

# MBR

## 2021 Mid-Year Highlights

### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

The Roundtable continues to stay very engaged among its members, government, and the broader business community following a historic year of unprecedented complexities due to the COVID-19 global pandemic and heightened social and racial injustices and inequities. In 2021, challenges continue to persist despite reaching significant milestones including high vaccination rates coupled with the reopening of schools and the economy in Massachusetts. Nevertheless, Roundtable members—like the Commonwealth—demonstrate great resiliency, innovation, and collaboration as we learn together the benefits, challenges, and unknowns of the future of work and impact to the state's competitiveness.

As 2021 continues, the Roundtable looks forward to more ideating, sharing of best practices, and proposing public policy solutions to support Massachusetts' economic recovery and further position Massachusetts and its businesses and residents to thrive.

JD CHESLOFF

### ADVOCACY, COLLABORATION & LEADERSHIP

#### Roundtable Outlines Principles & Priorities for 2021-22 Legislative Agenda

In evaluating principles and priorities, the Roundtable is framing its 2021-22 Legislative Agenda and way of doing business with a lens for reimagining **opportunity**, enhancing **equity**, and strengthening Massachusetts' **competitiveness**.

#### KEY PRIORITIES

- » **Redefine competitiveness** post-pandemic and balance necessary public investments to recruit and retain talent with sensitivity to costs of doing business and cost of living.
- » Engage in the development of legislation to establish universal, high-quality **early childhood education** in the Commonwealth.
- » Develop strategies to support the **mental health/behavioral health needs** of employees.
- » Advocate for **statewide transportation and housing strategies** as part of a broader agenda to recruit and retain talent.
- » Prioritize **opportunity pathways** by focusing on closing the digital skills gap and expanding access to school to career connecting activities, technical education and training, and post-secondary education.
- » Continue support for **offshore wind development** as a regional economic development opportunity and essential component of the state's clean energy future.
- » Continue to be **business community voice for caregivers** in the workplace.

*The above-mentioned focus areas may continue to evolve with additional feedback from members as well as continued conversations with key stakeholders.*

## Advocating for Opportunity, Equity, and Competitiveness

Building on the Roundtable's newly established guiding principles of opportunity, equity, and competitiveness, MBR focused on adding the voice of the Roundtable and its members to several proposals during the FY 2022 Budget Process and to kick off the 2021-22 Legislative Session:

### FY 2022 BUDGET PROCESS

- Dual enrollment/early college
- Career Technical Initiative
- Workforce Competitive Trust Fund
- YouthWorks

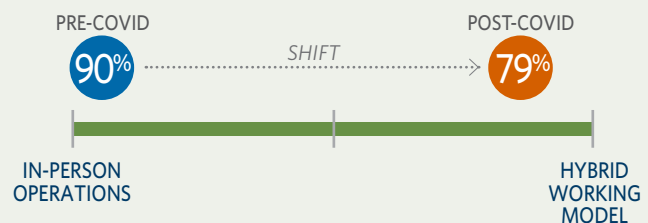
### 2021-22 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

- Release of Rapid Reemployment Report and Recommendations
- Launch of MA Business Coalition for Early Childhood Education
- Launch of MA Business Coalition on Skills Agenda
- Participation in Career Technical Education Advocacy Day
- Appointment to the Future of Work Commission
- Briefing on Workforce Programs with Chair of House Committee on Federal Stimulus and Census Oversight

## ROUNDTABLE MEMBERS PLAN FOR FUTURE OF WORK

In April 2021, the Roundtable surveyed and interviewed members on post-pandemic planning, providing the latest insight from the Board and among major employers in Massachusetts. While the future of work continues to evolve, the findings underscore trends and potential policy implications the Roundtable will continue to monitor. Key takeaways include:

✦ **Hybrid:** Prior to COVID-19, among respondents, 90% of offices maintained all or mostly in-person operations whereas during the pandemic, 81% of offices have been all or mostly work-from-home. Post-pandemic, the survey found that 79% of offices will shift to a hybrid working model, a dramatic shift in how people will work. What hybrid means remains to be seen.



✦ **Office Real Estate and Design:** About 38% of MBR respondents said they plan to decrease their Massachusetts footprint (because of the shift to hybrid, not necessarily a decrease in headcount). Additionally, 65% of respondents will be decreasing office density, and 50% said they'd be eliminating personal workstations, as companies consider new office designs and layouts to support in-person collaboration.

✦ **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:** 92% of respondents indicated they would champion measures to advance DEI in their organizations with 88% claiming there will be a visible commitment from executive leadership. As an indication of the level of commitment, 85% of respondents said they intend to increase funding of DEI initiatives from pre-pandemic levels.

✦ **Out-of-State Considerations:** 88% of respondents said they plan to maintain, relocate, or expand their presence in Massachusetts in the next 12-24 months, primarily because of access to talent. Those who said they are considering reducing their presence here (8%), would do so primarily because of the cost of living/cost of doing business. Among MBR respondents, 5% of the workforce from Massachusetts-based operations worked out of state pre-pandemic; 21% during pandemic; and 15% anticipated post-pandemic.

✦ **Digitization & Automation:** Not surprisingly, 90% of respondents will increase adoption of digitization tools in the next 12 to 24 months.

As part of this rollout, MBR provided several briefings including the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development; the Joint Committee on Economic Development; the Senate Committee on Reimagining Massachusetts Post-Pandemic Resiliency; the National Business Roundtable Workforce Committee; among other stakeholders. Coverage was also included in the Boston Globe, Bloomberg Business Radio, and Boston Business Journal.

## Massachusetts Competitiveness Agenda on Talent

Building on the Roundtable's Future of Work survey, the Roundtable is developing a **Competitiveness Agenda focused on Talent**. Members universally expressed a need to focus on talent attraction and retention as critical in maintaining and strengthening the Commonwealth's long-term economic prosperity. Massachusetts is home to world-class academic institutions, positioning the state as an epicenter of global talent; yet, the pandemic further recognized existing disparities including limited access and opportunity for students of color to pursue higher education. Moreover, challenges have emerged with employers now able to tap talent regardless of location and thousands of individuals forced out of jobs and in need of greater skills to thrive. Considered together, **we need to ensure that Massachusetts maintains its competitive advantage by prioritizing the development, recruitment, inclusion, and retention of talent balanced with a cost environment that avoids the risks of losing it.** As a Roundtable member declared, "business will go to where talent is." In turn, we need to promote public policies that will create a more inclusive, equitable Commonwealth for all to live, work, and thrive.

**88%** of MBR respondents plan to maintain, expand or relocate within MA, citing world-class and diverse talent as their top reasons



### The Business Case for Early Childhood Education

In February 2021, the Roundtable collaborated with over 70 employers and business affiliate groups in the Commonwealth to launch the Massachusetts Business Coalition for Early Childhood Education. This growing coalition, founded by CEOs and leaders of Massachusetts employers, was established to make early childhood education more accessible, affordable, and stable for Massachusetts workers and to help attract and retain a strong workforce within the industry. The Roundtable was also named to the Early Education and Care Economic Review Commission, focused on determining necessary programming and services to reach the Commonwealth's goal of expanded access to high-quality early education and care.

### Roundtable Discusses Rapid Reemployment with MA Secretary of Labor & Workforce Development

During the June 2021 Quarterly Meeting of the Roundtable Board of Directors, **Secretary Rosalind Acosta** of Labor & Workforce Development invited members to join in hiring and supporting job training for approximately 400,000 jobseekers expected to lose unemployment benefits in September. Secretary Acosta pointed to effective programs such as the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund and new Rapid Reemployment Training Grant to train and place unemployed individuals, plus the Workforce Training Fund to upskill existing employees. MBR can be a resource to member companies looking to navigate available funds and opportunities to collaborate with training providers to access funding.



## WELCOME NEW MEMBER COMPANIES & BOARD MEMBERS



# CONVENING & LEARNING TOGETHER



## EDUCATING & ADVOCATING AT THE STATE HOUSE

- **Senators Eric Lesser, Cindy Friedman, Joe Boncore**, and **Representative Tom Golden** presented and discussed legislation on economic development, health care, transportation finance, and climate change. (JAN. 13, 2021)
- **Massachusetts Commissioner of Higher Education Carlos Santiago**, **President of Greenfield Community College Yves Salomon-Fernandez**, **Jeremiah Johnson of UMass Donahue Institute**, and three student participants presented on career pathways and sourcing talent in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, specifically through the STEM Starter Academy. (FEB. 10, 2021)

## COMMUNICATING PANDEMIC RESPONSE

- **Massachusetts Secretary of Health and Human Services Marylou Sudders** along with **Dr. Pooja Kumar of McKinsey** and **Lucy Pérez of McKinsey** presented on the pandemic response and engaged with members in understanding the role of employers for the vaccine rollout. (JAN. 27, 2021)
- The **Health Action Alliance** presented as part of the National Business Summit and with support by the national **Business Roundtable** on employer resources for the vaccine rollout including the #MoveTheNeedle campaign. (MARCH 10, 2021)

## INCREASING EQUITY IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

- **The Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce** presented on the **Pacesetters** program including its expansion in partnership with the Roundtable to provide resources statewide to increase supplier diversity. (FEB. 3, 2021)
- **Dr. Paul Watanabe, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Institute for Asian American Studies** at the **University of Massachusetts Boston** presented on the history of Asian American and Pacific Islanders in the United States followed by personal reaction and discussion moderated by **Karan Dyson of Procter & Gamble** and **Chair of the Roundtable's DE&I Task Force** that included **MA State Representative Tackey Chan**, **Sam Hyun, Chair of the Massachusetts Asian American Commission**, and **Grace Lee of People's United Bank**. (APRIL 7, 2021)
- **Segun Idowu, President & CEO of the Black Economic Council of Massachusetts (BECMA)** and his team presented BECMA's 2021-22 legislative priorities, especially highlighting areas of shared interest including education and workforce development among other focus areas. (MAY 5, 2021)

- **Aixa Beauchamp, Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the Latino Equity Fund**, **Juan Lopera, Co-Chair of the Latino Equity Fund** and **Chief Diversity Officer at Beth Israel Lahey Health**, and **Evelyn Barahona**, newly named **Director of the Latino Equity Fund** presented on the history and mission of the fund as the only current philanthropic fund focused on the Latino community in Massachusetts. (JUNE 30, 2021)

## NAVIGATING THE FUTURE OF WORK

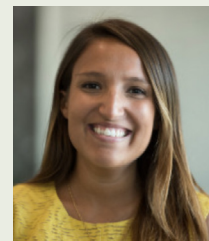
- **Derek Townsend, PwC** presented on the future of remote work. (FEB. 24, 2021)
- **Lucy Pérez, McKinsey** previewed preliminary findings from MBR's survey on the Future of Work and Massachusetts' Competitiveness. (APRIL 21, 2021)
- **Steve Kozcela, MassINC** and **John Killeen, Keolis** presented on the future of transportation and the commuter rail system. (MAY 16, 2021)
- **Natalie Mayslich, Care.com** presented on the future of employer benefits for employees. (JUNE 2, 2021)
- **Evan Metter, KPMG** presented on new challenges for post-pandemic work including defining what "hybrid" means within the workplace among other new concepts. (JUNE 16, 2021)

## ROUNDTABLE WELCOMES NEW STAFF

As the Roundtable bid farewell to MBR staff including Chris Kealey in January 2021 and Katelyn Hamilton in July 2021, the Roundtable welcomed Lauren Jones and Claire Cooper to the team.



**Lauren Jones** joined in February 2021 as Executive Vice President.



**Claire Cooper** joined in June 2021 as Vice President of Public Policy & Operations.