

# Somerville Job Creation and Retention Trust 2019-2020 Annual Report

This is the first annual report of the Somerville Job Creation and Retention Trust (JCRT) Board of Trustees, due September 2020. This report provides information on the funding and investments of the JCRT from September 2019 through August 2020. The JCRT board was established in January 2019. In its first several months, the board established by-laws and its leadership; adopted a strategy for guiding its investments; learned more about local labor market needs, economy, and workforce development assets; and engaged in a strategic planning process to identify specific investments, including soliciting public input on potential investment ideas. The board initiated investments in specific activities and programs, as detailed in this report, starting in the spring of 2020.

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## Section 1: Background, Administration, and Funding

### Background

The creation of the Jobs Creation and Retention Trust is the result of the City's 2016 approved home-rule petition to institute a workforce development linkage fee to support additional training programs to prepare residents for and connect them to new job opportunities.

After an extensive evaluation of the commercial development landscape, incoming industry sectors, and resident educational and skill attainment, as well as exploration to further conceptualize the future JCRT Board of Trustees structure, the Somerville Board of Aldermen voted in December 2017 to approve a zoning amendment creating the JCRT fund and setting the jobs linkage fee at \$2.46 a square foot on commercial development projects of more than 15,000 square feet.

Over the Spring and Summer of 2020, the JCRT made its first investments of \$882,340 towards workforce training programs, workers' rights education, and COVID-19 non-profit assistance.

### Administration

The JCRT Board of Trustees is comprised of the following representatives that serve three-year terms:

- Mayor of Somerville or designee
- Board of Aldermen President or designee
- Superintendent of Schools or designee
- Representatives of two non-profits
- Two Somerville residents, with a preference that such residents have participated in workforce development programs in the City of Somerville
- Representatives of two local businesses

### JCRT Board of Trustees

- Vickie Choitz - Resident, Managing Trustee
- Anika Van Eaton – Non-profit representative, Co-Managing Trustee
- Thomas A. Galligani Jr. – Mayor's designee
- Jesse Clingan - President of the City Council's designee
- Lisa Cook – Superintendent's designee
- Tom Bent – Business representative
- Josh Grehan - Business representative
- Rand Wilson – Non-profit representative
- Silvana Dinka – Resident

The Job Creation and Retention Trust Board of Trustees met 15 times between September 2019 and September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020:

- September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019
- October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

- January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020
- May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Meeting agendas and minutes can be found at [Somervillema.gov/JCRT](http://Somervillema.gov/JCRT)

### Funding

Funding for the JCRT comes from a commercial development linkage fee of \$2.58 per square foot of commercial development over 15,000 square feet (fee as of March 2020). In 2019, the JCRT linkage fee generated \$1,363,754.93 for the fund. Given the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the linkage fees have not generated any additional funding for the trust fund as of the writing of this report.

## Section 2: Strategy and Investments

At the April 4, 2019, JCRT meeting, the board adopted the City of Somerville’s [Talent Equity Playbook](#) strategy as the JCRT board strategy to guide its investments and align with the City of Somerville investments in workforce development. The table below provides a summary of the JCRT board investments in its first year. See Appendix A for a detailed narrative of each investment made by the JCRT board in year one.

**Table 1: JCRT Investments in Year One (2019-2020)**

<b>Strategy 1: Build a coordinated system of education and training services that ensures Somerville youth and adults achieve their career goals</b>		
<b>Strategy Plan Actions</b>	<b>City Activity and Investments</b>	<b>JCRT Board Investments</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop infrastructure needed to support the coordination of education and workforce services in Somerville.</li> <li>2. Increase the scale and benefits of Somerville resident participation in jobs and their links to opportunities with anchor businesses.</li> <li>3. Leverage Somerville High School’s space</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Co-investment and hiring of additional full-time City staff</li> <li>2. SCALE, Casino outreach, SCC First Source Jobs, Career navigation community benefits</li> <li>3. FabVille</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Co-investment of additional full-time City staff</li> <li>2. Per Scholas Cloud Computing, Software Development, IT Administration; Just A Start Biomedical Careers and IT Administration Careers; Asian American Civic Association Building Energy Efficient Maintenance, Careers in Finance and Banking, Green Automotive Maintenance Skills; Bunker Hill Community College English as a Second Language for Customer Service Industry; SCALE career readiness and digital literacy training for adult education students.</li> <li>3. No investments at this time</li> </ol>

<b>Strategy 2: Position Somerville as a national leader in employee engagement practices</b>		
<b>Strategy Plan Actions</b>	<b>City Activity and Investments</b>	<b>JCRT Board Investments</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Help motivated businesses in Somerville improve their employee engagement practices.</li> <li>2. Brand Somerville as a leader in employee engagement practices.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Somerville Living Wage Ordinance</li> <li>2. Updated Somerville Wage Theft Ordinance</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Issued an RFP for Quality Jobs Education and Training for small businesses; continued exploration of possibilities</li> <li>2. The Welcome Project Wage Theft and Workers Rights</li> </ol>

		education for Somerville workers
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<b>Strategy 3: Build a full suite of experiential learning opportunities for Somerville youth and adults</b>		
<b>Strategy Plan Actions</b>	<b>City Activity and Investments</b>	<b>JCRT Board Investments</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support and expand existing city-based efforts to ensure all youth and adults receive as many substantial experiential learning experiences as possible.</li> <li>2. Increase the number of local businesses offering experiential learning opportunities.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mayor’s Summer Jobs Program, SHS Wider Learning Ecosystem support, Somerville Education Foundation support</li> <li>2. No activity or investments at this time</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The training investments under Strategy #1 include experiential learning</li> <li>2. No investments at this time</li> </ol>

<b>Strategy 4: Develop resiliency responses to the “future of work”</b>		
<b>Strategy Plan Actions</b>	<b>City Activity and Investments</b>	<b>JCRT Board Investments</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build citywide capacity to understand, simulate, and prepare responses to future employment and economic scenarios</li> <li>2. Support city education and training partners to integrate “skill resilience” into career preparation</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staff initiated and participated in the development of a regional Workforce Rapid Response Plan prepared by MAPC</li> <li>2. FabVille, Skill Up Somerville digital literacy grants, Northstar Digital Literacy</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. COVID 19 Emergency grants, regional Workforce Rapid Response Plan prepared by MAPC</li> <li>2. No investments at this time</li> </ol>

**Emergency COVID-19 Response**

Somerville’s low-income workers and job seekers were severely impacted by the coronavirus pandemic that began in March 2020. In response, the JCRT board voted at a special meeting of the board on March 26, 2020, to create a \$100,000 COVID-19 emergency response fund under our Rapid Response priority. The board has granted \$77,747 to Somerville organizations serving Somerville workers and job seekers in need through this fund, as detailed in Appendix A.

### Section 3: Funding Allocations for Year One

At the January 28, 2020, meeting of the JCRT board, the board voted on investment priorities in rank order of priority and on allocations for each item. The table below summarizes the board’s investment priorities and allocations for year one.

**Table 2: JCRT Board Year One Investment Priorities and Allocations**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Investment Idea</b>	<b>Approved Allocation</b>	<b>Committed Amount</b>
#1	Wage Theft/Worker Rights and Responsibilities Training + HR and Job Quality Training for Small Businesses	\$200,000	\$119,000
#2	Coordination and Data Collection City Staff Position	\$95,000	
#3	Contextualized Education for Adult and English Language Learners	\$250,000	\$368,933
#4	Industry-Specific Training Programs	\$600,000	\$380,229
#5	Rapid Response Strategy	\$40,000	
#6	COVID-19 Emergency Fund	\$100,000	\$77,746 <sup>1</sup>
#7	A Somerville Public Schools (SPS) and Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) program to provide one year of pre-college courses, career coaching, and work experience for Somerville High School (SHS) graduates not going directly to college (“Year 13” program) <sup>2</sup>	\$75,000	
#8	Career Navigation Resources		
#9	Professional Development for Adult Education Teachers and Workforce Professionals in Somerville		
#10	A Somerville Public Schools (SPS) - Bunker Hill Community College Pell Grant gap funding and college counseling program		
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,360,000</b>	<b>\$945,908</b>
<b>Total JCRT 2019 Funding</b>			<b>\$1,363,754</b>
<b>Remaining JCRT 2019 funding</b>			<b>\$417,846</b>

<sup>1</sup> This is the Board’s COVID response emergency fund.

<sup>2</sup> SPS and BHCC submitted a proposal to the JCRT board for this program. During discussions between SPS and the JCRT board on this proposal, the coronavirus pandemic hit, disrupting forward movement on this priority until operations at SPS and BHCC normalize.

## Appendix A:

### JCRT Board Year One Investments

#### Narrative

#### **Strategy 1: Build a coordinated system of education and training services that ensures Somerville youth and adults achieve their career goals**

1. *Description:* The JCRT and the City of Somerville will be sharing the cost of a new full-time junior economic development division staff-person to assist the current economic development specialist in managing the City's workforce development portfolio. The JCRT board has committed to two years of funding for this position (at 50% cost share).

*Year One Investment:* \$47,500 contributed by the JCRT

\$47,500 contributed by the City

\$95,000 - Total

*Timeline:* Staff person to begin in early 2021.

2. Adult Education and Industry Specific Training Programs:

- a. *Description:* Per Scholas will provide training and job placement services to 15 Somerville residents in technology training programs including two program cycles of the Amazon Web Services program, two cycles of the TEKsystems program, one cycle of the software engineering program, and one or two network support cycles. Essential business skills training, financial security strategies training, and access to a Navigator on staff will also be provided to students to ensure success in the program and in employment. Stipends of \$1,000 will be provided to all students.

*Investment:* \$66,706

*Timeline:* August 1, 2020 through October 1, 2021.

- b. *Description:* Just-A-Start (JAS) will provide training and job placement services to 5 Somerville residents in its Biomedical Careers and IT Careers programs. Stipends of \$7,000 to \$9,000 will be provided to students based on need.

*Investment:* \$113,523

*Timeline:* Programs begin January 1, 2021 and runs to October 15, 2021.

- c. *Description:* The Asian American Civic Association (AACA) will provide training and job placement services to 20 Somerville residents in the following programs: the Building Energy Efficient Maintenance Skills (BEEMS) program, the Careers in Banking and Finance (CFB) program, and the Green Automotive Maintenance Skills (GAMS) program. AACA will offer three cycles ("program cycles") of the CFB program, two cycles of the BEEMS program, and two cycles of the GAMS program. Stipends of \$50 per week will be provided to students depending on need.

*Investment:* \$200,000

*Timeline:* September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2021

- d. *Description:* Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) will partner with three Somerville social service agencies, East Somerville Main Streets (ESMS), the Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS), and The Welcome Project (TWP). This partnership will provide approximately 100 low-income Somerville adults with multiple levels of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, a specially designed ESL course contextualized to teach essential customer service training concepts, and wrap-around services, such as help with enrolling for public benefits and referrals to specialized health and mental health services, to support student success. Participants will also receive assistance with career navigation, guidance, and essential job placement skills, including resume development, interviewing skills, and visits to the MassHire Metro North Career Center.

*Investment:* \$250,000

*Timeline:* August 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021

- e. *Description:* The Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE) will provide remote career readiness and digital literacy classes in its English language learner and adult basic education programs. SCALE will strengthen its existing English language learning and adult basic education programs by integrating skill/career navigation, goal setting, and social-emotional and other wraparound supports. Education and Career Advisory (ECA) staff will provide support services including coaching and mentoring, assistance with childcare needs or issues related to housing, transportation assistance, or assistance with fees required to complete their certification. Services will be offered to 60 students.

*Investment:* \$118,933

*Timeline:* September 1, 2020 through September 1, 2021

### **Strategy 2: Position Somerville as a national leader in employee engagement practices**

1. *Description:* The Job Creation and Retention Trust released an RFP in spring 2020 to solicit proposals for a provider(s) to assist small businesses and startups in Somerville in establishing lawful and effective human resource policies and practices within the context of a quality jobs approach to business operations and management. No proposals met our expectations; therefore, the board is continuing to explore options for this investment.

*Investment:* ~ \$80,000 to \$100,000

*Timeline:* Fall of 2020

2. *Description:* The Welcome Project, the Brazilian Workers Center, and the Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Health and Safety to develop and implement workers' rights and wage theft education for immigrant workers in Somerville. This program will educate workers and communities members about the updated Wage Theft Ordinance, as well as other critical worker rights such as safety, protection from discrimination and harassment, paid leave, among others.

*Investment:* \$119,000

*Timeline:* Contracted for August 1, 2020 through September 1, 2021

### **Strategy 3: Build a full suite of experiential learning opportunities for Somerville youth and adults**



1. Experiential learning opportunities are included in the curriculums of the three industry specific training programs funded by the JCRT and described under Strategy 1.

#### **Strategy 4: Develop resiliency responses to the “future of work”**

1. COVID 19 Emergency grants

*Description:* The JCRT released a grant application for non-profits in Somerville providing emergency services and resources to Somerville workers and job seekers impacted by the coronavirus pandemic; grants could be up to \$9,999.

*Investment:* The JCRT awarded seven grants totaling \$77,746.

*Timeline:* April through December 31st, 2020

- a. *Description:* The Elizabeth Peabody House received a grant to hire a food pantry coordinator. Between April and June, the Elizabeth Peabody House assisted 405 households at their food pantry.  
*Investment:* \$5,000
- b. *Description:* The Community Action Agency of Somerville received a grant to provide food assistance to Somerville residents affected by COVID 19. CAAS assisted 132 families with \$75 Market Basket Gift Cards each.  
*Investment:* \$9,999
- c. *Description:* The Somerville Public Schools received a grant to purchase 50 T-Mobile hotspot subscriptions for 12 months for Somerville students.  
*Investment:* \$9,999
- d. *Description:* Somerville Community Corporation (SCC) received a grant to assist Somerville residents with applying for unemployment assistance and preparing for and searching for jobs. SCC hired three temporary, part-time career coaches to work with the increased quantity of clients.  
*Investment:* \$9,999
- e. *Description:* Union Square Main Streets (USMS) received a grant to provide \$50 SNAP matching funds at the Union Square Farmers Market. USMS provided 168 families with SNAP matching funds during this period as well as hired an outreach coordinator to advertise the program to more residents.  
*Investment:* \$7,550
- f. *Description:* The Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE) received a grant to provide Verizon Jetpacks and T-Mobile subscriptions to SCALE students as well as hold professional development for SCALE teachers. This grant helped to provide between 15 and 45 students with digital access and helped 35 teachers increase their digital skillsets for a remote school year start.

*Investment:* \$16,200<sup>3</sup>

- g. *Description:* The Welcome Project received a grant to conduct COVID-19 related community outreach. This included LIPS youth translating 20 public health documents into four languages. Funding also went to direct cash assistance to families.

*Investment:* \$9,000

## 2. Regional Workforce Rapid Response Plan

*Description:* The City of Somerville contracted with the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission in April 2020, along with several other Massachusetts municipalities, to develop a rapid response plan for workforce development. Released in August of 2020 the plan recommended seven key strategies:

- a. Formalize communication systems between intergovernmental departments and outside organizations;
- b. Identify and implement a shared technology that enables quick and responsive inter-agency communication;
- c. Expand the network of stakeholders;
- d. Create targeted outreach materials for residents seeking social services and businesses seeking reopening information;
- e. Coordinate efforts between public health, ISD, workforce agencies, and businesses to ensure smooth and safe reopening;
- f. Create a unified intake system for social service assistance;
- g. Continue to advocate for updated municipal-level unemployment data.

*Investment:* No Investment from JCRT

*Timeline:* March through July 2020

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<sup>3</sup> As a public agency, SCALE was exempt from the \$9,999 grant award cap, which was put in place due to municipal procurement requirements. The Somerville Public Schools received a total of \$26,199 in COVID 19 Emergency Assistance Grants.