UPSKILLING: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN NEW ENGLAND'S EDUCATORS AND EMPLOYERS

PROBLEM

Unemployment in New England is at or near record low rates exacerbating a persistent skill shortage reported by employers across the region. In a recent McKinsey survey, executives increasingly see investing in retraining and "upskilling" existing workers as an urgent business priority. With New England's share of fast-growing, high-skill industries wherein available jobs largely require a postsecondary credential, upskilling is an essential tool that nearly all businesses need to employ to ensure a greater skills match while improving employee retention and work product. Strada's Consumer Insights Data indicates that adults in New England with no college experience are most likely to feel as if they need additional education to advance in the workforce--the call for meaningful educational programs exists in the region.

For successful implementation of upskilling programs, collaboration and alignment between New England's educators and employers is imperative. As a first step to addressing these issues, NEBHE will convene a regional thinkers' meeting and subsequently produce a white paper that will serve as the basis for state-level briefings that will generate momentum around creating and developing successful upskilling programs and policies.

TARGET POPULATION

Adults with no postsecondary degree who do not earn a family sustaining wage In New England, 5,449,340 adults over 25 years-old do not hold a postsecondary degree and in the region, a family sustaining wage is approximately \$64,655 (based on calculations for a household of 1 adult and 2 children)

TARGET INDUSTRIES

Healthcare Life and Bio Sciences Business and Financial Operations Information Technology Additional industries that employ a workforce comprised of low- and middle-skilled workers

ACTION ITEMS



THINKERS' MEETING



NEBHE will convene regional thought leaders in a thinkers' meeting, renewing the focus on bridging the gap between New England's educators and employers. The meeting agenda will leverage Strada's Consumer Insights data and NEBHE's Commission on Higher Education and Employability. Participants will use their experience and expertise to develop ideas around improving the delivery of high-quality postsecondary education and training opportunities for adults in the New England workforce.



WHITE PAPER

BRIEFINGS

Outcomes from the thinkers' meeting will serve as the foundation for a white paper—Bridging the Gap Between New England's Educators and Employers—intended to present findings and key recommendations that will catalyze a regional action agenda.

To facilitate buy-in surrounding the white paper's recommendations, NEBHE will coordinate

presentations of regional consumer and labor market insights, white paper recommendations, and assessments of the regional and state higher education and employability landscape.

legislative and gubernatorial briefings in each New England state. Briefings will include

DELIVERABLES

Understand and capitalize on the strengths of a regional consumer insights perspective and opportunities to build cross-state communities of practice to upskill New England's mobile population

Identify emerging best practices and opportunities for scaling successful institution and employer partnerships and state policies

Determine the needs and capacities of workers, employers and higher education institutions to implement new practices and needed transformation



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