



An Act Establishing a Middle-Skills Council and the Creation of Regional Skills Academies in the Commonwealth

(Senate Bill 921; House Bill 2713)

THE LEGISLATION

The Middle-Skills Solutions Act: An Act establishing a middle-skills council and the creation of regional skills academies in the Commonwealth was filed in January 2011 by Senator Kenneth Donnelly and Representative Coakley-Rivera.

The Act's three main sections build upon existing resources to develop a more robust system to prepare adult, non-traditional students for employment in economic sectors targeted by the Commonwealth for increased growth and investment:

Section I. Establish a middle-skills council to make recommendations that increase the readiness for and success of working adults and other non-traditional students in education and training in order to increase the number of adults with credentials for middle-skill jobs. The council's work will include establishing baseline data on the Commonwealth's middle-skills gap and making recommendations for a system-wide plan to better align adult basic education programs with post-secondary institutions.

Section II. Establish Regional Skills Academies, aligned to the Commonwealth's economic development strategy, to address the gap between the skills currently held by the Commonwealth's workers and the skills needed by its employers for middle-skill jobs. The Regional Skills Academies will encourage innovation and incentivize greater resource coordination across agencies, departments, and schools to increase credential and completion rates.

Section III. Require the regular review of local and regional labor market information and the development of regional plans to coordinate training and education activities to meet Massachusetts' demand for middle-skill workers.

THE FACTS

- Approximately **45% of all jobs in MA require middle-skill training (more than a high school diploma but less than a four-year degree)** but only 32% of MA workers have the education required to fill those positions.¹
- Nearly **two-thirds of the people who will be in Massachusetts' workforce in the year 2020 were already working** adults in 2005—long past the traditional high school-to-college pipeline.²
- **Non-traditional students make up the largest pool of students at community colleges** and most of the growth in community college enrollments across the state.³
- Nationally, **61% of students who enter community college through adult basic education programs never earn any college credits within five years**, and only 3% earn a credential of one year or more.⁴

THE SOLUTION

Support the Middle-Skills Solutions Act, which creates better pathways and more opportunity for workers to gain the middle-skill training and credentials that Massachusetts' businesses need.

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Sources:

¹ National Skills Coalition, *Massachusetts' Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs*. July 2010. Available at http://skills2competema.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/forgottenjobs_ma.pdf

² Ibid.

³ Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, "Highlights: 2009 Early Enrollment Estimates." October 6, 2009. Available at <http://www.phenomononline.org/images/documents/2009earlyenrollmentreport.pdf>

⁴ The Boston Foundation, *Massachusetts Community Colleges: The Potential for Improving College Attainment*. February 2007. Available at

http://www.tbf.org/uploadedFiles/tbforg/Utility_Navigation/Multimedia_Library/Reports/CommunityCollege.pdf

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