



HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT of the Massachusetts SMALL BUSINESS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

March 2015

Laid-off workers are **83% more likely** than those continuously employed to develop a stress-related condition such as heart disease.¹



KEEPING RESIDENTS EMPLOYED – AND HEALTHY

Unemployment has serious effects on health. Joblessness can be extremely stressful, and people without a regular paycheck often can't afford good health care and housing. This may lead to higher levels of cardiovascular disease, obesity, asthma, and depression among the unemployed.

Joblessness affects entire communities, too. For example, neighborhoods and cities with high levels of unemployment are likely to experience higher amounts of cardiovascular disease, suicide, and type 2 diabetes among all males, not just among the males without work.

Programs like the **Small Business Technical Assistance program** serve as a buffer against unemployment. By helping small businesses overcome practical challenges such as adopting new financial management software or getting access to capital, these programs provide stability and keep existing owners and employees on the job.

In one year, the Small Business Technical Assistance program contributed to the **stabilization of nearly 300 small businesses** and the **preservation and creation of nearly 800 jobs**. By focusing on disadvantaged communities, this program supports economic opportunity in the areas where it most needed, keeping residents employed and on track to healthier lives.

Participate in the HIA

Participation is an essential element of an HIA. In this HIA, we are engaging a wide range of people who are familiar with small businesses and public health in Massachusetts. These will include those who provide technical assistance to small businesses, individuals and organizations with small business and public health expertise, and experts from state agencies, academic settings, and non-profit organizations.

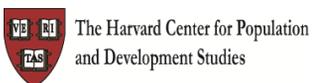
If you are interested in learning more about the HIA or providing feedback, please contact us.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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1. Job Loss and Health in the U.S. Labor Market 2009, Journal of Demography



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Interested in contributing to the HIA? Please contact us before June 2015.



ASSESSING THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Small businesses have a profound economic impact on Massachusetts – that is well known. But what of their health impact? How does the Commonwealth's Small Business Technical Assistance program, which helps underserved and disadvantaged businesses with fewer than 20 employees, improve the physical and mental health of owners and employees? Can that benefit extend to customers, surrounding neighborhoods, nearby residents and other businesses?

These are questions that a team led by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies is determined to answer.

The team is conducting a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) on Massachusetts' Small Business Technical Assistance. Our goal is to better understand the links between the program and health outcomes, and to use our findings to inform program funding and decision-making. The HIA is being performed in coordination with the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation and the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations.

WHAT IS A HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

A **Health Impact Assessment (HIA)** is a process that uses data, health expertise, and public input to identify the possible health effects of a proposed change. HIAs are used to assess proposals such as new development projects or legislative policies to produce recommendations that minimize health risks and maximize health benefits.

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www.healthimpactproject.org

The views expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Pew Charitable Trusts or the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation