



Annual Report 2022-2023



Somerville Job Creation and Retention Trust



COVER PHOTOS Images of industry specific job training programs, courtesy of Just A Start, Per Scholas, and Asian American Civic Association.

ABOVE: CV Properties is developing Boynton Gateway located at 495 Columbia Street in Somerville. Boynton Gateway joins the emerging life sciences cluster forming between Boynton Yards and Union Square, just one mile from Kendall Square.. Photo courtesy of CV Properties.

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Introduction and Background

Introduction

This is the fourth Annual Report of the Somerville Job Creation and Retention Trust (JCRT) Board, completed in September 2023. This report provides information on the funding, investments, and outcomes of the JCRT from July 2022 through June 2023. Highlights of this year's investments included

JCRT Fast Figures

- First Board Meeting: **2019**
- Current Linkage Rate: **\$2.93/square foot**
- Fees Generated as of 6/30/2023: **~\$4.8M**
- Investments as of 6/30/2023: **~\$4.3M**

expanding the menu of industry specific training opportunities, launching new initiatives including the Job Training Scholarship Fund and Professional Development Fund for Adult Education Teachers and Workforce Development Professionals, and providing over \$70,000 in stipend and support services to participants in JCRT-funded programs.

Background

Somerville's Job Creation and Retention Trust is the result of the City's 2016 approved home-rule petition to institute a workforce development linkage fee to create and maintain employment opportunities and provide training and wraparound support services to Somerville residents, enabling them to succeed and earn adequate incomes to continue to live in Somerville. Following an extensive evaluation of the commercial development landscape, incoming industry sectors, and resident education and skill attainment, as well as exploration to further conceptualize the future structure of the JCRT, the Somerville Board of Aldermen (now City Council) voted in December 2017 to approve a zoning amendment creating the JCRT fund. This zoning amendment set the jobs linkage fee at \$2.46 per square foot on commercial development projects of more than 15,000 square feet. The jobs linkage fee is adjusted annually based on the Boston Consumer Price Index (CPI).

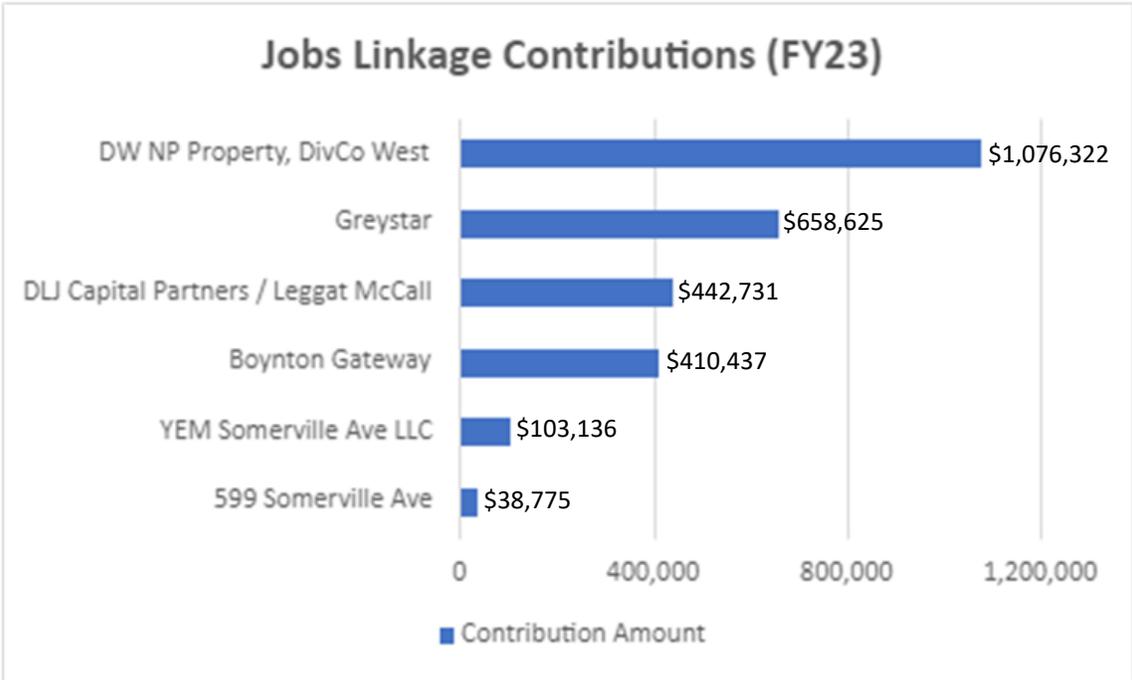
This Year's Highlights

- **Over 250** Residents served
- **Launch of Job Training Scholarship Fund** and Professional Development Fund for Workforce Development Professionals
- More than **\$70,000** distributed in stipends and support services

Funding

The current jobs linkage fee, effective March 2023, is \$2.93 per square foot. As of June 30, 2023, the jobs linkage fee has generated over \$4.8M. In the last year alone, the jobs linkage fee generated over \$2.7M. Table 1 illustrates the projects that contributed to the fund this fiscal year.

Table 1



ABOVE, 599 Somerville will consist of 43,000 SF of life science, tough tech, and R&D workspace. Photo courtesy of Rafi Properties.

Strategy and Investments

At their April 4, 2019 meeting, the JCRT Board adopted the City of Somerville’s Talent Equity Playbook strategies as the framework for prioritizing the JCRT Investments. The four strategies are:

- **Strategy 1:** Build a coordinated system of education and training services that ensures Somerville youth and adults achieve their career goals
- **Strategy 2:** Position Somerville as a national leader in employee engagement practices
- **Strategy 3:** Build a full suite of experiential learning opportunities for Somerville youth and adults
- **Strategy 4:** Develop resiliency responses to the “future of work”

During this reporting period the board continued to allocate funds based on 2021-2022 Investment Priorities (Table 2) through December 2022, and thereafter, based on 2022-2023 Investment Priorities (Table 3), as determined during the Fall of 2022. Additional information on these investments and JCRT beneficiaries can be found on subsequent pages.

Table 2: 2021-22 JCRT Ranked Investment Priorities

Rank	TEP Strategy	Investment Idea	Committed from 7/1/2022—6/30/2023
#1	1 & 3	Industry Specific Training Programs	Invested in prior to 7/1/2022
#2	1 & 3	Childcare Career Advancement Initiative	\$150,000 (in addition to \$150,000 invested prior)
#3	2	Wage Theft/Worker’s Rights and Responsibilities Training	Invested in prior to 7/1/2022
#4	1	Contextualized Education for Adult and English Language Learners	\$741,300
#5	1 & 2	Professional Development Fund for Adult Education Teachers and Workforce Development Professionals	\$116,080
#6	1 & 3	Municipal Apprenticeship Feasibility Study/ Good Municipal Jobs Training	--
#7	2	Job Quality HR Training for Somerville Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs	Invested in prior to 7/1/2022
#8	4	Rapid Response Strategy for Worker Displacement	No Investment Needed
#9	2	Supporting Employee-Ownership Business Models in Somerville	--
#10	1 & 3	One Year Post-placement support for students in 2020 JCRT training and adult education programs	--
#11	4	Digital Literacy and Training Resources	--
#12	1	Public Space and Urban Forestry Participatory Action Research Team	--
Ongoing	1	Coordination and Data Collection Staff Position	Invested in prior to 7/1/2022
Ongoing	4	Student Emergency Fund	Invested in prior to 7/1/2022

Strategy and Investments Continued

Somerville Talent Equity Playbook Strategies

- **Strategy 1:** Build a coordinated system of education and training services that ensures Somerville youth and adults achieve their career goals
 - **Strategy 2:** Position Somerville as a national leader in employee engagement practices
- **Strategy 3:** Build a full suite of experiential learning opportunities for Somerville youth and adults
 - **Strategy 4:** Develop resiliency responses to the “future of work”

Table 3: 2022-23 JCRT Ranked Investment Priorities

Rank	TEP Strategy	Investment Idea	Committed from 7/1/2022— 6/30/2023
#1	1	Somerville High School Post-Secondary Supports Programming	No JCRT Investment Needed; ARPA-funded for FY23
#2	1	Coordination and Data Collection Staff Position – FY24 and FY25-FY28	\$219,774
#3	1 & 3	Industry Specific Job Training Programs	\$650,000
#4	1 & 3	Somerville Good Municipal Jobs Training Program	\$400,000
#5	4	Digital Literacy and Training Resources	Included in Contextualized Education for Adult and English Language Learners grant; No Additional Investment Needed
#6	2	Mental Health, Resilience, and Trauma Training for Adult Education and Workforce Development Organizations	--
#7	2	Wage Theft and Worker’s Rights Training	--
#8-Tie	1 & 4	Curriculum Development and Updated Training Materials	--
#8-Tie	1	Career Exploration and Readiness Pre-Training Program	--
#10	1	Contextualized Education for Adults and English Language Learners	--
#11	4	One Year post-placement services for Students in recent and current JCRT-funded training and education programs	--
#12	1 & 3	Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Expungement and Job Placement Services	Included in Priority #3
#13	1	Municipal Apprenticeship Feasibility Study	--
#14	1 & 3	Paid Internship Program	--

STRATEGY 1 & 3 INVESTMENTS

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC TRAINING PROGRAMS

This year, the JCRT funded five local nonprofits to provide free industry specific job training and placement services to a total of 35 Somerville residents:

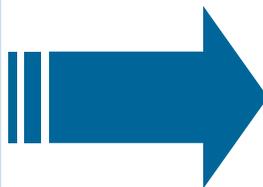


- Asian American Civic Association (AACA) provided Building Energy Efficient Maintenance Skills, and Careers in Banking and Finance trainings to 15 residents;
- Benjamin Franklin Cummings Institute of Technology (FC Tech) is recruiting to enroll 15 residents in Clean Energy and IT programs this Fall;
- Just A Start provided IT & Biomedical Careers trainings to 10 residents;
- Mass CultivatED trained 4 residents through their Jails 2 Jobs Workforce Development program which provided CORI expungement services, internships, and job coaching support, and;
- Per Scholas provided IT Support, AWS re/Start, Software Engineer, and Cybersecurity training to 6 Somerville residents.

Residents in all training programs also received wraparound supports and earned stipends or tuition assistance to support their participation and training completion. All organizations are continuing to work with remaining graduates to complete trainings and obtain employment in the coming months.

Intake Demographics:

- **53%** Unemployed or working part-time
- **48%** without post-secondary education
- **88%** identify as people of color
- **10** languages spoken



Participant Outcomes:

- **35** Residents trained in high-demand industries
- **96%** graduation rate
- **\$22.22/hour** Average Placement Wage
- **27** Industry-Recognized Credentials earned, including **OSHA 10**, **Responsible Vendor Training**, and **COMPTIA A+**
- **4** participants earned college credits
- **Local Employers Include: Cambria Hotel, Tufts Technology Services, and Cambridge Innovation Center**

STRATEGY 1 & 3 INVESTMENTS

CONTEXTUALIZED EDUCATION FOR ADULT AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Learner Profile:

- **Largest Age Group:**
30-39 years old
- **Most Common Primary Languages:** **Spanish, Portuguese, Haitian Kreyol**
- **Most Common Zip Code:**
02145
- **66% Female**
- **92% identify as people of color**

Participant Outcomes:

- **221 Residents received ESOL and/or HiSET education**
- **More than half of the participants are projected to re-enroll, or continue career development at another institution**
- **59 participants reported improved employment or job attainment**
- **8 SCALE participants earned high school equivalency (HiSET) credential**



The JCRT continued to fund two organizations providing free contextualized education for adult and English language learners: Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC), and the Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences (SCALE).

BHCC partnered with local social service agencies, East Somerville Main Streets, the Community Action Agency of Somerville (CAAS) and The Welcome Project (TWP) and ultimately enrolled 203 participants in multiple levels of ESOL classes. 11 of these students subsequently participated in a supplemental customer service and career readiness course.

SCALE enrolled 18 participants across their ESOL career intensive, high school equivalency, and ESOL writing lab programs. 8 participants graduated with their high school equivalency (HiSET) credential in Spring 2023. Several of these graduates are continuing onto community college this fall.

“As a Somerville resident I am so grateful and happy to have such opportunity. I hope I can participate in the near future [in] some of the programs that BHCC is offering.”

- Elluz Acosta, BHCC ESOL Participant

ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS

Childcare Career Advancement Initiative (Strategies 1 & 3)

Over the past two years, the JCRT has obligated \$300,000 to fund industry specific education and career advancement opportunities for low-income Somerville adults to help them achieve certifications, credentials, and licenses that lead to gainful employment or career advancement in the childcare, daycare, out-of-school time and Pre-K settings in Somerville and the greater Boston region. While the Trust has not received any proposals this obligation, significant funding from the American Rescue Plan Act has gone toward this priority at a state level.

Good Municipal Jobs Training Initiative (Strategies 1 & 3)

The JCRT has obligated \$400,000 to fund the development and implementation of a Good Municipal Jobs Training Initiative for individuals interested in attaining entry-level positions with the City of Somerville or other local employers. This initiative plans to target technical training in entry-level office skills and in licenses and certifications that focus on municipal trade roles, such as Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDLs).

Job Training Scholarship Fund (Strategies 1 & 3)

Somerville Community Corporation was selected to administer the Job Training Scholarship Fund. The purpose of this fund is to provide financial assistance to Somerville residents participating in job training programs, particularly programs not already funded by the JCRT.

Professional Development Fund for Adult Educators and Workforce Development Professionals (Strategies 1 & 2)

The Trust obligated \$60,000 to PD for Workforce Development Professionals. This fund is administered by the City of Somerville. To date, two practitioners have utilized this fund to attend a workforce development conference.

Coordinator Role (Strategy 1)

The JCRT and the City of Somerville continue to share the cost of a full-time Workforce Development Coordinator who serves as staff liaison to the JCRT and assists the Senior Planner in managing the City's workforce development portfolio. The JCRT obligated \$42,232 to cover its portion of the staff role through June 2024 and proactively obligated \$177,542 to cover this cost through FY28.

Administration

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

- ◇ Mayor of Somerville or designee
- ◇ City Council President or designee
- ◇ Superintendent of Schools or designee
- ◇ Representatives of two workforce development 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 *(as of June 30, 2023)*

- ◇ Tom Bent—Business Representative
- ◇ Vickie Choitz—Resident
- ◇ Silvana Dinka—Resident
- ◇ Matt McLaughlin—City Council President’s designee*
- ◇ Colleen Moran—Business Representative, *Co-Managing Trustee***
- ◇ Rachel Nadkarni—Mayor’s Designee
- ◇ Anika Van Eaton—Non-profit Representative, *Co-Managing Trustee*
- ◇ Rand Wilson—Non-profit Representative
- ◇ Vacant—Superintendent’s designee ***

City of Somerville Workforce Development Staff

- ◇ William Blackmer—Workforce Development Coordinator, *Staff Liaison*
- ◇ Jennifer Mancina—Senior Planner

* *Councilor J.T. Scott served in this seat until January 2023*

** *Colleen Moran assumed Co-Managing Trustee responsibilities from Vickie Choitz in January 2023*

*** *Lisa Cook served in this seat until July 2022*

The Job Creation and Retention Trust Board of Trustees met nine times between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023. Meeting agendas and minutes can be found at Somervillema.gov/JCRT.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the many partners who make our work possible, including but not limited to:

East Somerville Main Streets

MassHire Metro North Workforce Board

Mayor's Office of Racial and Social Justice

RESPOND Inc.

Somerville Community Corporation

Somerville Family Learning Collaborative

Somerville Health and Human Services Department

Somerville Housing Authority

Somerville Office of Immigrant Affairs

**Somerville Office of Strategic Planning and Community
Development**

Somerville Public Library

Somerville Public Schools

Union Square Main Streets