

News from the Institute

A message from Executive Director Johan E. Uvin

In our last issue, I wrote about the shifting landscape of funding priorities and the uncertainty that continues to shape our work.

While those uncertainties remain, what has not wavered is our commitment to mission-driven work and the tangible impact we continue to make across Massachusetts, throughout New England, and well beyond.

One recent highlight is that we secured a three-year contract to continue our Head Start training and technical assistance work in New England. This is great news for the staff, the institute, the Head Start directors, and local program staff, and the families and children who rely on our expertise.

This issue of the newsletter offers just a glimpse into the progress we've made since our last issue. The stories here are a powerful reminder that our work matters in so many ways—and that we are moving forward in uncertainty.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Your support, collaboration, and belief in what we do make all the difference.



Institute Evaluation and Innovative Practices Improve Community College STEM Student Outcomes

The **STEM Starter Academy**, an initiative launched in 2014 by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, was

The Journal of the Massachusetts Economy



Institute in the News

[Associated Press: Income inequality dipped, and fewer people moved, according to the largest survey of US life](#)

[Berkshire Eagle: Missed counts, lost power: Why the 2030 census matters for the Berkshires](#)

[GBH: Taxes, but not jobs, pouring in from sports betting](#)

designed to increase access to STEM education and careers for **underserved and underrepresented students**.

A key component of this program is **case management**, a strategy identified through evaluation by the Donahue Institute.

This approach, as described by case manager Carolyn Frantz, acts as a "**throughline**" **connecting a student's entire journey**. Case managers meet with students twice per semester, even if they've dropped out, to encourage re-engagement and connect them with vital resources like tutoring and academic advising. This personalized support has proven effective, with analyses showing that students who receive case management services are more likely to achieve **positive outcomes**, including earning STEM degrees and certificates at higher rates than their peers.

[Read more.](#)

Institute Awarded Three-Year Grant to Continue Training and Technical Assistance to New England Head Start Grant Recipients



The new contract started on September 1, with a [full team of 20 experienced and returning staff](#) covering a variety of specialist positions, including early childhood, grantee specialists, health, family engagement, disabilities, and systems.

The New England team is now part of the Northeast Region, which covers New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. We will support Head Start programs in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. They will provide one-on-one assistance for all levels of the program. They are also planning a series of professional development trainings and community of practice initiatives that address the Office of Head Start's priorities and address programs' needs.

A big focus for the upcoming year will be on family wellbeing and health.

[Kerry Spitzer awarded for her outstanding contribution](#)

[Studying Diverse Participation within the Massachusetts sports betting industry](#)

[All Donahue News](#)

Our Services

Applied Research & Program Evaluation

Civic Initiative

Connected Beginnings

Economic & Public Policy Research

Head Start National Center on Program Management and Fiscal Operations

Head Start Real Property Facilities Initiative

MassHire Greater Brockton Career Center

New England Head Start Training & Technical Assistance

Organizational & Community Solutions

[More about our services](#)

Massachusetts sees impactful economic lift from research and development

A recent report by our Economic & Public Policy Research group found that research funding in Massachusetts is a crucial driver of the state's economy, supporting **81,300 jobs**, **\$7.8 billion in income**, and more than **\$16 billion in economic activity**. This represents a significant return on investment, with **every dollar of funding generating nearly double that amount in economic activity**.



The report highlights that Massachusetts is a national leader in research and development (R&D), home to **1 in every 10 R&D jobs in the U.S.**, and regularly a top recipient of federal funding from agencies like the NIH and NSF. However, the report also warns of the potential negative impact of proposed federal funding cuts.

A reduction in funding could lead to substantial losses, including an estimated loss of **3,300 jobs** and **\$19.7 million in state and local tax revenue**, underscoring the importance of these investments to the commonwealth's economic future.

[Learn more](#) and see the [media coverage](#).

North Central Mass. Chamber of Commerce launches transportation program, based on the institute's research



The North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce has launched a new initiative, the **North Central Massachusetts Rides Transportation Management Association (TMA)**, to address the region's transportation challenges that hinder workforce participation and economic growth. The TMA brings together employers, institutions, and municipalities to provide and promote transportation options for commuters.

The creation of the TMA was a direct result of a **2022 workforce study** conducted by our **Economic & Public Policy Research (EPPR) group**, which recommended a TMA as a strategic solution.

The EPPR group also developed the chamber's [Regional Data Center](#), an extensive economic, workforce, and industry dashboard covering the 27 communities that comprise North Central Massachusetts.

Our Recent Publications

[Affording Preschool](#): The [MassBenchmarks](#) project conducted a special examination of the challenges families face in qualifying for government-supported child care and education services, like Head Start. The focus was on families that need these essential services but find the cost of preschool or child care to be a significant burden. The examination specifically looked at eligibility barriers for these services, which are critical for households with children under the age of six.

[MassVentures, 50 years of impact](#): MassVentures, in collaboration with the institute, conducted an economic impact analysis of its venture fund's activity from its inception in 1978 through 2024. The report used the IMPLAN Econometric Model to quantify the full economic effects, including the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of the fund.

[State of the South Shore](#): The South Shore Chamber of Commerce commissioned the institute to conduct an updated study on the economic and demographic performance of the South Shore region over the last decade. This new "State of the South Shore" report builds on a similar 2014 study, aiming to provide a comprehensive, data-driven understanding of the area. The ultimate goal is to use this analysis to inform strategic priorities for the chamber and help the region leverage its strengths to become more competitive.

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