WHAT IS THE WORKING CITIES CHALLENGE?

KEY FEATURES

- Based on Fed research showing economic resurgence for smaller post-industrial cities possible; key elements: collaboration and leadership on shared economic vision
- Eligible to compete: struggling smaller post-industrial cities
- Proposals must be ambitious and
  - unite public, private, non-profit sectors, and community members
  - focus on improving lives of low-income people and diverse residents
  - create systems change
- **One proposal per city:** must create shared vision and team to carry out effort
- **Merit-based:** Winners chosen by *independent, expert Jury* based on public criteria (Fed not on Jury)
- Three-year efforts supported by extensive *technical assistance* and independent evaluation
WORKING CITIES CHALLENGE IN NEW ENGLAND

- Competition for three-year grant funds. Grants are modest in size ($400–$475k) and contributed by private, public and philanthropic partners (no funds from the Federal Reserve)
- Over $10 million in award funds contributed by 63 funders to date
- State-by-state model. Current states: Massachusetts (2 rounds), Rhode Island, and Connecticut
- Expansion to northern New England states (VT, NH, ME) currently in planning with adaptations for rural areas
CLOSER TO HOME

- Connecticut Working Cities Challenge winners—Danbury, East Hartford, Hartford, Middletown, and Waterbury—each received $450,000 in 2018
- Initiatives focus on workforce development for lower-income residents
- Cities are addressing difficult issues, including racial equity

**DANBURY**
‘DanburyWORKS’ is addressing barriers (language and childcare) to help move residents into job and educational training programs to improve economic self-sufficiency

**E. HARTFORD**
E. Hartford ‘CONNects’ brings together employers, workforce intermediaries, job seekers to create a career development culture that leads to family-sustaining employment

**HARTFORD**
‘South Hartford Young Adult Employment Zone’ focuses on poverty and the need for an educated workforce to attract and retain employers to the city and region

**MIDDLETOWN**
‘Middletown Works’ is developing meaningful employment opportunities for single parents and provide them with training and resources to obtain a living wage and career-sustaining work

**WATERBURY**
‘River Baldwin ASPIRA’ realigning and relocating job training services and revising childcare decision-making policies to be more equitable in the South End neighborhood
WCC AT WORK: LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS

New CEO economic development group: Lawrence Partnership. Lawrence WCC effort and Partnership together tackling city-wide local hiring campaign

- Major **new family support system** created for schools has counseled, referred, and trained nearly 1,000 parents to date.
- Over **250 parents placed in jobs; 25 percent average increase** in wages
- Launched the state’s first **Pay-for-Success** immigrant jobs effort outside of Boston
- **New parent engagement model** piloted with 650 parents, now being adopted across school system (9,500 families)
- School turnaround successful so far – significantly moving the needle on graduation rate
- **CEO-to-CEO effort** to improve healthcare and manufacturing hiring involving 7 manufacturing and 6 healthcare employers
- WCC implementation grant **leverages more than $1.6 million** in direct philanthropic and public-sector funds
COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP & OPPORTUNITY

• Cross-sector collaboration is fundamental ingredient for success.
• Public, private, nonprofit sectors and residents engage and problem solve in new ways.
• How can the business community become involved?
Launch Event
May 3, 2013