

August 2020



A COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL RAPID RESPONSE PLAN

Significant Labor Force Disruptions and Unemployment



Produced by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council
for the cities of Beverly, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett,
Revere, Salem and Somerville, and the Metro North
and Greater Lowell MassHire Workforce Boards

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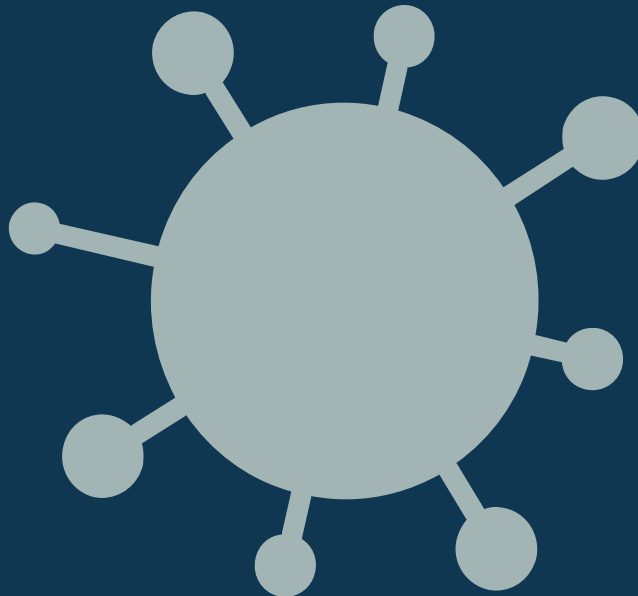
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Executive Summary

Project Background and Formalized Response

The Coronavirus has drastically, and possibly permanently, altered traditional economic systems as we know them - **in the MAPC region and across the globe.**

In late March, Massachusetts took steps to curb the rapid spread of COVID-19 and closed all businesses deemed “non-essential,” causing a spike in unemployment at a scale unlike anything seen in recent history. Closures most impacted workers in the retail, restaurant, service sector, and gig economy, which put thousands of low wage employees out of work almost overnight.

In response to the national surge in worker dislocation, the federal government expanded the unemployment insurance program under the CARES Act, which extended the amount of time individuals are eligible for unemployment, and allowing for an additional \$600 of payment per week, as part of a broader economic stimulus package. The state of Massachusetts also passed a residential eviction moratorium, aimed to keep individuals unable to pay their rent from becoming homeless amidst the public health crises.



Photo Credit: Jon Taylor via Flickr

As of this writing (August 4th 2020), the state has extended the eviction moratorium to October but the CARES expanded unemployment payments have expired, leaving approximately **600,000 Massachusetts residents jobless¹** and in a perilous economic situation.

By nature of the State's reopening plan and political structure, municipalities in Massachusetts are in a strong position to lead an effective response to the COVID induced unemployment surge. **MAPC has identified the following actions steps to coordinate and leverage all possible resources:**



Formalize communication systems between intergovernmental departments and outside organizations through codified MOU / MOA's



Identify and implement a shared technology that enables quick and responsive inter-agency / organization communication



Expand the network of stakeholders currently involved in this work to include representatives from Community Based Organizations (CBO's), Businesses, Anchor Institutions, Transportation Providers, Public Health Departments, and others as needed.



Create targeted outreach materials for residents seeking social services and businesses seeking reopening information.



Coordinate efforts between public health departments, inspectional services departments, workforce providers, employee advocacy organizations, businesses, and economic development actors to ensure that businesses can open safely and smoothly in line with the state's reopening plan.



Create a unified intake system for social service assistance that can be used to document trends in need and populations who may require additional outreach.



Continue to advocate for updated municipal-level unemployment data

A Networked Response

In partnership with organizations across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, MAPC has worked to evaluate the immediate critical needs and options for unemployed individuals and to create an action framework for economic security. This action framework is structured around the concept of a networked response, one that distributes actions across a range of actors to collectively leverage available resources and tools, to the short- and long-term recovery efforts.



As a structure to support the recommendations of a networked response MAPC recommends that our project partners take the following immediate steps:



1 Formalize a regional response and recovery network through a regional body that integrates

activities and leverages public and private sector resources between public health/healthcare, economic development, workforce development, housing, and transportation stakeholders at the local and state level.

2 Identify a coordinating entity that can facilitate communication within this response network,

actively develop tools and technology critical to economic recovery, evaluate the effectiveness of the response, and coordinate applications for federal and state funding.



Undertaking these two immediate action steps will enable an economic recovery process that avoids the pitfalls of work duplication, ensures an equitable distribution of resources across the region, and a free flow of information between on the ground service providers, businesses, and public sector entities.



Research Summary and Gaps Analysis

At the outset of this project, **MAPC identified three critical research questions** to assist in the understanding of the current conditions impacting the unemployment surge and to assist in guiding response and recovery efforts.

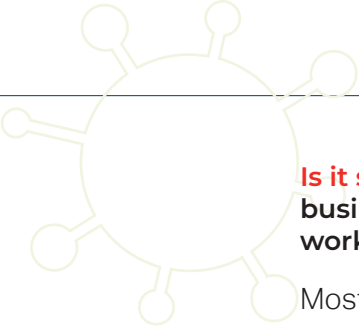
Prior to answering those questions, the MAPC team first determined the timeline for expanded federal unemployment assistance and the timeline of state activities to curtail evictions and foreclosure, as well as the timeline for the shutdown. While the end of the expanded unemployment benefits (July 31) and the expiration of the residential eviction moratorium (August 18, now extended to October 17) coincided with the reopening process, begun on May 18 through a phased approach, as noted below, many individuals experienced financial challenges despite the expanded assistance. In addition, many will continue to experience financial hardship due to the elimination of their previous positions and the inability to find suitable work post reopening. The questions and key findings are as follows:




Are there **specific target populations** who are in critical need of employment under current circumstances, even with the expanded unemployment benefits and eviction moratorium?

MAPC's research has identified that even with the expanded unemployment benefits, there are groups of workers who are still in need of additional assistance to ensure stable housing and needed lifelines due to historical inequalities and current barriers to wealth creation.

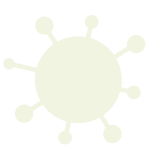
- People of color
- Undocumented workers who are ineligible for expanded unemployment
- Non – English speakers
- Family households



Is it safe for individuals to seek employment in industries or businesses that are currently open, and how can we better protect workers in essential industries?



Most essential industries present risk to workers, especially during times of ongoing community transmission. Workers must also manage the risks associated with travel to and from the business. Although clear standards and regulations are needed for all occupations to ensure a safer working environment, there are a number of gaps in the hierarchy of public health standards and regulations that create unsafe working conditions. This stems from the fact that there are no COVID-19- specific, enforceable Federal standards for working conditions. Based on these gaps, MAPC has identified a number of needs to ensure worker safety.

- 
- Workers need a place to file complaints and advocate for their right to refuse
 - Employers need support building capacity to fulfill a quasi-public health role given the additional tasks of monitoring employee health.
 - Local Public Health departments need support in further developing their occupational health and safety capacity. To address these needs, Boards of Health and Local Public Health Departments can fill gaps in enforcement, improve communication of evolving health standards, and build partnerships between Economic Development Entities, Planners, and employers. Regional partnerships of Local Public Health Departments, nonprofits, and health care providers can increase local capacity.

With the reopening of the economy, what kind of job opportunities can we anticipate being available?

While it is incredibly difficult to forecast what is going to drive demand for labor as the state and communities reopen their economies, MAPC was able to identify a few industries that show signs of labor market demand. Consistent review of data, economic trends and drivers, and public policy work to respond to that information will be needed over the next months and years to ensure that partner efforts are adaptable to changing situations and needs within the public and private sector.

Industries with near-term demand drivers:

- Public Health and Health Care
- Infrastructure and Utilities /Construction
- Manufacturing
- I.T.
- Essential Services
 - Food Production, Delivery, Storage and Retail
 - Logistics



Gaps

In addition to the review of the above questions, MAPC **identified a number of gaps and opportunities for expanded work** within the current response networks that could be addressed through additional coordination and resources. They are as follows:

Municipalities, CBOs, Foundations

- Funding for basic needs after expanded unemployment runs out
- Assistance accessing public benefits
- Funding for CBOs to continue to provide needed social supports



Municipalities, Workforce Development Partners, Private Sector

- Funding for organizations to provide additional adult education, training, workforce development, and employment supports.
- Communication of resources available, particularly to connect residents to workforce development opportunities.
- Research re: immediate and future job opportunities, outreach to and coordination with employers
- Greater enforcement and communication of workplace health and safety standards

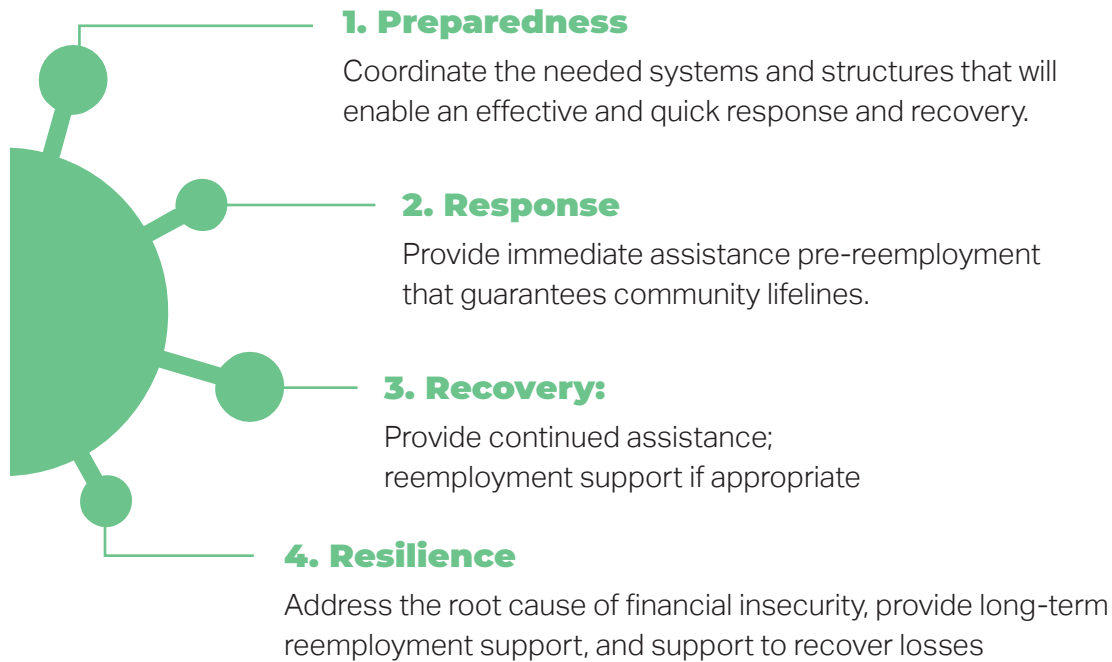




Recovery Framework

Disaster Response

To assist municipalities in the recovery effort, MAPC has adapted the FEMA disaster recovery framework. The FEMA framework consists of four self-reinforcing areas of work that serve to ensure the provision of community lifelines – food, shelter, medical supplies – and set up the conditions for long term recovery and preparedness for future events. The framework has been adapted to reflect the current situation and reflects content input provided by project partners.



Equity Considerations

Equity is one of the key values of MAPC and is a key priority of each of the partner entities.

MAPC's framework accounts for the disparities in the impact that COVID-19 has had along racial lines and aims to ensure that the COVID-19 response and recovery process yields outcomes that increase equity and wellbeing among people of color, working families, and immigrant groups to levels beyond Pre COVID conditions.

While only **19%** of the state's population,

Black and Latinx residents account for close to 45%

of the state's total COVID 19 cases

Source: The COVID Tracking Project, Racial Data Dashboard

A Community and Regional Rapid Response Plan: Significant Labor Force Disruptions and Unemployment

Introduction



Project Origins

At the beginning of 2020, MAPC launched a collaborative planning process in partnership with six MassHire Workforce Boards in the Greater Boston and Northeast regions to analyze the connections between employment centers, housing availability and affordability, and transit access. The end goal of the collaboration was to develop shared action steps in each of those areas to advance workforce development in the region.

With the onset of COVID-19, the project was suspended and reoriented to focus on immediate responses to the unemployment crisis. This reorientation was motivated by discussions with staff from the City of Somerville and the City of Revere. In 2019, the Somerville staff and the Jobs Creation and Retention Trust Board had identified the need for the City to respond to large unemployment events, such as the closure of a business due to an anticipated development. Similarly, in 2019, the City of Revere had advanced discussions regarding long-term workforce development planning at the local level.

Somerville served as the lead community and contributed \$5000 to the project. MAPC is grateful for the leadership of the City of Somerville on this project, and on many other collaborative efforts in the region.

Project Partners

Municipalities

Revere and Somerville staff stated the need for a coordinated response to the unemployment crisis generated by COVID-19, leading to the inclusion of Cambridge, Chelsea, and Everett with whom Revere and Somerville partner regularly. MAPC's relationship with the North Shore MassHire Board led to the inclusion of Beverly and Salem, bringing the total number of municipalities to seven.

MassHire Partners

MassHire Metro North staff participated on the project team, given the five participating municipalities in their region. Peter Farkas, Executive Director of MassHire Lowell, participated on the project team to provide guidance and expertise from his work.

State Partners

The project also benefitted from the participation of Aviva Rothman-Shore title DHCD with experiencing piloting workforce assistance programming for Section-8 residents in partnership with MassHire Lowell and other MassHire Workforce Boards. Cheryl Scott, Executive Director and Allison McIntyre.

Project Goal and Guiding Questions for the Immediate COVID-19 Crisis

The **guiding questions** for the current COVID-19 unemployment crisis were:

- How much time do the federal unemployment expansion and state efforts provide to curtail evictions, foreclosures, and business closure to unemployed individuals in terms of adequate food, shelter, and medical security?
- Are there specific target populations who are in critical need of employment under current circumstances?
- What are the health risks for dislocated workers who seek employment in essential industries?
- Which industries are currently hiring, and who are the key partners that should be tapped into to provide hiring conduits?
- How can we better protect the health and safety of workers currently hired or seeking work in essential industries?
- As the economy reopens, what kind of job opportunities can we anticipate being available?

Guiding Value

Equity is at the heart of this plan.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council believes that achieving equity is essential to the sustainable future of the Metro Boston region and the wellbeing of its residents. An equitable region is one where all residents can meet their basic human needs, i.e., food, housing, safety, and have access to opportunities that enable them to attain their full potential. Every person has a shot at growing up healthy, receiving a quality education, getting a good job that ensures a good quality of life, and enjoying life into old age. An equitable Metro Boston is free from discrimination that marginalizes people based on race, sex, religion, disability, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, family or marital status, income, military status, criminal history, or age. It holds up leaders from marginalized groups and centers the experiences of the disenfranchised.

Equity is particularly relevant to this project, given the disparate impacts of COVID-19 on people of color and low-income residents. Historic and current systemic barriers to employment and health care contribute to socio-economic conditions that increase a population's vulnerability to COVID-19. Two of the participating municipalities, Chelsea and Revere, both with large percentages of low-income communities of color, have some of the highest infection rates in the Commonwealth.



Unemployment Recovery Plan Framework

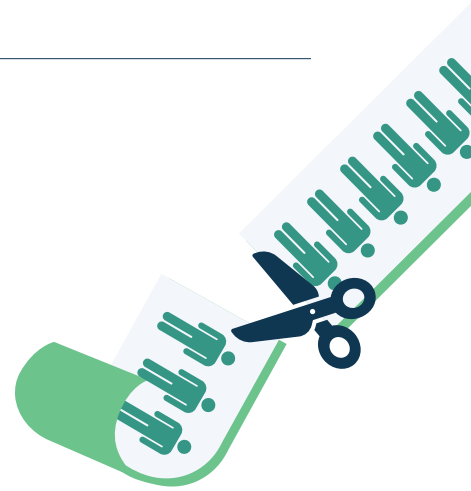
Context and FEMA Framework



**CLOSED FOR
COVID-19**

Context and FEMA Framework

At the recommendation of project stakeholders, **MAPC has adapted the FEMA disaster recovery framework** as an applicable tool to use in considering a networked response to the economic recovery, specifically focused on the spike in unemployment, caused by COVID 19.



The framework has been adapted to reflect the current situation and reflects content provided by project partners. This framework was deemed particularly relevant for the COVID recovery because of its adaptable guiding principles, which are

1 Networked partnership

Collaborative focus on coordinated action instead of discrete solutions approached by multiple stakeholders - not just government.

4 Unity of effort

Recovery actions will be coordinated across jurisdictions and sectors. An established entity will be selected to provide unity of voice and action.

2 Tiered response

Actions occur at the state, regional, and local levels.

5 Readiness to act

Stakeholders must be prepared in a forward-leaning posture in order to preserve critical community lifelines.

3 Scalable, flexible, and adaptable operational capabilities

Stakeholders will respond to the changing needs of individuals and communities.

6 Accountability to equity

The documentation of how the Coronavirus has impacted people of color, and low wage workers has been clear. An equitable recovery will be one where those most impacted receive the support they need that improves their health and wellbeing beyond pre-coronavirus conditions.

The FEMA framework hinges on ensuring the delivery of community lifelines during a natural disaster.

As the COVID-19 induced economic shutdown hasn't disrupted physical infrastructure in the same way as a more traditional natural disaster, we are adapting this framework to reflect the pressing lifeline needs that are most associated with an individual's financial resources – Food, Shelter, Access to Childcare, and Medical Supplies - either through an augmented social safety net or employment in industries/occupations that are driving demand in the recovery economy.

Ensuring the delivery of these community lifelines will require a number of different tools and resources that range from social service networks to skill-building to the increased financial sustainability of impacted individuals to withstand future flare-ups of Coronavirus. A review of this framework with project partners illustrated the need for tactile action steps that can facilitate areas outlined in the following section, as well as higher-level regional coordination activities. These action steps are as follows:



Formalize communication systems between intergovernmental departments and outside organizations through codified MOU / MOA's



Identify and implement a shared technology that enables quick and responsive inter-agency / organization communication¹



Expand the network of stakeholders currently involved in project partners' work to include representatives from CBO's, Businesses, Anchor Institutions, Transportation Providers, Public Health Departments, and others as needed.



Create targeted outreach materials for residents seeking social services and businesses seeking reopening information.



Coordinate efforts between public health departments, inspectional services departments, workforce providers, employee advocacy organizations, businesses, and economic development actors to ensure that businesses can open safely and smoothly in line with the state's reopening plan.



Create a unified intake system for social service assistance that can be used to document trends in need and populations who may be in need of additional outreach.

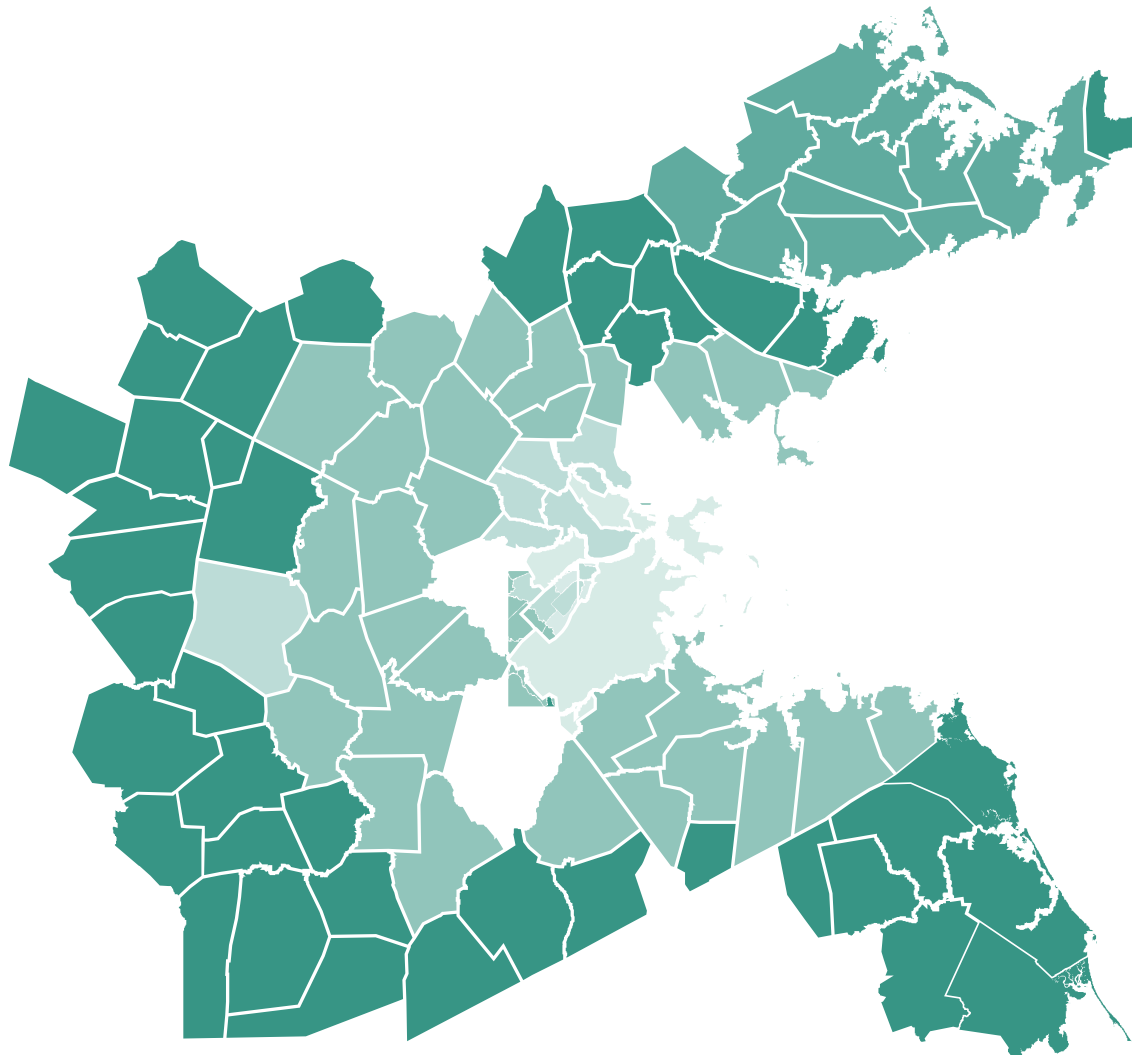
Areas of Action

Economic recovery from COVID 19 will depend greatly upon the State reopening plan, which includes guidance for businesses around capacity limits and other regulations, which will, in turn, impact demand for labor.

As it is possible that there could be a resurgence of COVID-19 cases, MAPC recommends that **this framework be used under the current conditions – beginning with the preparedness.**

The framework should also be used as a list of activities in which municipalities should engage in an ongoing manner in anticipation of the start of another cycle of increased infection rates.

Each phase of framework is summarized in the following section, followed by a discrete list of needs and actions that municipalities can lead with partner stakeholders. Each phase also corresponds to a time outlook, ranging from pre-unemployment event to long-term. Appendix A contains a detailed action planning tool that could be used by a municipal partner.



Preparedness: Goal **(Pre-Event)**

The Preparedness Phase of the FEMA Disaster Response framework (as adapted to this context) focuses on setting up the systems that will enable a networked response to an economic shock.

Municipalities, if they have not already, should identify and activate internal and external stakeholders that are relevant to providing direct assistance to individuals that will require emergency assistance accessing food, shelter, or medical supplies/service. Setting up formalized communication systems with these stakeholders, preparing to understand where impacts will occur, and identifying target populations and effective means of outreach are all action steps that should occur in the Preparedness Phase.

What is needed?

- Strong and formalized communication protocol with internal and external partners to unemployment response.
 - Agreement of shared goals and outcomes among stakeholders
 - Inventory of capacity, tools, resources, and networks that each stakeholder has available to assist with emergency response.
 - Establishment of convening entity
- Identification of target populations who will be most in need based on existing data and knowledge.
 - Development of systems to reach that population (language, access to the internet, trust, and sensitivity)
- Policy actions that will mitigate the reduction in federal and state services
 - Expanded eligibility for municipal focused mutual aid to workers of a municipality, not just residents.
 - Extended local eviction moratorium
 - Occupancy Relief for Businesses
 - Increase in emergency food provision
- Equity Evaluation Criteria
 - Race/Age/Gender/H.H. Income of recipients of aid

Leverage Work Done to Date

- Municipalities can review and build upon the systems developed in the first several months of the COVID-19 response.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of the response should be conducted to determine how to improve the elements listed above

Response: **(Immediate and ongoing)**

Goal

Response actions are designed to provide immediate assistance pre-reemployment.

The immediate response that takes place to support individuals post expanded unemployment benefits should focus on supporting those individuals unable to return to work or find new work and ensure safe working conditions for those workers who eligible under the state's reopening plan. Continuing the coordination of support services with public, private and nonprofit entities, and augmenting where needed, will ensure the delivery of community life-lines of food, shelter, or medical supplies/needs. Ensuring worker safety should be achieved by coordinating private businesses, local public health officials, and worker advocates.

What is needed?

- Unified intake form or data tracking system that can be used across response stakeholders to ensure there is documentation of need and in what areas.
 - Accounts for multiple languages and e-literacy/availability issues
 - Enables evaluation of equity tracking
- Flexible resource sharing of facilities, equipment, etc.
 - Computers
 - Transportation services
 - Kitchen spaces
 - Childcare o Emergency Housing
 - Medical Supplies
 - Technical Assistance in public assistance applications
- Increase in mutual aid assistance
- Coordinated efforts to access federal and state funds to support expanded social assistance from the public sector and nonprofit actors
- Working partnerships between public health officials, economic development entities, businesses, and worker advocacy groups

Leverage Work Done to Date

- Ongoing coordination between internal and external stakeholders should streamline flows of communication and enable the sharing or augmenting of resources where needed.
- Explore options for a unified intake form to allow organizations to track caseloads and demand for services and respond as needed, as well as case sharing across jurisdictions and organizations. Such exploration should include careful consideration of privacy protections.
- Outreach to target populations via identified methods should assist in ensuring the equitable distribution of resources assembled for the response.

Recovery: (Mid-term)

Goal

Recovery actions are designed to ensure the provision of continued assistance and reemployment support if appropriate and feasible.

Recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 epidemic will be an ongoing, iterative, and possibly bumpy process. While some unemployed individuals may be able to return to work immediately in their former positions, others will be unable to do so due to decreases in business capacity and business closures. The drivers of labor demand at this point are still unclear. It is unclear to what extent the public sector and local government can create opportunities for increased procurement opportunities given uncertainties around budgets.

Ensuring that individuals have continued access to social safety nets and lifeline services while they either wait for positions to open, or upskill or retrain to join industries that are driving labor demand, will be critical to ensure the long-term recovery. During the recovery stage, it is critical that workers and employers alike are equipped to maintain a healthy and safe workplace. Shared resources and services will be critical to the recovery phase.

What is needed?

- Ongoing and up to date information about job openings and education, skills, and competencies required as provided by workforce investment boards.
- Documentation of sectors and occupations in demand.
 - Evaluation of state and local capacity to drive demand
 - Coordinated efforts to access federal and state funds to support infrastructure upgrades and spending.
- Input and engagement from private sector partners around challenges associated with safety, reopening processes, and hiring
 - Engagement with public health departments to step in and provide guidance around worker/client/consumer safety.
 - Engagement with local suppliers and health care systems to enhance employers' access to testing and materials for workplace disease control, such as disinfectant or PPE.
- Coordination with workforce system, educational providers, and social service network to ensure adult education and job training programs are accessible and meet the needs of employers and target populations.

Leverage Work Done to Date

- Ongoing provision of lifeline resources such as housing assistance and childcare should enable individuals to focus on training programs, education, or apprenticeships that will enable long term and sustainable employment.
- Documentation from a unified intake form should enable direct communication with individuals who may be seeking work or job training services.
- Identification of shared resources and capital that can be used for job training or service support should be activated.
 - Shared kitchen spaces
 - Educational facilities
 - Clinics
 - Etc.

Resilience: (Long-term)

Goal

Mitigation actions are designed to address the root cause of financial insecurity, provide long- term education, training, and employment support, and support to recover losses

In the context of traditional natural disasters, Mitigation efforts are defined as:

“efforts (that) directly limit the impact of an emergency, disaster, or attack on community lifelines and systems, thereby reducing the required scale of response capabilities needed for an incident.”

Mitigating the economic impact of COVID 19-induced unemployment could follow **three pathways:**

1 Public Health – Improving the coordinated response to the spread of the virus to contain it's spread, which would protect businesses and jobs from closure.

2 Economic Development – Improving the financial conditions of those being most impacted by the closure of businesses.

3 Policy - Expanding social safety net benefits to be more sufficient to accommodate longer-term disruptions to the economy.

What is needed?

- Coordinated effort to increase wages in low wage occupations such as food service, retail, hospitality, gig work, home health care, and administrative work.
- Coordinated effort to ensure adequate sick leave policies, especially for part-time or low- wage occupations.
- Strengthened workforce development system that is better connected to communities in need, leverages networked infrastructure and educational facilities, and guarantees supportive services for those seeking education and training programs.
- Increased diversity of regional economic activity that encourages and supports more middle- wage employment opportunities.
- Support for the development of business models that generate wealth and retain it in the community, including but not limited to co-ops and local purchasing of goods and services by anchor institutions such as eds and meds.
- Support for the development of business models that assume workers are company assets and not simply labor costs to be minimized and cut at the first sign of a downturn.
- Stronger and better distributed financial support systems such as banks and financial education resources that are responsive to local communities, particularly low-income and communities of color.

Leverage Previous Phases

- Documentation of in-demand jobs, education, skills, and competencies required, and drivers of growth should inform a responsive workforce development system.
- Networks of private sector actors, education providers, and workforce boards should coordinate resources and capital to provide training, either on the job or prior to hire.
- Social supports should ensure training is accessible without fear of losing wages to pay for food, shelter, or medical supplies.

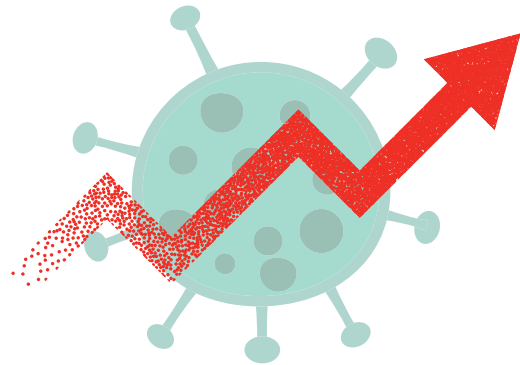
Stakeholder Engagement



Stakeholder Engagement

Over the course of the planning process, the MAPC project team spoke with a number of stakeholders regarding their experience with the growing unemployment crisis:

- Community-Based Organizations
- Community Development Corporations
- Employers
- Municipal Leaders



Their assessment of the **current needs** is as follows:

- Increased demand in case management needs for emergency rental, food, and unemployment assistance.
 - Many organizations have had to train staff and/or pull staff from other departments to meet needs.
 - Where organizations relied on volunteers, many of whom were at an increased vulnerability to COVID-19 due to age, they have found their capacity reduced.
 - Concern about organizational budget and/or funding for staffing with this increased demand
- As employers, these organizations are also thinking about the safety of their own workers – balancing that with the case-management and/or in-person work needs
- Increased amounts of funding from donors and funders and/or flexibility in funding to provide emergency assistance
 - Strong concern that this funding will start to dry up and/or will not be enough to meet the vast emerging need
- Training
 - Many programs have shifted their previous in-person training (English-language skills, career-based training) to online platforms.
 - Some programs have been adding training focused more broadly on skills workers may need in the future/applicable to multiple types of jobs/sectors.
 - One program has started developing a training program for small business owners to support them in setting themselves up with more financial stability and security.

- Concerns about reopening:
 - Safety of workers
 - Availability of childcare
- If workers are unable to access childcare, they will be unable to return to their jobs.
 - Long term sustainability of funding and/or support – not everyone will be able to return to a job immediately/in phase one.
- Thinking regionally and developing regional solutions:
 - Many of these organizations have been partnering with organizations/entities in nearby municipalities, creating a network of support.
 - Organizations are curious to see the regional picture and see potential region-wide interventions.
- Specifically: funding that could be allocated for them to continue work sustainably – these organizations hold a lot of community trust and/or existing relationships (people know to come to them for support), with sustainable streams of funding, they could expand level/degree of support.
- Additionally: guidance for municipalities on how to best/strategically use funding and allocate amongst organizations on the ground
 - Having a centralized/coordinated list of widely available and/or regional resources
 - Having standardized guidance from the state on procedures, support, funding, etc. would be helpful



Areas for Improvement

Based on analysis of activities currently underway in each municipality and stakeholder interviews with outside organizations, several gaps and areas for expansion emerged:

- Communication of resources available, particularly to connect Career Centers or other workforce development opportunities to residents.
 - CBOs mentioned interest in centralized communication of resources (ex: each organization claims to have a comprehensive list of resources, but each list is different).
- Funding for basic needs after expanded unemployment runs out.
 - Basic assistance: United Way has been a significant benefit for communities to raise funding and channel it to established organizations.
 - Challenges:
 - City funds have different capacity to raise \$ based on constituency (i.e., Chelsea Fund has raised less than Newton City Fund)
 - United Way funds established organizations and might leave out smaller CBOs with roots in the community, given their smaller capacity.
- Rental assistance: Municipalities have used CDBG funding or CPA funding for rental assistance
 - This is a strong short-term solution, but there are challenges regarding the amount of funding available for future needs, and the focus of the funds (CPA is designed primarily for housing development, and there is a tension between immediate versus long-term needs).
- Food assistance:
 - Replicate and expand Cambridge/Revere restaurant program to provide food to insecure individuals.
- Assistance accessing benefits
 - Navigation of U.I. o Digital access (computers, internet)
- Assistance connecting with Career Centers to determine immediate and future job opportunities
- Gaps in enforcement and communication of workplace health and safety standards
 - State and local leaders need to Proactively fill policy gaps while advocating for more federal support.

Unemployment Data & Housing Assistance Need

As of May 2, the municipalities of Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Revere, Somerville, and (CCERS study area) had just over 23,700 residents receiving the state's unemployment assistance. Beverly and Salem together had nearly 7,000 residents receiving unemployment assistance. In the CCERS study area, we estimate 61% of these layoffs are workers in renter households. In Beverly and Salem, we estimate 34% of these layoffs are workers in renter households.

The table below estimates the number of layoffs by occupation in each municipality. Across all municipalities, the largest share of claims was from workers in Food Preparation and Serving, followed by Office and Administrative, Sales, and Transportation occupations. These numbers do not include self-employed workers who may be eligible for funds through the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) or undocumented workers who are ineligible for unemployment assistance.

May 2nd Unemployment Claims by Municipality and Occupation (Estimated)

Municipality	All Households	Renters	Total Assistance	Assistance, Renters
Beverly	1,424	581	\$2,146,267	\$674,129
Cambridge	1,878	1,212	\$2,863,174	\$1,699,920
Chelsea	1,864	1,215	\$2,759,037	\$1,647,041
Everett	2,165	1,417	\$3,214,165	\$1,926,475
Revere	3,521	2,311	\$5,208,695	\$3,132,796
Salem	2,025	866	\$2,997,441	\$992,610
Somerville	2,523	1,644	\$3,811,476	\$2,279,709

These layoffs will have enormous impacts on workers' ability to stay in their homes. We estimate that without public assistance (including unemployment benefits) or dipping into their savings, over 15,000 households impacted by layoffs in these municipalities wouldn't be able to cover housing costs as well as other basic needs such as food, healthcare, and transportation. The total gap in resources for these impacted households is \$23 million per month, \$12.4 million of which is needed for renter households. The breakdown of estimated need by municipality is below.

Estimated Housing Assistance Needed by Municipality, Based on May 2nd Layoffs and No Government Aid (Including No Unemployment Assistance)

Municipality	All Households	Renters	Total Assistance	Assistance, Renters
Beverly	59	29	\$60,616	\$22,350
Cambridge	76	53	\$61,987	\$37,938
Chelsea	84	60	\$69,332	\$46,092
Everett	97	69	\$79,607	\$52,402
Revere	160	115	\$131,282	\$88,349
Salem	86	44	\$86,523	\$33,605
Somerville	108	76	\$88,557	\$55,579

Fortunately, the combination of expanded unemployment and direct payments authorized by the federal CARES Act will cover housing expenses for almost all households who receive federal assistance. Even after the one-time payment, we estimate that the extra \$600/week included in the CARES act, on top of regular unemployment benefits, will help thousands of households avoid major financial distress. With expanded unemployment benefits, we estimate 670 households will need housing assistance, totaling \$578,000 per month, \$336,000 of which is needed for renter households. The breakdown of estimated need by municipality is below.

Estimated Housing Assistance Needed by Municipality, Based on May 2nd Layoffs and Expanded CARES Act Unemployment Benefits (\$600/week)

Municipality	All Households	Renters	Total Assistance	Assistance, Renters
Beverly	59	29	\$60,616	\$22,350
Cambridge	76	53	\$61,987	\$37,938
Chelsea	84	60	\$69,332	\$46,092
Everett	97	69	\$79,607	\$52,402
Revere	160	115	\$131,282	\$88,349
Salem	86	44	\$86,523	\$33,605
Somerville	108	76	\$88,557	\$55,579

However, after the direct payments are exhausted, and expanded unemployment has run out in at the end of July, it is likely many still won't be able to return to work. With Massachusetts' typical unemployment assistance, nearly 7,680 of the households impacted by these layoffs, just over 5,100 of whom are renters, will need nearly \$8.5 million monthly to make ends meet. The breakdown of estimated need by municipality is below.

Estimated Housing Assistance Needed by Municipality, Based on May 2nd Layoffs and Regular Unemployment Benefits (No CARES Act)

Municipality	All Households	Renters	Total Assistance	Assistance, Renters
Beverly	684	349	\$778,066	\$321,256
Cambridge	900	629	\$984,894	\$650,569
Chelsea	949	669	\$1,039,019	\$695,868
Everett	1,099	777	\$1,205,420	\$807,832
Revere	1,802	1,279	\$1,979,472	\$1,333,846
Salem	1,006	532	\$1,131,286	\$487,108
Somerville	1,240	873	\$1,363,966	\$906,950

Many workers **won't be able to receive federal support** due to their immigration status or other factors.



MAPC Estimates

\$750

per laid-off worker



For households ineligible for the federal support, we estimate they will need housing assistance at a rate of roughly \$750 per laid-off worker, or \$1,490 for every household in need of assistance. Undocumented workers are ineligible to receive assistance through the CARES act and are likely to be the most vulnerable to housing insecurity at this time.

\$1,490

for every household in need



This analysis demonstrates that COVID-related unemployment has the potential to make our current housing crisis in Massachusetts even worse. While imminent federal supports will cover costs for most households who receive them, relief is temporary. Many households will need help after the one-time direct payments are exhausted. Furthermore, many workers may not be eligible for federal assistance, or it may not arrive in time.

This analysis is a derivative of work that MAPC conducted for the State of Massachusetts. MAPC released the first report with unemployment filings from March 16-March 28th, and a follow-up report with unemployment filings from March 16-April 11 and more detailed information about the demographics of those impacted. MAPC released a blog post on May 13, which provided an update based on more recent unemployment claims. Those reports, along with more detailed information about the methods we used, can be found at www.mapc.org/COVID19-layoffs.

Worker Safety When Returning to Work

Classifying occupational risk for SARS-CoV-2 at industries

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration developed an occupational risk pyramid (see figure) to help employers determine if there is a very high, high, medium, or lower risk of exposure to COVID-19 in their workplace.

The level of risk depends on the need for repeated or close (within 6ft) contact with people who are suspected of being or known to be infected with SARS-CoV-2. The risk levels are represented as a pyramid to represent the likely distribution of risk in the population; most American workers will fall into the lower or medium exposure risk levels. The very high and high exposure risk jobs are largely healthcare workers, laboratory personnel working with samples from COVID-19 patients, and morgue workers.

As duties change, workers can move from one exposure risk level to another within the same job. For example, working in stocking when a facility is closed to the public could be considered a low exposure risk job, but it would become medium during normal operations. Similarly, home repairs, usually a medium exposure risk job, could become a high exposure risk job if working in the home of a person suspected having or known to have COVID-19 and/or in an area contaminated with body fluids.

Most of the industries within the scope of this project provide medium exposure risk jobs. Many jobs in essential industries require close or repeated contact with coworkers and the general public while we are experiencing community transmission of COVID-19. These jobs come with a medium risk of exposure, and certain tasks may come with a higher risk. "Medium exposure risk jobs include those that require frequent and/or close contact with (i.e., within 6 feet of) other people who may be infected with SARS-CoV-2" - OSHA Guidance on Preparing workplace for COVID-19. In areas of ongoing community transmission, all workers with repeated contact with the general public are in this category.

Workplaces which have not instituted the proper workplace controls could place workers at higher risk (for example, cleaning high-touch areas like credit card terminals and handles without PPE OR with PPE but without training on how to don/doff PPE OR without training on how to clean without aerosolizing the virus)

Employers should be developing and implementing controls commensurate with assessed risk. A hierarchy of controls has traditionally been used as a means of determining how to implement feasible and effective protections.

One representation from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH):

Control methods at the top are more effective and protective, for more people than those at the bottom. To substantially reduce risks for workers and customers alike, employers should be implementing controls that include changes to the worksite, new procedures, and policies, as well as PPE.



Worker Protection Standards

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) sets and enforces standards for private industry. The Dept. Of Labor Standards enforces employee safety requirements for public sector workplaces. While OSHA has provided COVID-19 guidance and recommendations, there is no specific OSHA standard covering COVID-19. Some existing OSHA requirements apply to prevent occupational exposure to COVID-19.

The two most relevant OSHA requirements to prevent occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2 are PPE standards and the General Duty Clause. Depending on the specific work task, setting, and exposure to other biological or chemical agents, additional OSHA requirements that may apply.

For various reasons, neither OSHA nor DLS have been doing enforcement around COVID-19 workplace standards. Your right to a healthy workplace is always protected by the OSHA general duty clause.

Workplace Policies Specific workplace controls are evolving with guidance published from entities such as MDPH, CDC, OSHA, NIOSH, MassCOSH. Every workplace should have a COVID health and safety officer on-site; this person will be responsible for assessing hazards and maintaining control plan.

Businesses and their employees are being asked to play a quasi-public health role, which is new for them. For example, supermarkets have trained employees to keep an eye out for heat sickness in customers waiting in line at stores, and employers are conducting wellness checks and reporting COVID-19 cases among staff to their Health Department.

Compliance will be much harder for small businesses, raising questions about how Local Public Health Departments and Economic Development agencies can support this need. Local Public Health departments have provided support through emergency orders to improve the distribution of information and resources. For example, one City provided plexiglass sneeze-guards to all neighborhood grocery stores in the first weeks of the pandemic, while others required all businesses to register one employee with the Local Public Health Department to improve communication regarding workplace outbreaks and evolving health guidance.

Workers need a place to file complaints and advocate for their right to refuse. Local Public Health Departments can serve this regulating authority. For example, New Bedford created an emergency order which creates enforceable workplace safety standards.

Healthy Workforce

To meet future hiring needs, workplaces need to be made safe environments, and workers need wage security and an avenue for self-advocacy. Experts have cited the following equation for a healthy workforce:

Healthy Workforce = Safety + (Livable) Wages + Security + Avenues for Self-Advocacy

Adequate sick time policies



Sick time should be provided not only during emergency orders but should be standard so that workers have the flexibility to stay home if they feel ill or need to take care of someone in their household who is ill. The provision of sick time will yield significant financial benefits to the workers and employers due to limiting the spread of disease.

Access to testing and PPE



Essential industry employers want access to testing and PPE for their employees and have struggled with both. Rethinking procurement systems will be crucial.

Avenues for Self-Advocacy



Through stakeholder interviews, the MAPC team heard that workers need a place to file complaints and advocate for their right to refuse job tasks.

Future Demand Drivers for Labor

The MAPC project team reviewed potential hiring opportunities in the public and private sectors. Information was gathered through stakeholder interviews with industry representatives in each sector.

Public sector demand drivers

Transportation

The industry has seen a significant number of layoffs so far, given that the demand for services has significantly decreased. Individuals who previously drove for Uber/Lyft are now shifting to drive for delivery services.

The future of public transportation in the wake of COVID may be the following:

- New routes might need more service if old routes were primarily catering to a population that is now working from home. Drivers who covered old routes that are no longer expecting significant demand may be moved to new routes.
- Human service support (Council on Aging shuttle services) will continue to be used. During the pandemic, some shuttles services had limited occupancy to ensure physical distancing, and others shifted to grocery delivery services for low-income populations. CoA shuttles may see a return to service and some uptick in use as people feel more confident taking transit again.
- Young families who buy homes further out in the region may still seek transportation services to account for single-car households.

As a result, industry experts predicted that hiring would be limited. Given changes in demand, it is likely that existing employees will be shifted to other positions as needed, and that limited hiring will occur.





Communications (Utility/IT/Tech)

The new future of working from home and businesses needing to start up again may seek faster but affordable internet. Municipal broadband may help that cause and might generate additional employment opportunities. Similarly, the federal and state investments in I.T. and broadband might create further opportunities.

Private sector demand drivers

The project team interviewed a number of key stakeholders in the private sector regarding hiring trends and workforce training needs. A summary of the responses is included in the appendix. Given its complexity, the health care industry will be discussed in detail below.

Health Care

Industry stakeholders shared that there is a strong demand for positions within the essential functions of hospitals. Such positions include environmental aid (cleaning) and security, which has seen increased demand. Other medical positions within the essential operations of the hospital are seen as very stable roles within the hospital.

However, stakeholders noted that other positions, such as entry-level LPN/PCA and sterilization positions are difficult to fill due to the nature of the work and the limited compensation provided.

At the time of the interviews in mid-May, there was currently a hiring freeze at several health institutions, given revenue losses generated by the postponement of elective procedures and the expenses involved with COVID-19 response and care. It is likely that additional hiring could occur as the reopening process continues, and elective procedures are allowed to resume.

However, it is important to note that positions that involve contact with potentially infected individuals or their fluids are classified as high risk. Employees do have access to PPE, although often not medical grade PPE.

The MAPC team also interviewed stakeholders in a range of industries to discuss current and future hiring opportunities. A summary of these interviews is included in Appendix C.



Outside Influences Impacting a Return to Work



Immigration

Federal, state, and local policy and programs, from visas to insurance reimbursements, will influence future hiring needs. The reduction in visas will have an impact on industries reliant on immigrant workers, particularly seasonal positions and businesses.



Transportation and Housing

Long-term planning around transportation systems, economic development, and affordable housing should continue. The misalignment between the location of workforce housing and essential industry workplaces exacerbates hiring challenges.



Workforce Development Models

Traditional workforce development models have been evolving and will need to continue to shift to meet hiring needs. Having remote programs could provide more long-term workforce opportunities. Workforce development providers are beginning to shift their work to focus on universal skills, rather than job training for specific occupations given the uncertainty of future employment projections and hiring opportunities. Community colleges are developing a new curriculum with more specific focus on skills, job readiness, rather than specific job training. Worker safety training and worker advocacy should also be incorporated into job training programs.

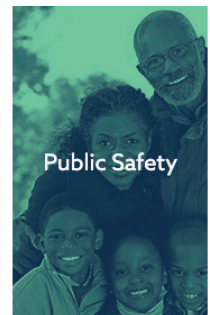
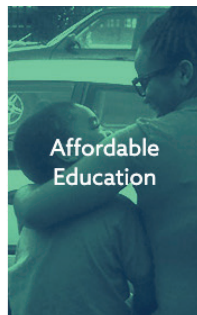
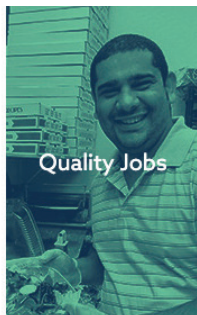
Prior to COVID-19, individuals in some behavioral health care fields faced transportation and socio-economic barriers given the limited number of trainings offered per year and given that interested individuals were located across the state. Bringing courses online will be a crucial avenue for expanding access.

Equity Evaluation

To ensure that a potential measure or policy will address equity impacts in the community, a municipality can conduct an Equity Assessment. An Equity Assessment relies on research, both from quantitative and qualitative data, and analysis that is guided by the following questions as they pertain to the measure or policy. As the lasting impacts of COVID-19 are unknown at this point, the tool should be reassessed periodically to determine effectiveness.

The equity assessment for this project should be based on the following:

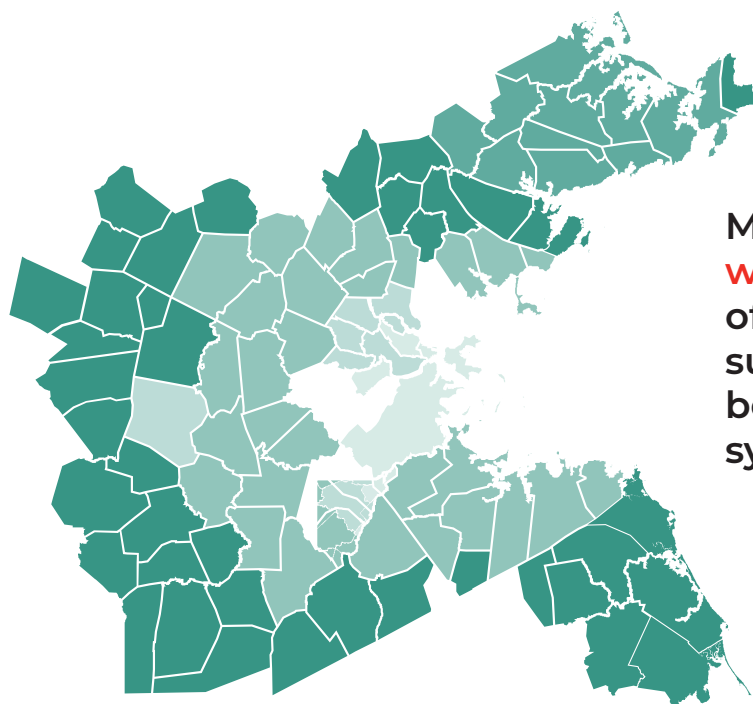
- Who has been historically impacted by unemployment?
 - Some examples may include immigrants, communities of color, indigenous peoples, or women.
- Who may be impacted in the future?
 - Which populations are most vulnerable to future waves of unemployment?
 - What other data should be tracked to understand who is being impacted moving forward?
- How will the co-benefits, such as the beneficial effects on public health, of this measure be distributed?
 - If there are physical programs associated with the measure, where will they be located? Who are they accessible for?
 - Where and how will public health benefits be realized?
 - Who will benefit from them?
 - What other benefits, if any, will be generated, and who will receive them? The Equity Assessment should aim to be transparent both in its creation and communication by including the communities impacted.



[MAPC's State of Equity Indicators](#) report can be a resource to help understand who has been historically impacted in your community.

To answer these questions, municipalities will need to track key metrics on the communities that have been historically impacted or may be impacted in the future, some of which may include immigrants, communities of color, indigenous peoples, and women. To track these metrics, MAPC recommends the following:

- Unemployment claims broken down by demographics including race, ethnicity, and gender
 - Employment or reemployment metrics are broken down by demographics including race, ethnicity, and gender
 - Mass Career Center inquiries broken down by demographics including race, ethnicity, and gender
- That key public health indicators be collected during testing that track race/ethnicity, occupation, and industry so that communities can better understand the vectors of disease.
- Communities assess how they can better serve residents by tracking the number of positive cases, presence of risk factors for hospitalization within the community, the occupational mix of residents and business located within the community, the capacity of local public health infrastructure, current testing capacity, current local support systems (isolation and quarantine sites) capacity of local health systems, overcrowding, population density, average household size and some form of income measure (per capita income or poverty rate).



MAPC also recommends **working with local service providers** who often provide more specialized support to communities that have been historically impacted by systemic racial and social inequities.