

# Massachusetts Community Colleges Putting Residents Back To Work Through The ‘Transformation Agenda’

## Accelerated Programs Train Workers for Skills Needed Now

February 6, 2013

**Brockton, MA** (February 6, 2013) – The Commonwealth’s [15 community colleges](#) are embarking on the second year of an innovative venture to transform the delivery of education and training programs for low skilled workers, and change how they interact with workforce development system, public agencies, leading industry groups, leaders of government and private businesses.

The Transformation Agenda at Massasoit Community College has been successful thus far. Respiratory Care, Biotechnology, Microsoft Office Specialist, Medical Interpreting and Home Health Aide are the five identified programs being promoted through the grant. Changes have been made to these programs, including the addition of Achievement Coaches and modularized/accelerated programming, to assist students with successful completion of the programs and the ability to join the workforce sooner. To date, 73 students have been enrolled in the programs. The grant has also supported curriculum development in developmental math and English courses, professional development for faculty, and Accuplacer coaching sessions. The College and Career Navigator have transitioned smoothly into the position at the three partnering career centers: Career Works in Brockton, Quincy Career Center, and Plymouth Career Center. To date, the Navigator has worked with and contacted over 100 customers (students). Four students have enrolled in TA programs identified by Massasoit.

Managed by the Massachusetts Community Colleges Executive Office and Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester, the [Massachusetts Community Colleges & Workforce Development Transformation Agenda](#) (MCCWDTA) is funded by a \$20 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration through the [TAACCCT](#) program.

Each community college is offering new or redesigned certificate and degree programs for un- and under-employed adults in a manner that will accelerate their learning and provide a bridge to jobs that are in demand now. The programs are in one or more targeted industries, designed to meet the unique needs of adult students. The targeted industries are: Healthcare; Advanced Manufacturing; Information Technology; Biotechnology & Life Sciences; Clean Energy/Sustainability and Financial Services. These sectors are projected to represent 45% of all jobs statewide by 2019.

What makes the Transformation Agenda truly unique for Massachusetts is the comprehensive collaboration between colleges, industry and workforce development systems. Teams comprised of faculty, administrators, industry leaders and officials of the workforce development system are joining forces to:

- Develop degree and certificate programs and career paths aligned with local industry needs
- Develop curriculum for Adult Basic Education and Developmental Education, contextualized to healthcare, advanced manufacturing and IT
- Build bridges from the state’s One-Stop Career Centers to college for un- and under-employed workers.

“Through accelerated programs linked closely to industry need, our community colleges are creating greater economic opportunities for Massachusetts’ residents by providing new ways for low-skilled workers to improve their education and skills” said Jennifer Freeman, Project Manager of the Transformation Agenda.

For adult learners, there are barriers that often prevent a successful transition to higher education. These can include scheduling conflicts, lack of confidence in succeeding, accessibility, limited knowledge of available short-term programs tied to workforce needs, and entry criteria. Through the Transformation Agenda, each college has hired **College and Career Navigators**, ensuring that displaced workers are thoroughly advised on college programs and services at all critical stages and providing a seamless connection between the colleges and their local Career Centers.

The College and Career Navigators are a critical link to the career success of lower skilled adults in Massachusetts, leading to improved retention and achievement rates among those students with the greatest need.

Currently, many low-skilled adult students require developmental coursework before they can begin a college level curriculum. Improving the success of these students is pivotal to them completing college and receiving a degree or certification that will lead to employment. With the help of workforce partners, college and adult basic education faculty and staff statewide have developed [contextualized curriculum modules](#) that have been flexibly integrated into a range of developmental, adult basic education and industry-specific programs. Through contextualization, abstract concepts become more concrete, helping students to grasp material more quickly and to see how academic skills relate to their future employment goals, which improves motivation.

### **About The Transformation Agenda**

The Massachusetts Community Colleges and Workforce Development Transformation Agenda (MCCWDTA) brings together Massachusetts' 15 community colleges, the Commonwealth's adult basic education and workforce development systems, and industry stakeholders to transform education and training programs. The state-wide initiative, supported by a \$20 million, three-year grant from the United States Department of Labor, is designed to build greater economic opportunities for residents of the Commonwealth by helping them attain degrees, certificates and industry recognized credentials through accelerated programs linked closely to industry need.

Founded in 1966, in the heart of southeastern Massachusetts, Massasoit Community College is a public two-year college in the Massachusetts Public Higher Education System. It is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), one of the six regional accrediting bodies in the United States. Many departments carry additional accreditations. The College offers a full spectrum of associate's degree programs in arts, sciences, and applied sciences as well as one year and short term certificates across a variety of occupations and interests. In addition, the College offers corporate and job skills training courses.

For more information about the Massachusetts Community Colleges & Workforce Development Transformation Agenda (MCCWDTA), please contact Jeff Landis at 774-242-8029. For additional information about Massasoit Community College and the implementation