, Skills Training and Certificate Programs

- Provide stipends that allow residents to participate in training programs without a loss of income.
- Explore paid apprenticeship models for in-demand occupations such as in health care.
- Encourage employers to conduct more face-to-face interviews with referrals from City and community employment programs.
- Conduct outreach to local employers to educate them about community workforce development programs and encourage their participation, partnership and investment in hiring Cambridge residents.
- Incorporate labor rights and reporting training into all workforce development programs.

Employer

- Consider creating a "Hire Local" campaign in Cambridge, which would fill needed positions and increase diversity.
- Incentivize employers to hire for skills, through assessments and competency-based certifications, and reducing degree requirements, thus increasing the probability of hire.
- Explore the possibility of creating an employer-recognized credentials system. Employers would determine the competencies necessary, and training (on- and off-line) could then be offered through the City of Cambridge along with education and other partners (e.g., The Link).
- Convene major employers to increase efforts to recruit and hire Cambridge's priority populations including older teens, youth, College Success students, American Born Blacks, and mothers.
- Encourage employers to provide more opportunities to for newly hired employees to earn money while learning on the job.
- Improve the quality of low barrier to entry jobs by working with employers to ensure stable hours, predictable and consistent schedules, better pay and benefits, and opportunities to grow.

Research and Evaluation

- Standardize data for City and non-profit training providers, disaggregated by race, age, and gender with special attention to American Born Black people. Conduct this analysis across the spectrum of outcomes, from recruitment, program completion, placement, and retention.

From this analysis, determine where more intervention is needed to increase access and success for training and employment programs.

- In Partnership with the MassHire Regional Employment Board, the City could inventory existing training programs accessible to Cambridge residents for the in-demand positions to determine how to refer clients, expand existing programs, and/or create new programs. This analysis should include evaluating the success of these training programs, disaggregating the data if possible to determine the extent to which underserved Cambridge residents access training and achieve success in employment.

Policy

- Incent employers to provide demographic data about the members of their workforce who are Cambridge residents including race/ethnicity, gender, pay level, and zip code.
- Promote and highlight employers who offer high quality employment opportunities for Cambridge residents.
- Fund community organizing and leadership development programs designed to help marginalized populations build leadership skills, develop relationships with mentors, identify issues of direct concern to them, and collectively act in order to create positive systemic change. This will put those directly affected by the problems surfaced in this study in the lead to address them in the way that will be most effective for them, and that will expand civic engagement in Cambridge.
- Work to ensure that hiring bias is reduced around CORI and returning citizens.

Appendix A: Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) Categories

Highlighted in blue are occupations featured in this report.

11-0000	Management Occupations
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations
23-0000	Legal Occupations
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations
51-0000	Production Occupations
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Appendix B: Programmatic Data

Cambridge Employment Program (CEP)

The Cambridge Employment Program (CEP) provides individualized career counseling to support Cambridge residents in achieving their short and long-term employment goals. The program works with clients at all levels of experience across a wide variety of occupations and industries. Services are free of charge.

Services include:

- developing or improving your resume, cover letter and interviewing skills
- identifying your transferable skills and realistic next steps
- learning about online job search strategies and tools
- thinking about a long-term career path

Cambridge Works Program (CW)

Cambridge Works is a transitional jobs program, designed to serve residents (age 18-35) who, for a variety of reasons, have not been able to get or keep jobs. The centerpiece of the transitional jobs model is learning to work by going to work.

The City and a limited number of private sector partners provide a **3-month** temporary job as a vehicle for participants to learn basic job-readiness skills: punctuality, attendance, responding to supervision, working with co-workers, etc. The work experience is coupled with intense case management, and participants attend weekly workshops to develop soft skills and to identify and address personal barriers that have prevented success.

Cambridge Learning Center (CLC)

The Cambridge Community Learning Center empowers a diverse community of adult learners to transform their lives and realize their potential through education, skills development, and community participation. These services include:

- English classes
- Citizenship classes
- Basic reading, writing, and math classes
- Preparation for the HiSET and GED tests
- Preparation for college

- Preparation for careers in Healthcare and IT
- The Community Learning Center also offers free educational and career counseling, tutoring, and basic computer instruction.

Just-A-Start Programs

Just-A-Start's **Information Technology (IT) Careers Program** is a free educational and career skills program that prepares individuals for Computer User Support Specialist positions in a business environment. The program is ideal for people who are looking for a new career or are entering the job market for the first time. Through this training module, students are able to obtain stackable industry-recognized credentials and certificates (i.e. CompTIA A+ and Network+). Classes are held from 9:00am – 2:00pm, Monday through Friday, at our classroom in Cambridge and at a local community college accessible by public transportation. Students gain knowledge and hands-on experience in Computer Hardware, Windows OS support, Networking techniques, Help Desk-targeted skills such as trouble-shooting and critical thinking and Business Communication.

The **Biomedical Careers Program** was launched in 1992 to prepare local low- to moderate-income adults for careers in the biotechnology, life sciences, and medical research industries, and supply local employers with work-ready, diverse employees. This free, nine-month program provides instruction in biology, chemistry, medical terminology, and computer and laboratory skills. The laboratory training is done in partnership with Bunker Hill Community College. In the program, students also receive job readiness training such as preparing a resume, interviewing, and job search, and are introduced to industry professionals through career talks and employer site visits. After graduation, students receive follow up services for up to one year, until they are placed in relevant employment.

Just-A-Start YouthBuild is a comprehensive youth development program for 16 to 24 year-old out of school youth that provides education leading to grade level increases and credential attainment (high school diploma or HiSET – formerly GED); career exploration and employment skills building; and leadership and life skills training. Through their housing community service work experience, youth gain occupational skills in construction leading to HBI PACT and OSHA certificates (industry recognized credentials), in addition to applied academic skills and leadership development. JAS YouthBuild also provides comprehensive guidance, counseling, case management, and support services. Youth who complete the program transition to employment, training, and/or college and receive intensive follow-up support for at least one year, with additional support beyond.

Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP)

With the goal of serving as a young person's first job experience, MSYEP primarily serves 14 and 15 year olds – placing them in public sector and non-profit jobs throughout the City for six weeks during the summer.

Teens work 20 hours a week, earning minimum wage, with the wage paid by the City. One third of the youth are placed in Summer Work and Learning sites, which offer participants a valuable educational and employment experience using the community's resources to expose youth to potential educational or career paths.

All youth participate in skill-building workshops for one hour each week and have the opportunity to attend college tours, financial literacy training, and a variety of program-sponsored social events during the summer.

Next Up

Next Up is a program that helps young adults figure out their next step in building a career. This is for Cambridge residents aged 19 to 25 with a high school diploma (or equivalent) and not currently enrolled in college.

Young adults participate in weekly workshops and outings, designed to work on soft skills and goal-setting, and explore careers and develop leadership skills.

Per Scholas Program

Per Scholas is a 25 year old workforce development organization that opens doors to technology careers for individuals from overlooked communities and connects them to the employers that need them. To date, they have served more than 10,000 students. Historically, 85 percent of students graduate, 80 percent of graduates obtain one or more industry-recognized IT certifications, and 80 percent of graduates gain employment with starting wages averaging more than four times their average pre-training income. Average starting wages for our students is around \$21/hour or more than \$43,000/year. They are widely regarded as a sectoral pioneer, and a technology workforce development organization whose efficacy has twice been proven in randomized and controlled evaluation research. They began scaling our operations in 2012 and now operate in twelve metropolitan areas nationwide, including Greater Boston since April 2019.

Per Scholas Greater Boston offers a bridge between the latent talent and the unfilled jobs in the Greater Boston region. They offer rigorous, tuition-free, and full-time training leading to industry-recognized credentials for in-demand tech jobs. In addition to technical training, they provide a suite of career development, job placement and support services, and direct placement to help their students secure, thrive and grow in tech careers.

DPW 9-Week Program

Cambridge Seasonal Laborer Lottery Program

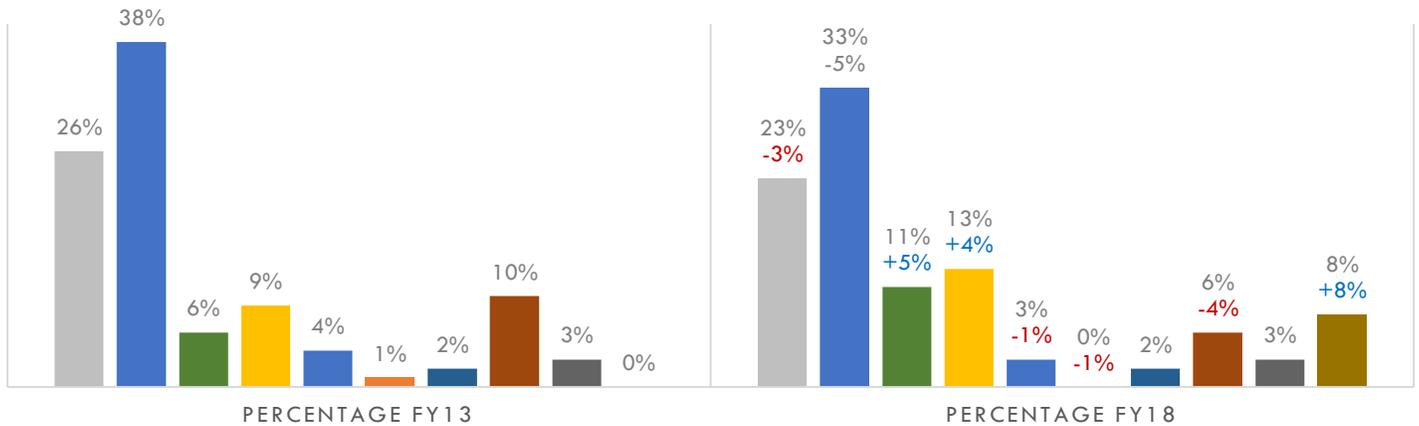
- 9 week assignments at Public Works Department
- Assignments are outdoors, typically on garbage trucks, in the cemetery or on public properties
- \$15.64 per hour, 40 hours per week, \$625.60 per week
- Open to current Cambridge residents willing/able to perform heavy labor duties with reasonable accommodation
- Must have proper clothing and footwear (i.e., work boots) at the time of appointment to perform work safely

- Applicants selected by Lottery from those who apply



RACE/ETHNICITY, CAMBRIDGE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FY13 AND FY18

■ White ■ Black ■ Hispanic/Latino ■ Asian / Pacific Islander ■ Mixed Race ■ Native American ■ Middle Eastern ■ Haitian ■ Other ■ Not Recorded

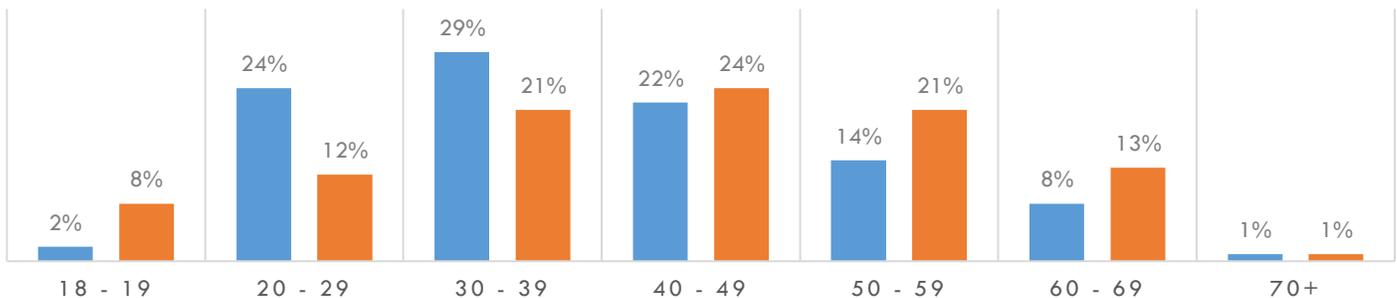


Key takeaways: Haitian participants went down by 4%. White and Black percentages went down 3% and 5% respectively, while Asian and Hispanic percentages rose 4% and 5% respectively.

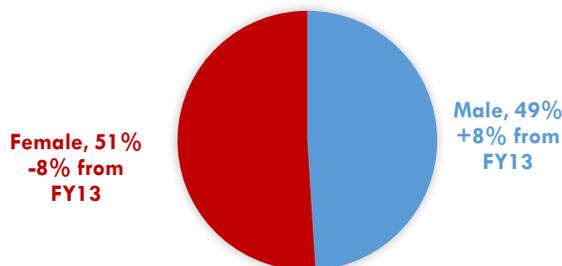
It should be noted that in FY13, no participant’s race/ethnicity went unrecorded. In FY18, 8% were not recorded, which could make up for the collective 8% decrease in White and Black participation.

AGE, CAMBRIDGE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FY13 AND FY18

■ Percentage FY13 ■ Percentage FY18



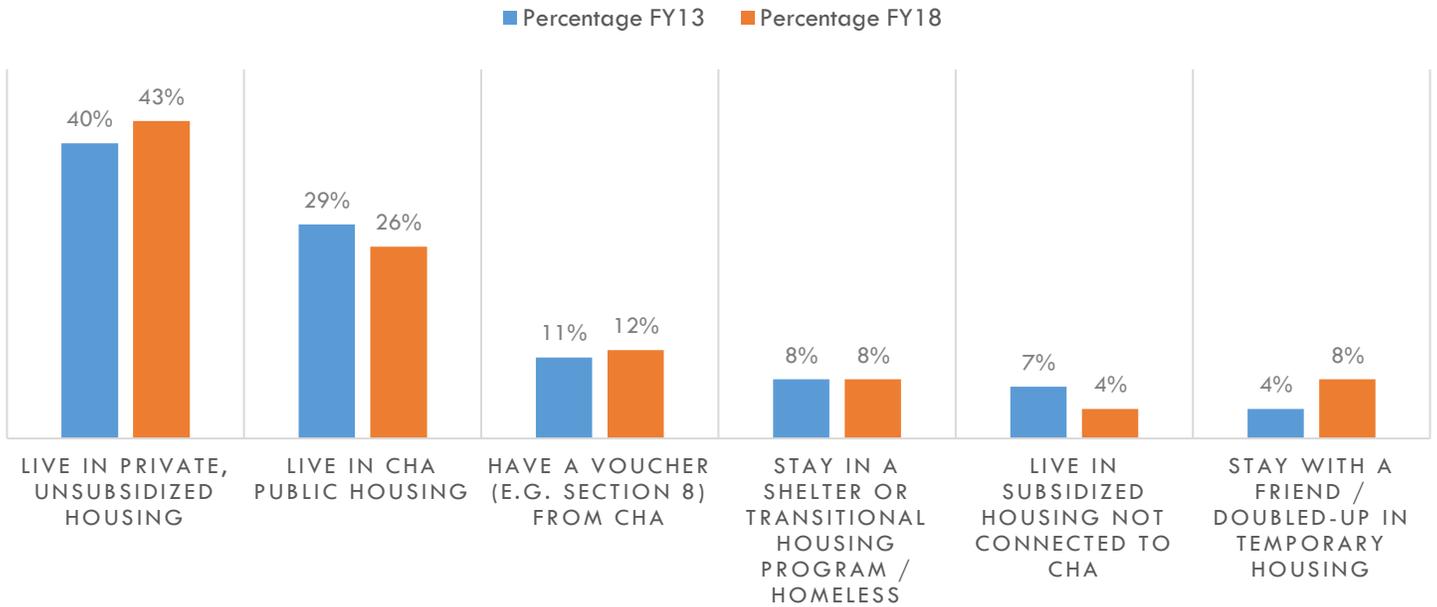
GENDER, CAMBRIDGE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FY18



Key takeaways: CEP gender distribution became 8% more male in FY18. While CEP is serving 6% more teens in FY18 than FY13, the program’s age distribution has trended towards the 40-70 age range.

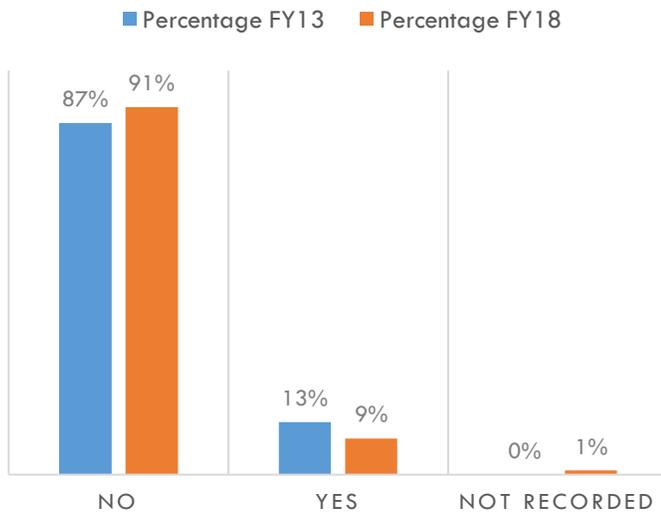
55% of participants were under 40 in FY13 and 45% were over 40. By FY18, 41% were under 40, a 14% decrease, while 59% were over 40, a 14% increase.

HOUSING STATUS, CAMBRIDGE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, FY13 AND FY18

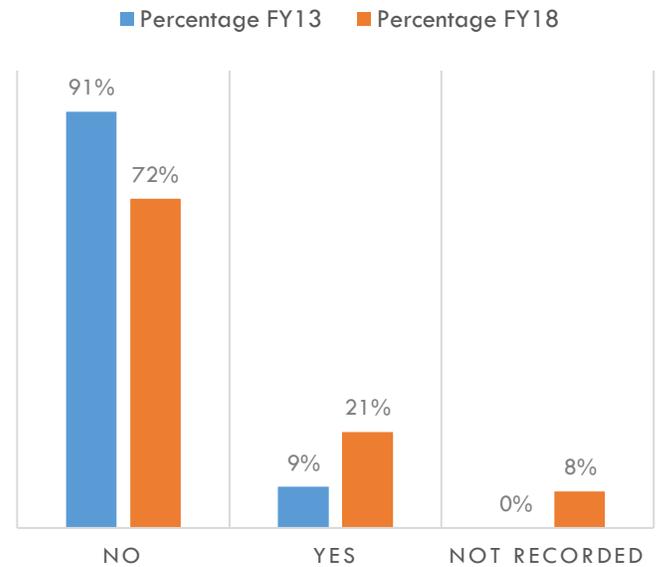


Key takeaways: 3% more participants live in private, unsubsidized housing, while 3% fewer participants live in CHA public housing. 3% fewer participants also live in subsidized housing not connected to CHA. The largest increase in housing status was a 4% increase in temporary housing.

ARRESTED OR CONVICTED, CAMBRIDGE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM, FY13 AND FY18

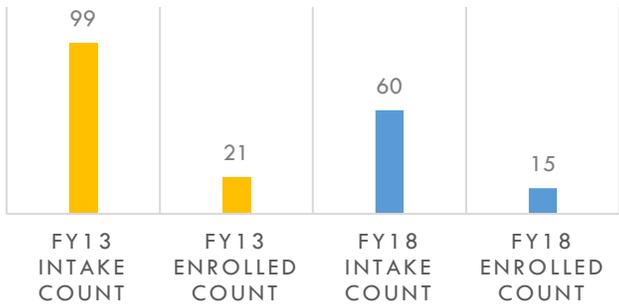


DISABILITY, CEP FY13 AND FY18

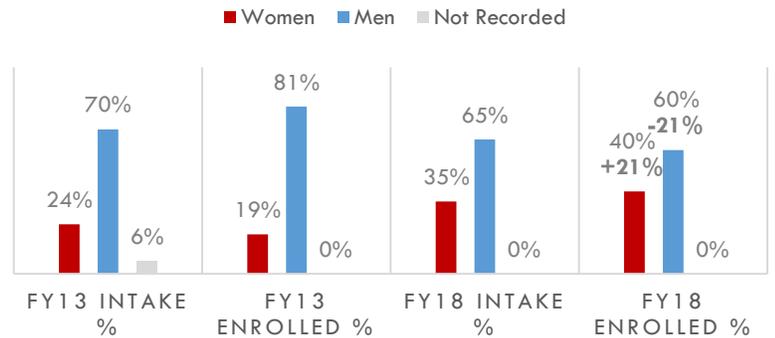


Key takeaways: Those who have been arrested or convicted shrunk by 4%. This is countered by those reporting disability as a barrier to employment, which rose by 12%.

COUNT, CAMBRIDGE WORKS INTAKES AND ENROLLED, FY13 AND FY18



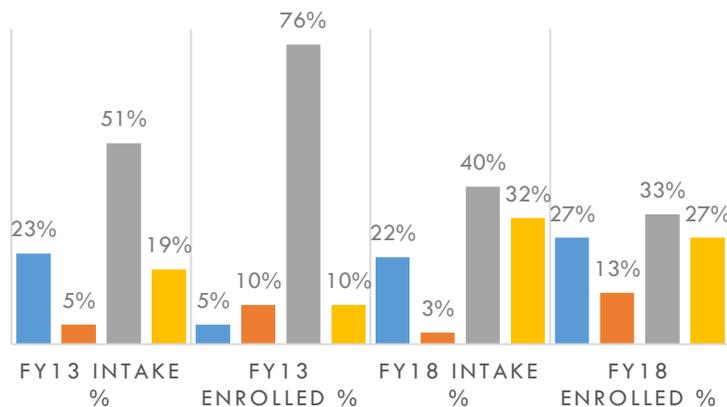
GENDER, CAMBRIDGE WORKS INTAKES AND ENROLLED, FY13 AND FY18



Key takeaways: There were both more intakes (+39) and enrolled (+6) participants in FY13. In FY13, only 19% of enrolled participants were women, but in FY18, that number rose to 40% (+21%). Intakes remained male dominated across both years, with female applicants accounting for 24% (FY13) and 35% (FY18, +11%).

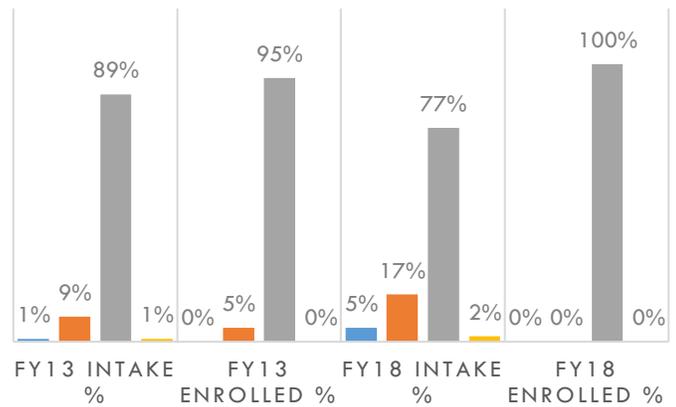
HOUSING STATUS, CAMBRIDGE WORKS INTAKES AND ENROLLED, FY13 AND FY18

- Unsubsidized Housing
- Other Subsidy (Not CHA)
- Public Housing or Section 8 (from CHA)
- Shelter or Temporary Housing



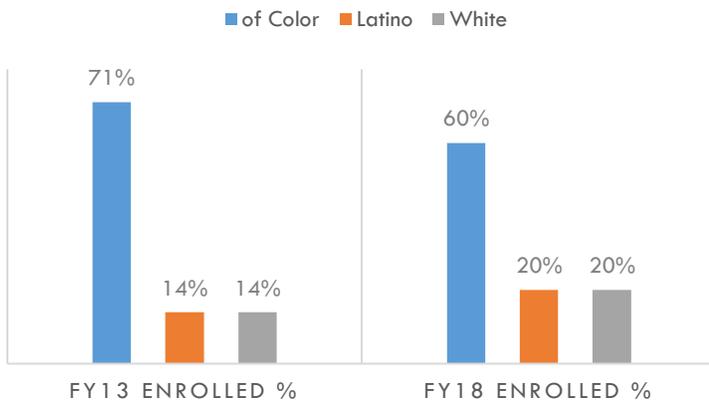
EMPLOYMENT STATUS, CAMBRIDGE WORKS INTAKES AND ENROLLED, FY13 AND FY18

- Working Full-Time
- Working Part-Time
- Not Working
- Not Recorded



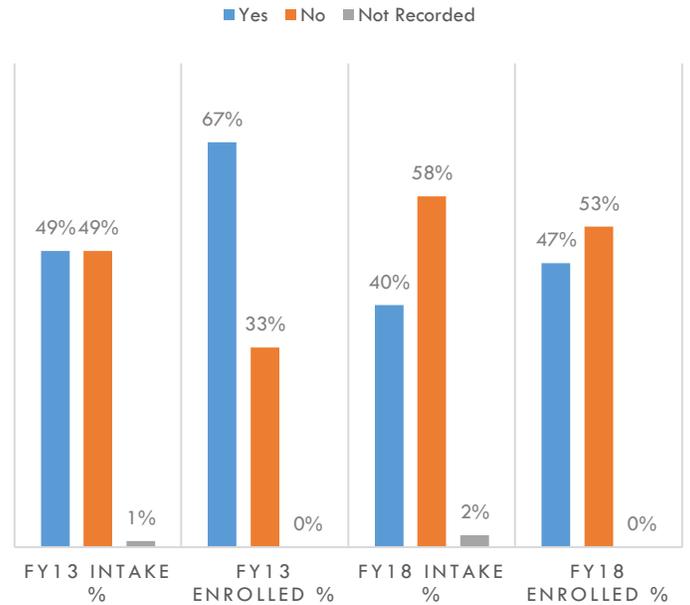
Key takeaways: The vast majority of both intakes and enrolled across both years were not employed. Numbers stayed consistent, but in FY18, 100% of enrolled participants were not working (+5%), while 77% of FY18 intakes were not working (-12%). Housing status saw a dramatic shift in participants living in CHA public or section 8 housing. In FY13, 76% of enrolled participants lived in CHA housing. That number fell 43% in FY18, as the percentage of those in unsubsidized housing and shelter/temp housing grew by 22% and 17% respectively.

RACE/ETHNICITY, CAMBRIDGE WORKS ENROLLED ONLY

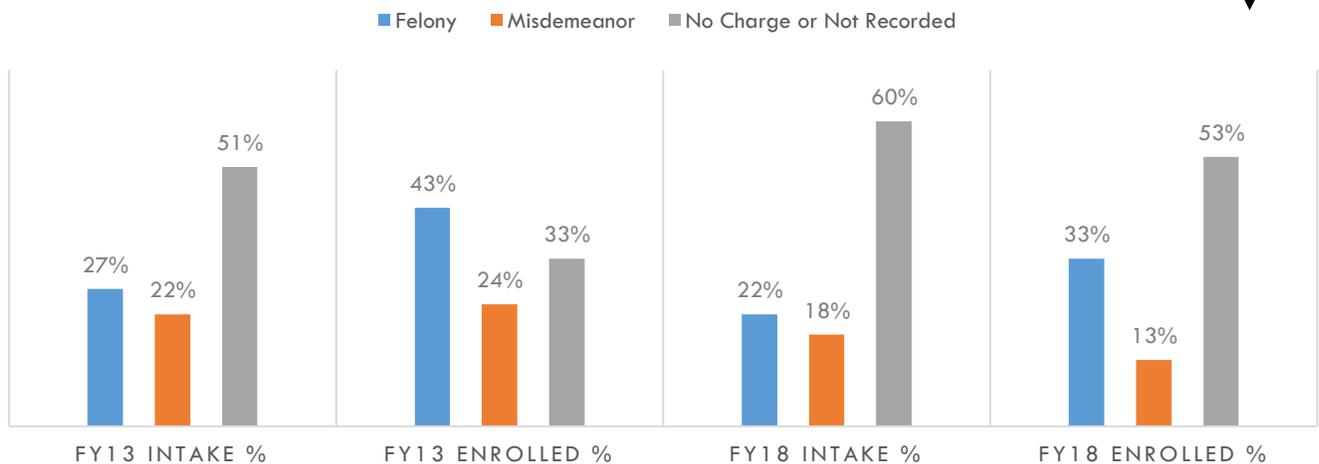


Key takeaways: In FY13, 71% of enrolled participants were people of color. This number dropped 11% in FY18, while the shares of Latino & White participants both grew 6%.

RECORD, CAMBRIDGE WORKS INTAKES AND ENROLLED, FY13 AND FY18

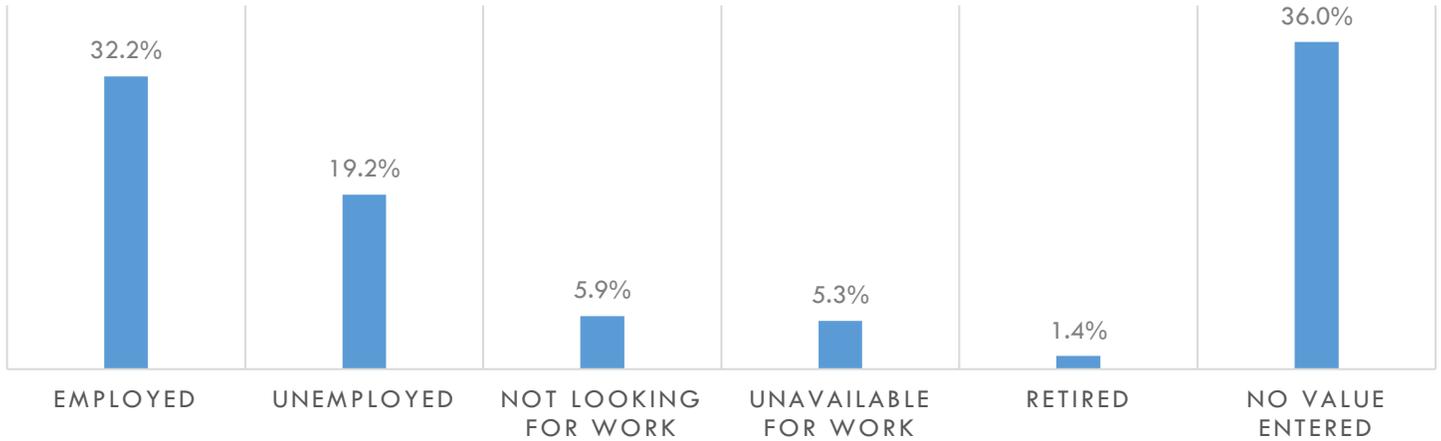


CHARGE TYPE, CAMBRIDGE WORKS INTAKES AND ENROLLED, FY13 AND FY18



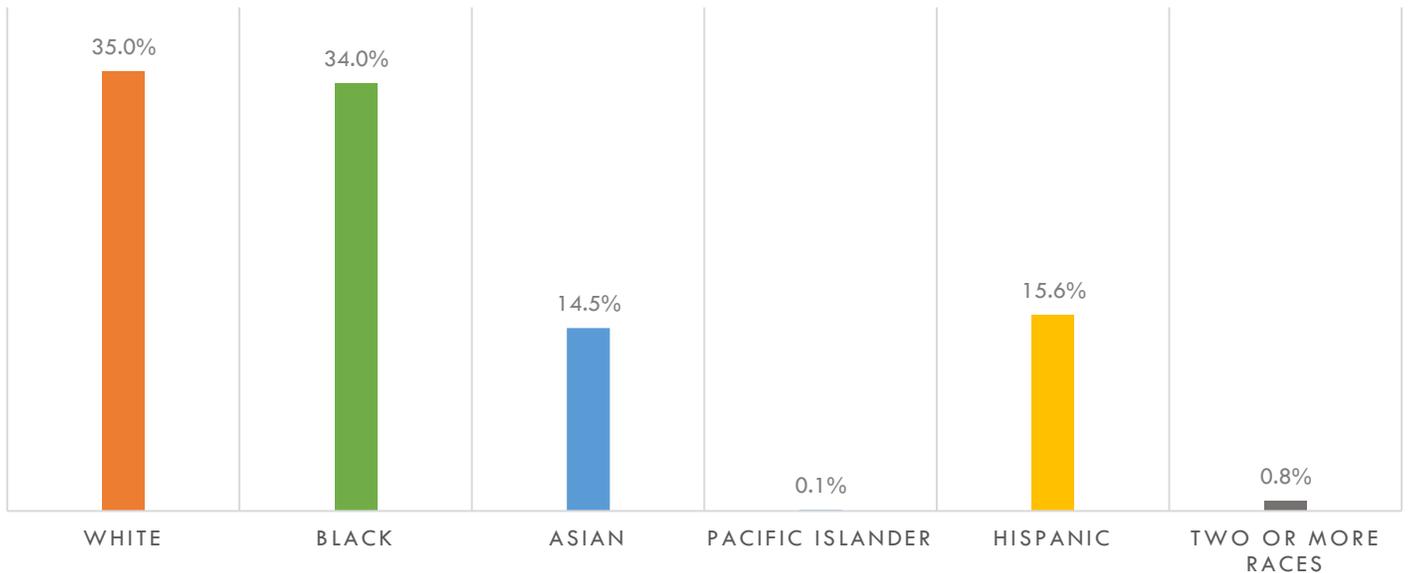
Key takeaways: Similar to CEP, those with a record as a barrier to employment shrunk, while those with a disability as a barrier to employment grew 7%. In FY13, 67% of enrolled participants had a record, 43% of which were felonies. In FY18, only 47% of enrolled participants had a record (-20%), 33% of which were felonies (-10%).

EMPLOYMENT STATUS, CAMBRIDGE LEARNING CENTER, 2013-2019
N=2900



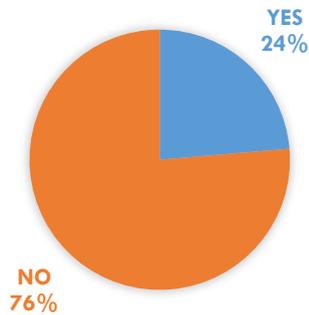
Key takeaways: 32% of people coming into the program (who provided employment status) were employed, while 31% were either unemployed, not looking for work, unavailable for work or retired.

RACE/ETHNICITY, CAMBRIDGE LEARNING CENTER, 2013-2019
N=2900

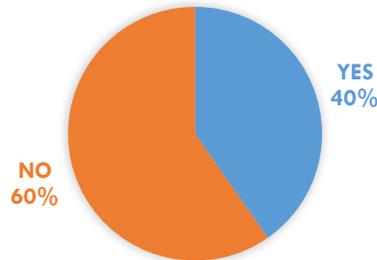


Key takeaways: Most program participants are either White or Black (35% and 34% respectively), the remaining percentage is made up (roughly) equally between Asian and Hispanic participants.

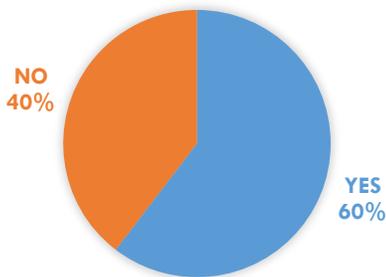
LOW-INCOME, CAMBRIDGE LEARNING CENTER, 2013-2019
N=1843



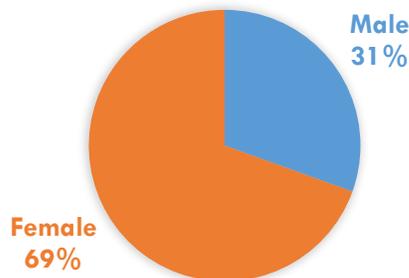
SNAP (EBT/FOOD STAMPS), CAMBRIDGE LEARNING CENTER, 2013-2019
N=273



IMMIGRANT, CAMBRIDGE LEARNING CENTER, 2013-2019
N=1732



GENDER, CAMBRIDGE LEARNING CENTER, 2013-2019
N=2757

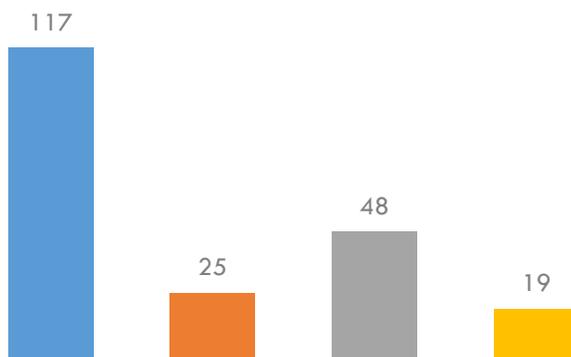


Key Takeaways: Most participants (76%) were not low income nor receiving SNAP benefits (EBT/Food Stamps) (60%).

The majority of program participants are both Female (69%) and immigrants (60%).

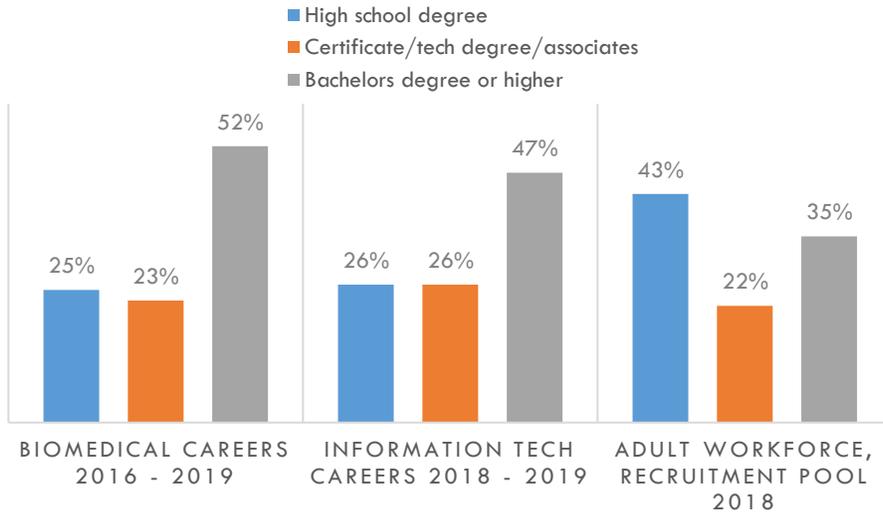
NUMBER OF CAMBRIDGE SERVED - JUST-A-START

- Youth Program 2017 - 2018
- Youth Build 2016 - 2019
- Biomedical Careers 2016 - 2019
- Information Tech Careers 2018 - 2019



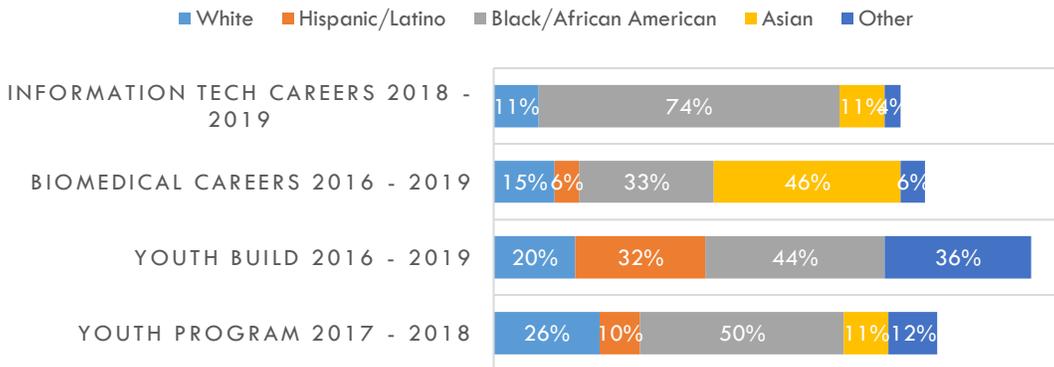
Key takeaways: Youth Program serves the largest number of Cambridge residents by a margin of 69, followed by Biomedical at 48 participants.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ADULT JUST-A-START PROGRAMS



Key takeaways: Biomedical and Info Tech are highly educated, with 52% and 47% of participants respectively holding a Bachelor's degree or higher. That said, 81% of Biomedical and 68% of Info Tech participants were educated outside of the United States.

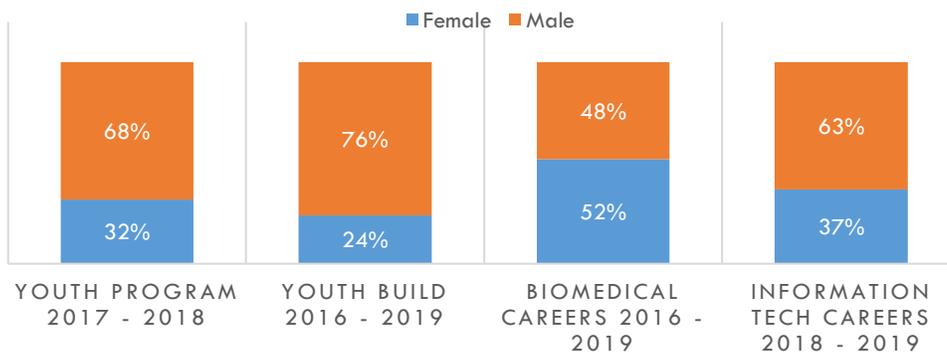
RACE/ETHNICITY OF JUST-A-START PROGRAMS



Key takeaways: Info Tech is largely Black (74%), Biomedical is largely Asian (46%) closely followed by Black (33%), Youth Build is more equally distributed, yet with the largest "Other" category, Youth Program is largely Black (50%), with White participation at about half of Black participation (26%).

Note: Data was aggregated differently across programs, e.g., Youth Build did not have an Asian category at all, which is why their "Other" category is much larger than the rest.

PERCENT MALE/FEMALE OF JUST-A-START PROGRAMS



Key takeaways: Biomedical has the most equal gender distribution, and the only program with a higher female % than male (52%). The rest are male dominated, particularly Youth Build (76% male).



PER SCHOLAS GREATER BOSTON

OVERVIEW & 2019 OUTCOMES FOR UMASS

MARCH 2020

Per Scholas Overview

Per Scholas is a 25 year old workforce development organization that opens doors to technology careers for individuals from overlooked communities and connects them to the employers that need them. To date, we have served more than 10,000 students. Historically, 85% of students graduate, 80% of graduates obtain one or more industry-recognized IT certifications, and 80% of graduates gain employment with starting wages averaging more than four times their average pre-training income. Average starting wages for our students is around \$21/hour or more than \$43,000/year. We are widely regarded as a sectoral pioneer, and a technology workforce development organization whose efficacy has twice been proven in randomized and controlled evaluation research. We began scaling our operations in 2012 and now operate in twelve metropolitan areas nationwide, including Greater Boston since April 2019.

Per Scholas Greater Boston offers a bridge between the latent talent and the unfilled jobs in the Greater Boston region. We offer rigorous, tuition-free, and full-time training leading to industry-recognized credentials for in-demand tech jobs. In addition to technical training, we provide a suite of career development, job placement and support services, and direct placement to help our students secure, thrive and grow in tech careers.

Overview of 2019 Outcomes

In our inaugural year, we have successfully established our operations at The Link Kendall Square in Cambridge and launched our site; hired a talented local team; began to develop solid partnerships with community and employer partners; and started to build the foundation for future sustainability.

Classes officially launched out of our new site on April 16th. The following is a summary of our 2019 outcomes:

- **Enrollment:** In 2019, we enrolled a total of 93 students in IT Job Training in Greater Boston across the following two training tracks: IT/Network Support and Full Stack Java Web Developer.
- **Graduation:** Our in-progress graduation rate for classes that have completed is an impressive 89%. We have a significant number of students (48) currently enrolled in 2019 cohorts and can report final graduation rates once these complete.
- **Certification:** Our current in-process certification rate across applicable courses is 89%. We expect that we will continue to exceed our certification goal of 80% as our currently

enrolled students complete training and look forward to providing final certification rates at that time.

- **Placement:** While it is too soon to report on final placement rates (we work to place graduates for up to one year following graduation), more than two thirds (69%) of our graduates from cohorts that completed at least four months ago have already been placed in full-time employment at an average wage of nearly \$29/hour, or more than \$60,000/year. Companies that have hired our students include Deloitte, Draper Labs, Modis, Randstad, R.G. Vanderweil Engineers, TEKsystems, and more. Per Scholas also hired one of our inaugural graduates as full-time Technical Teaching Fellow. He was promoted to Junior Technical Instructor in February 2020.

Student Profile: Per Scholas Greater Boston serves un/underemployed adults (18+) from throughout the Greater Boston area. The following is an overview of our 2019 student demographics:

- **Gender:** 20% (19) Female and 80% (74) Male
- **Ethnicity:** 35% African American; 22% White; 19% Asian; 16% Hispanic/Latino; 6% Multi-racial; and 1% Other.
- **Age Range:** 18% of students are age 18-24; 47% are age 25-35; 19% are age 36-45; 11% are age 46-55; and 4% are age 55+.
- **Income:** Around 90% of our students qualified as “low-income” as defined by HUD as 80% of median income.

Appendix C: List of Stakeholders

- City Stakeholders Meeting, May 9th, 2019 (The Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, Cambridge Department of Public Health, and Lead staff from CEP)
- Cambridge Equal Opportunity Committee - Tina Alu
- Cambridge Housing Authority - John Lindamood
- Cambridge Office of Workforce Development - Sue Walsh, Susan Mintz, Allyson Allen
- Cambridge Community Foundation - Geeta Pradhan
- Just-A-Start Corporation - Gina Plata and Deborah Ruhe
- City Human Services/Community Engagement Team

Appendix D: Focus Group Outreach Materials



Center for Social Policy
McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies
University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125-3393

Research Project: "Cambridge Workforce Study"

Consent to be Audio Recorded

This study involves the audio recording of the focus group. Only the research team will be able to listen to the recording.

The recording will be transcribed by the researcher and erased once the transcriptions are checked for accuracy. Transcripts of your interview may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study. Neither your name nor any other identifying information (such as your voice or picture) will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from the study. Immediately following the interview, you will be given the opportunity to have the tape erased if you wish to withdraw your consent to taping or participation in this study. Audio recordings will be destroyed by June 1, 2021.

Participant's Signature _____

Date _____





Center for Social Policy
McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies
University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125-3393

Research Project: "Cambridge Workforce Study"

Consent form for Focus Group Participants

Introduction and Contact Information

You are asked to take part in a research project that will assess the training and employment needs of Cambridge residents. The Principal Investigator for the project is Susan R. Crandall, PhD, Center for Social Policy, J.W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston. Dr. Crandall can be contacted by email at susan.crandall@umb.edu or by phone at (617)-287-5565. Please read this form and feel free to ask questions. If you have further questions later, please contact Dr. Crandall.

Description of the Project

The Center for Social Policy is conducting an assessment of unemployed and underemployed Cambridge residents training and employment needs. Participation in the focus group will take 1.5 hours. If you decide to participate in the focus group, you will be asked a series of questions related to your employment and training background as well as your connections with the workforce development system. Following the focus group, you will be asked to complete a short survey. You will receive a \$25 stipend for participating.

Risks or Discomforts

There are minimal risks associated with participating in the research study.

Confidentiality

Your part in this research is confidential. That is, the information gathered for this project will not be published or presented in a way that would allow anyone to identify you. Information gathered for this project will be stored in a locked file cabinet and on a secure server with password protected files and only the research team will have access to the data. Notes, transcriptions and other materials from the focus group will be destroyed in five years, August 2024.

The researchers would like to remind participants to respect the privacy of your fellow participants and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others.

Voluntary Participation

The decision whether or not to take part in this research study is voluntary. If you do decide to take part in this study, you may terminate participation at any time without consequence. If you wish to terminate participation, you should contact Dr. Crandall by email at susan.crandall@umb.edu or by phone at (617)-287-5565. There is no penalty for withdrawing from the study.



Questions

You have the right to ask questions about this research before you sign this form and at any time during the study. You can reach Dr. Crandall by email at susan.crandall@umb.edu or by phone at (617)-287-5565. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact a representative of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, which oversees research involving human participants. The Institutional Review Board may be reached by telephone or e-mail at (617) 287-5374 or at human.subjects@umb.edu.

I HAVE READ THE CONSENT FORM. MY QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. MY SIGNATURE ON THIS FORM MEANS THAT I CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY. I ALSO CERTIFY THAT I AM 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER.

Signature of Participant / Date

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Researcher / Date

Printed Name of Researcher





Center for Social Policy
McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies
University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125-3393

Cambridge Workforce Study

Information Sheet for Focus Group Participants

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Risks or Discomforts

There are minimal risks associated with participating in this study.

Confidentiality

Your part in this study is confidential. That is, the information gathered for this project will not be published or presented in a way that would allow anyone to identify you or your organization. Information gathered for this project will be stored in a locked file cabinet and on a secure server with password protected files and only the research team will have access to the data. Notes, transcriptions and other materials from the focus group will be destroyed in five years, October 2024.

The researchers would like to remind participants to respect the privacy of your fellow participants and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others.

Voluntary Participation

The decision whether or not to take part in this research study is voluntary. If you do decide to take part in this study, you may terminate participation at any time without consequence. If you wish to terminate participation, you should contact Dr. Crandall by email at susan.crandall@umb.edu or by phone at (617)-287-5565. There is no penalty for withdrawing from the study.



Audio Recording

This study involves the audio recording of the focus group. Only the research team will be able to listen to the recording.

The recording will be transcribed and checked for accuracy. Transcripts of your interview may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study. Neither your name, your organization's name nor any other identifying information (such as your voice or picture) will be used in presentations or in written products resulting from the study. Audio recordings will be destroyed by October 2024.

Questions

You have the right to ask questions about this study at any time. You can reach Dr. Crandall by email at susan.crandall@umb.edu or by phone at (617)-287-5565. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact a representative of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, which oversees research involving human participants. The Institutional Review Board may be reached by telephone or e-mail at (617) 287-5374 or at human.subjects@umb.edu.

Focus Group Methodology

The UMass Boston Center for Social Policy (CSP) research team conducted the focus groups in partnership with Cambridge Office of Workforce Development (OWD), following the approval to conduct this research by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Massachusetts Boston. The OWD recruited the focus group participants through their partner organizations and agencies in the City of Cambridge, while the CSP research team moderated the focus group discussions and data analysis. In total, three focus groups of Cambridge residents (Young adults, Mothers, and American-born Black adults), and a Cambridge employer focus group was conducted. Participants in the Cambridge residents' focus group sessions were also asked to voluntarily complete a demographic survey, which had 11 short questions. To ensure that participants understood their rights and are willing to volunteer in the study, we provided participants with a consent form for participation and audio recording. We also provided the employer group with an informational sheet. The consent forms and informational sheet highlights the purpose of the study, the procedure, the cost, payment, risk, and benefits, the issues of confidentiality, participant rights, and contact persons.

The focus group sessions lasted an average of 90 minutes with participants ranging from 5-10 persons. The discussions were guided by protocols consisting of 7 open-ended questions carefully developed by the CSP research team and OWD. In accordance to standard focus group practice (Krueger and Casey, 2015), we welcomed participants, and outlines the ground rules, which included one person speaking at a time, and respecting the privacy of fellow participants. Afterwards, we asked them the few open-ended questions to allow for a rich discussion of each questions. We started off with an introductory question about their strength as individuals and as a group of Mothers, Young adults, or American-born Black adults, and ended with final remarks reiterating the purpose of the focus group and asking for any further contributions or questions. Such introductory question and closing remark are recommended to help warm-up the group before putting more specific questions to the group and stimulate any additional but important discussion point respectively (Redmond and Curtis, 2009). During each focus group session, a light breakfast or dinner was provided, and all participants in the Cambridge residents' focus group sessions were compensated with \$25 cash for their time and participation.

In order for all participants' comments to be understandable and useful, we used a systematic process to analyze the data. First, we transcribed all focus group recordings. Then we cleaned and organized transcripts for the three groups of Cambridge residents and employer focus group. Transcripts for each focus group sessions were coded separately for key findings and themes. Common themes and findings across the three focus groups of Cambridge residents generated initially resulted into these primary and secondary themes; strength/contribution to the community, job/work experience, challenges/barriers to jobs (age, race, income, and gender discrimination, education, job requirement, work condition, job training /program, CORI checks, affordable housing), and idea job/work situation. The employer focus group session initially generated these main themes; overview of their entry level workforce, challenges to recruitment, training and retention, and strategies to address these challenges. All themes and key findings were further reviewed to produce the final themes and key findings reported. Findings from the survey were summarized²⁸ and reported in the report

²⁸ See appendix for survey-summary of findings

accordingly. Quotations included in the report were purposefully selected to reflect voices of participants who spoke to the themes and findings.

Redmond, R., & Curtis, E. (2009). Focus groups: Principles and process. (Issues in research). *Nurse Researcher*, 16(3), 57-69.

Krueger, R., & Casey, M. (2015). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* / Richard A. Krueger, Mary Anne Casey. (5th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.

CAMBRIDGE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STUDY – EMPLOYER FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Please introduce yourself, provide us with a description of your company, the role that you hold within your organization. Lastly talk to us a little bit about your entry-level workforce.

- What kind of entry level jobs are available to new employees?
 - PROBE: Part-time, full-time, temporary, seasonal, benefit or non-benefited?
- What kind of job training do you provide new employees?
 - PROBE – by occupation, entry level jobs
- What kind of job training do you provide across time for all employees?
 - PROBE – College tuition benefits? In house training? Access to training programs? Union based training?
- Do you see any opportunities to restructure your business model in ways that would increase access to training, along with increases in wages and promotions?
 - PROBE – What are these opportunities? What might enhance or prevent your business from taking on these opportunities?
- For your entry-level jobs, what kinds of skills are missing from job candidates?
 - PROBE: Differentiate between soft and hard skills
- In your opinion, what prevents some entry level workers from moving forward?
 - PROBE: Are they stuck? If so, why?
- Have you ever considered offering stipends or wages for entry level workers to train? Or do you already provide some kind of incentive?
 - PROBE: If you don't provide stipends or wages for training, do you think it's possible to re-organize your business model to do so?

Cambridge Residents Focus Group Protocol

- What are some of the greatest strengths that mothers/American-Born Blacks/young people bring to their communities?
- Tell us about your work experience. What kind of jobs have you held?
- What would you be doing for a job or career if there were no obstacles in the way?
- What is your biggest barrier to getting jobs or earning more money?
- What has been your experience with employment and training programs?
 - specific programs, what worked, what didn't work
- Would you be interested in training or assistance to get a better job?
 - If so, what would keep you from attending? What would make it possible for you to attend?
- What would work best for you (probe for hours, time of day, length of time, paid/unpaid)

Demographic Survey - Summary of findings

Combined Focus Group Self-Reported Demographics			
Focus groups	Moms	American Born-Blacks	Young Adult
# of participants	10 participants	9 participants	7 participants
Gender	10 females	6 males 4 females	3 males 4 females
Race	2 Non-Hispanic White 4 Non-Hispanic Black 2 Mixed races 2 Hispanic or Latino	8 Non-Hispanic Black 1 Black American Indian	3 Non-Hispanic Black 1 Hispanic Black 2 Hispanic White 1 Black American Indian
Age range	28-51	25-80	18-23
Marital status	6 Never married 3 Married 1 Divorced	4 Never married 3 Married 1 Divorced 1 Widowed	7 Never married
Education	5 < High school 1 High school 3 Some college 1 Bachelor's degree	2 < High school 2 High school 2 Some college 1 Bachelor's degree 1 Graduate degree 1 no-response	1 < High school 3 High school 3 Some college Bachelor's degree
Notes*	1 participant in the American-born Black group left before survey collection		

Combined Focus Group Survey summary

Persons under 18 in the household

- All mothers have at least one person in their household who is under 18 years of age
- Four American-born Blacks have at least one person in their household who is under 18 years of age, four have none, and one American-born Black provided no response.
- All young adults have at least one person in their household who is under 18 years of age

Concerned about losing government assistance if earning more or working more hours

- Six mothers strongly agree; one somewhat agrees; one reported non applicable, one somewhat disagrees, and one provided no response.
- Three American-born Blacks strongly agree, one somewhat agrees, one neither agree nor disagree, three reported non applicable, and one provided no response.
- Three young adults strongly agree; one somewhat agrees; two reported non applicable, and one provided no response.

Unable to pay rent or mortgage on time in the last 12 months

- Six mothers reported yes, they were unable to pay rent or mortgage on time in the last 12 months, and four reported no.
- Three American-born Blacks reported yes, four reported no, one American-born Blacks reported s/he did not pay rent or mortgaged in the last 12 months, and one provided no response.
- Four young adults reported yes, one reported no, and two reported they did not pay rent or mortgaged in the last 12 months.

Accommodation conditions in the last 12 months

- Seven mothers reported they did not move from their accommodation or live in a temporary or transitional home or shelter in the last 12 months; one mother moved twice or more in the last 12 months; two mothers provided no response.
- Four American-born Blacks reported they did not move from their accommodation or live in a temporary or transitional home or shelter in the last 12 months; three American-born Blacks moved twice or more in the last 12 months, and two provided no response
- Five young adults reported they did not move from their accommodation or live in a temporary or transitional home or shelter in the last 12 months; One moved in with others so family could make ends meet; one lived in a temporary or transitional home or shelter in the last 12 months



Cambridge Workforce Demographic Survey

Instructions

- Please fill out this brief survey and return it to the research team.
- Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you come across a question you would rather not answer, feel free to skip it and go on to the next question. Your answers are confidential. No information will be presented or published in any way that would permit identification of any individual. Your answers will not be shared with anyone other than the researchers.

1. What is your current age?

_____ Write in your age

2. Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent?

- Yes, Hispanic or Latino
- No, not Hispanic or Latino

3. What is your race? Please check all that apply.

- White
- Black or African American
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Other → Please describe: _____

4. Which of the following best describes your gender identity?

- Woman
- Man
- Transgender
- Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming
- Unsure

5. What is your marital status?

- Married
- Divorced
- Separated
- Widowed
- Never Married

6. How many people in your household are under 18 years of age?

_____ Write in number of people under 18

7. I am concerned if I work too many hours or earn too much money, my family might lose government assistance (e.g., SNAP, MassHealth, SSI, TANF, childcare, housing, etc.).

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Not Applicable

8. In the last 12 months, was there a time when you were not able to pay rent or mortgage on time?

- Yes
- No
- Did not pay rent or mortgage in the last 12 months

9. In the last 12 months, did you do any of the following?

Move 2 or more times Yes No

Move in with others so your family could make ends meet Yes No

Live in a temporary or transitional home or shelter Yes No

10. What is the highest level of school you have completed?

- Less than a High School Diploma
- High School Diploma or GED
- Occupational Certification or License (e.g., CNA, CDL)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate's Degree (for example: AA, AS)
- Bachelor's Degree (for example: BA, BS)
- Graduate Degree (for example: MA, MS, PhD, JD)

11. What jobs have you held, if any? *List the most common/significant jobs you have held, including your current job (if applicable)? If you're not sure of the exact title, just make your best guess.*

THANK YOU! Please return the completed survey to the research team





July 12, 2019

Susan R. Crandall,
PhD PPPA/CSP

RE: Your application dated 7/8/2019 regarding study number 2019134: Cambridge Workforce Study (Subcontracting through UMDI-ultimate client is City of Cambridge)

Dear Dr. Crandall:

I have reviewed your study listed above and have determined that this study qualifies as **exempt** from review under the following guideline: 45 CFR 46.104(d)(2) Educational tests/survey/interview procedures, or observation of public behavior. You are free to conduct your study without further reporting to University of Massachusetts Boston IRB. In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

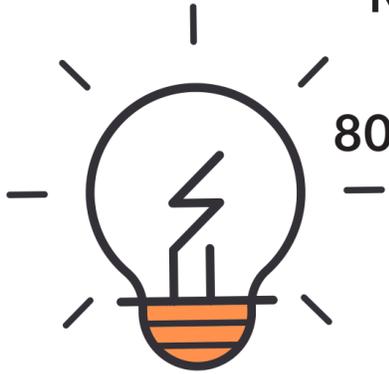
If you decide to modify the project in such a way that it may no longer qualify for exemption, submit a modification request to the IRB for review prior to implementation of the modified research project.

Thank you for keeping the IRB informed of your activities.

Sincerely,

Sharon Wang, CIP, CIM
Senior IRB Administrator





Monday, July 29, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.
Citywide Senior Center
806 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge

FOCUS GROUP FOR AMERICAN-BORN BLACK ADULTS

WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED OR UNDEREMPLOYED

The City of Cambridge and UMass Boston are holding focus groups to ask questions about the employment, education and training needs of Cambridge residents, including:

- *What holds people back from pursuing their employment goals or keeping stable employment?*
- *Who isn't getting the help they need to find a job?*
- *Who are the Cambridge residents who need more training or education to get and keep a good job?*

In order to attend you must register by calling:
Susan Mintz at 617-349-6070

We'll provide a light dinner and a \$25 gift card for participating



Wednesday, August 7, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.
Citywide Senior Center
806 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge

FOCUS GROUP FOR YOUNG ADULTS 18-24 YEARS OLD

WHO ARE UNEMPLOYED OR UNDEREMPLOYED AND NOT IN SCHOOL

The City of Cambridge and UMass Boston are holding focus groups to ask questions about the employment, education and training needs of Cambridge residents, including:

- What holds people back from pursuing their employment goals or keeping stable employment?
- Who isn't getting the help they need to find a job?
- Who are the Cambridge residents who need more training or education to get and keep a good job?

In order to attend you must register by calling:
Susan Mintz at 617-349-6070

We'll provide a light dinner and a \$25 gift card for participating





**Monday, July 22, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.
Center for Families/Baby U office
51 Inman St., Cambridge**

FOCUS GROUP FOR MOMS

WHO ARE LOW-INCOME AND WOULD LIKE TO BE WORKING

The City of Cambridge and UMass Boston are holding focus groups to ask questions about the employment, education and training needs of Cambridge residents, including:

- What holds people back from pursuing their employment goals or keeping stable employment?
- Who isn't getting the help they need to find a job?
- Who are the Cambridge residents who need more training or education to get and keep a good job?

**In order to attend you must register by calling:
Susan Mintz, 617-349-6070**

**Child care will be provided, as well as light refreshments
and a \$25 gift card for participating**