

The Roundtable achieved many milestones in 2021 to advance public policies, strategies, and initiatives guided by **Opportunity, Equity,** and **Competitiveness** as part of its 2021-22 Policy Agenda.

1 Future of Work and Massachusetts Competitiveness Survey and Report

The Roundtable released findings in May 2021 on the [Future of Work and Massachusetts' Competitiveness](#) based on responses from Roundtable members on current trends and post-pandemic projections on the future of work. **It concluded that in order for Massachusetts to maintain its competitive advantage, it must "prioritize the development, recruitment, inclusion and retention of talent balanced with a cost environment that avoids the risks of losing it."** *The Roundtable's work helped to inform the Baker Administration's Future of Work strategy for the state and was cited numerous times in the state's report.* Coverage of the Roundtable's report was featured in the [Boston Globe](#), a [BBJ op-ed](#), [WBUR](#), and Commonwealth Magazine's [Mass Reboot](#) podcast.

2 Policy Agenda Focused on Talent

In response to the top priority expressed by members, the Roundtable developed and released a [Talent Agenda to Drive Massachusetts' Competitiveness](#) (Fall 2021), shaped by three pillars including strategies to: **1) attract and retain talent; 2) develop talent; and 3) diversify talent.** This Talent Agenda builds on findings from the Roundtable's Future of Work and Massachusetts Competitiveness report and will guide the Roundtable's policy advocacy in 2022. *Many of the Talent Agenda priorities were included in the state's final ARPA funds allocation.* The Talent Agenda was highlighted in a [Boston Globe](#) column focused on the Roundtable's report and perspective.



3 Leadership on Workforce Development

Acting on a priority identified by members, the Roundtable **promotes opportunity pathways through policies and initiatives to expand access to school to career connecting activities, technical education and training, post-secondary education, and digital skills.** The Roundtable serves on the Massachusetts Future of Work Commission and is a part of the Workforce Solutions Group (WSG), which released a [report in early 2021 with recommendations to deliver rapid and equitable reemployment strategies](#); the Roundtable is also active with the Alliance for Vocational Technical Education, Massachusetts Workforce Association, and the Massachusetts Business Coalition on Skills. Throughout the year, the Roundtable met with legislators and government officials and testified before the Legislature to advance funding priorities through the budget and ARPA processes. *The state's ARPA law includes \$107 million in workforce development funding.*



4 Leadership on Early Childhood Education

Building on its longstanding advocacy, the Roundtable helped to launch the [Massachusetts Business Coalition for Early Childhood Education](#) in early 2021 to further engage employers in advancing long-term changes to the early education and care system. The Roundtable serves on the Legislature's Early Education and Care Economic Review Commission, the Common Start Coalition, CEO Action for Racial Equity's ECE Team, and engaging in federal advocacy to encourage inclusion of childcare investments in federal legislation and develop a plan for Massachusetts to effectively spend it. The Roundtable provided testimony to the Joint Committee on Ways & Means and House Committee on Federal Stimulus and Census Oversight and the Committee on Education to urge the prioritization of early education and care. On behalf of the Roundtable, JD Chesloff also co-authored an [op-ed with leaders from CEO for Racial Equity placed in the Washington Post](#) and a [blog post promoted by Ready Nation](#). A legislative framework for the long-term sustainability of child care in Massachusetts is expected in 2022.

5 Mental Health Support for Employees

The Roundtable supported a key provision of comprehensive behavioral health reform legislation offered by Senate President Karen Spilka, Senator Julian Cyr, Chair of the Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use, and Recovery and Senator Cindy Friedman, Chair of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing. The bill, An Act Addressing Barriers to Care (ABC) for Mental Health, includes a provision to require coverage for annual mental health wellness exams—like the requirement for physical health—which was endorsed by the Roundtable. The bill was approved by the Senate in November 2021.

ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES

- ✦ **Support for offshore wind development as a regional economic development opportunity and essential component of the state's clean energy future.** In early 2021, the Roundtable submitted a letter of support for a joint grant application by BFIT and UMass Lowell which was later awarded to both entities by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to build a diverse pipeline for future talent in the emerging offshore wind industry. Moving forward, the Roundtable is working with both groups to plan for convenings in 2022 to advance this work within the business community. Stay tuned!
- ✦ **Continue to be the business community voice for caregivers in the workplace.** The Roundtable continues to play an active role as a founder of the Massachusetts Caregivers Coalition, adding the business perspective including thought leadership from members on events to spotlight caregivers and the mental health of caregivers in the workplace. In November 2021, the Roundtable co-hosted the [Massachusetts Caregivers Summit](#) which featured speakers from member companies including Cigna New England, Citizens Bank, EMD Serono, Lantheus Medical Imaging, and PwC, who hosted the in-person summit.
- ✦ **Advocate for statewide infrastructure investments.** Recognizing the direct benefit of investing in transportation, housing, broadband and other critical infrastructure builds communities that can attract and retain talent, the Roundtable advocated for strategic investment in these areas as part of its [Talent Agenda](#) and [testimony](#) on workforce development before the Joint Committee on Ways & Means and House Committee on Federal Stimulus and Census Oversight. The federal infrastructure bill will bring between \$9 to \$12 billion to Massachusetts.