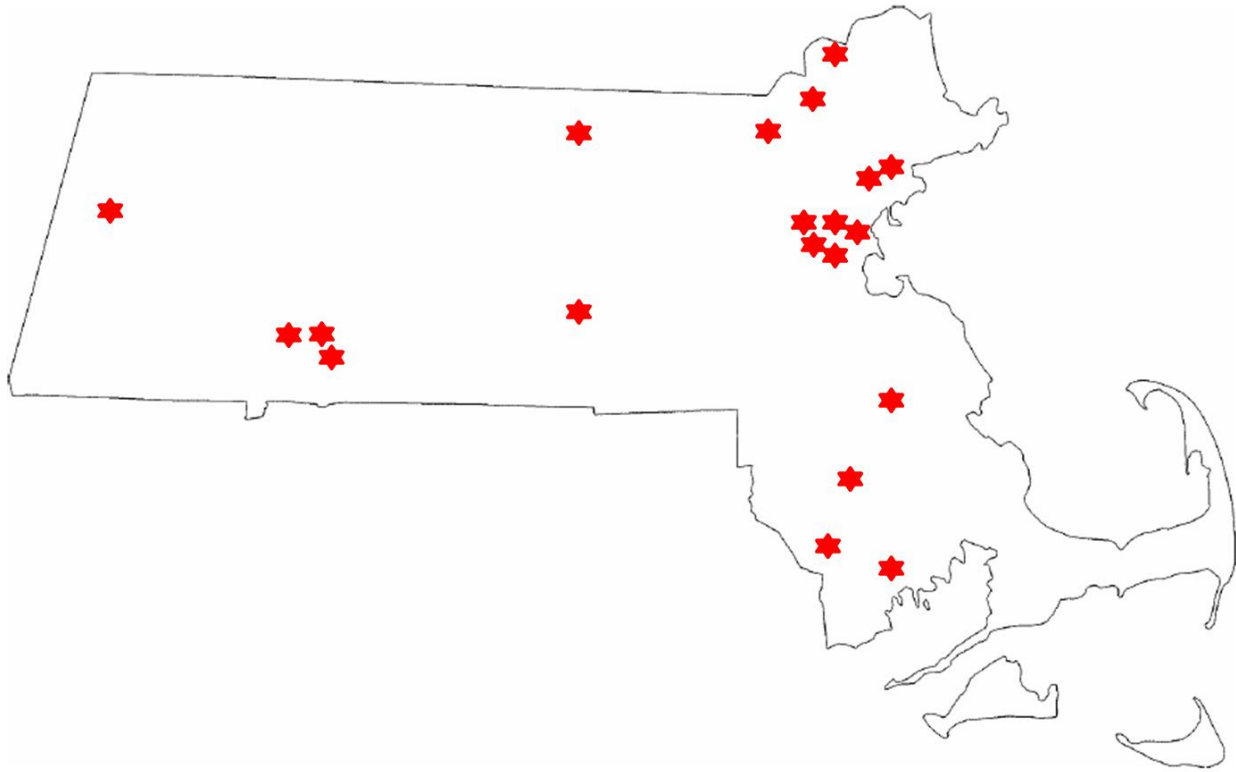# Data Dashboards for the Massachusetts Working Cities

Working Cities Challenge

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CLARK UNIVERSITY
Mosakowski Institute for
Public Enterprise

Introduction

The following "Data Dashboards" were compiled by a team at Clark University's Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise during the spring and summer of 2013. These documents have been created to serve as reference points for the staff, steering committee and outside evaluators of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's Working Cities Challenge. This important initiative has two primary goals: "to advance collaborative leadership in Massachusetts smaller cities and to support ambitious work to improve the lives of low-income people in those cities" [http://www.bos.frb.org/WorkingCities/index.htm].

Dashboards were created for each of the twenty cities that are eligible for participation in the WCC competition. The dashboards contain a range of quantitative information and are designed to give evaluators a foundational, introductory understanding of the current status and recent past of each of these cities. Each document contains information pertaining to topics such as demographics, the status of the local economy, educational achievement, health, employment, and the presence of non-profit entities. Many variables contain observations at two points in time (generally 2000 and 2011).

The data contained in the dashboards were compiled from a variety of sources. The American Community Survey and the Decennial Census provided the data for the following areas: population, demographics, age, economy, household income, housing, rent, commuting, educational attainment, and language abilities. These sources also provided the unemployment rates for 2000 and 2011; however, the unemployment rates for June, 2013 came from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. This same source was used to gather the data on the number of individuals employed by each sector of the economy in each city. Data on high school dropout rates and the 2012 MCAS scores came from the

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. All health indicators came from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services. The data on non-profit entities were provided by the National Center for Charitable Statistics, except for the cases of Chelsea and Chicopee, which utilized information from GuideStar. Finally, data on the top five employers in each city came from the Hoovers database, which is a product of Dun & Bradstreet.

Some features of the data compilation and consolidation process merit brief descriptions. The annual number of individuals working in a given sector was calculated by adding together monthly employee counts and dividing the total by twelve in order to get an average. The summation of the number of individuals working in each sector is often less than the total number of employees, because the data for certain industries were either unavailable or confidential. Additionally, the sectors for which data were compiled occasionally changed between 2001 and 2011, which resulted in occasional "NA" labels for certain sectors, most notably Educational Services.

The dropout rate presented in the dashboards is the 4 year rate for the 2012 cohort, which is calculated using the following formula:

<u># of students in cohort (denominator) who graduate in 4 years or less</u>
[# of 1st time entering 9th graders in 2008-09] - transfers out/deaths + transfers in

The non-profit data for Chelsea and Chicopee had to be gathered from GuideStar because these two cities were not represented in the database maintained by the National Center for Charitable Statistics. Because of differences between the data sources, only the ten largest non-profits are presented for these two towns, and the total amount of assets controlled by non-profits in Chelsea and Chicopee could not be calculated. The numbers for "gross rent as a percentage of

household income" from the year 2000 do not always sum to 100% because the figure was not computed for a portion of each sample.

The compilation of the five largest employers in each city was a multifaceted process; the Hoovers database provides two measures for each employer, "employees at this site" and "employees at all sites". This creates complications in a few scenarios, the first being employers that are headquartered in a city, but have many employees at sites outside of the city, and the second being employers that have multiple sites within a city of interest. These instances were treated on a case by case basis and the most reasonable number was provided after all factors were taken into account.

Every effort has been made to find and correct errors in the dashboards presented here. Readers who have suggestions for improvement are invited to submit them to Jim Gomes, Director of Clark's Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise, at jgomes@clarku.edu.

The Mosakowski Institute [http://www.clarku.edu/research/mosakowskiinstitute/] is the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's Research Partner for the Working Cities Challenge. The Mosakowski team that compiled the data dashboards consisted of Jim Gomes, Laura Faulkner, and Joe Krahe. Professor Ramon Borges-Mendéz, Director of Clark's program in Community Development and Planning, provided advice and technical assistance throughout this project. The support and guidance of Tamar Kotelchuck, the Boston Fed's Project Director of the Working Cities Challenge, is also gratefully acknowledged.