

Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce



Overview

The Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce is a broad-based association representing more than 1,700 businesses of all sizes and nearly every industry. The Chamber tries to bring business and government together to ensure the long-term advancement of the Boston metropolitan region. Its mission is to be an important resource to its members by providing information and marketing exposure that enhances their success. In addition, the organization also advocates for policy initiatives that are critical to economic growth and job creation in the region.

Regional Priorities

In general, the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce is focused on supporting the regional economy and enhancing the region's quality of life. The Chamber is especially interested in supporting policies and strategies that strengthen the region's top industry clusters — finance, technology, education, healthcare and tourism. For example, the Chamber supports public policy aimed at increasing the amount of federal funding for the region, especially funding that supports scientific research and teaching hospitals. In 1997, the Chamber created the National Business Coalition for Federal Research which has more than 30 member organizations from around the country. Members of the coalition travel to Washington, D.C. to increase support for research funding among senior White House officials and Congressional leaders.

In addition, the Chamber strives to support the regional economy by increasing the pool of talented workers for employers to draw upon. The Chamber is a strong advocate of community college job training programs and state job training initiatives. In addition, the Chamber is committed to working with higher education and state political leaders to reform the state's higher education system and make it more efficient. Recently the Chamber and the Boston Foundation commissioned a report conducted by Boston Consulting Group to analyze why recent college graduates have left the region. The report provided numerous recommendations as to how the business and academic communities can work together to encourage recent graduates from area colleges to stay in the region. (See box on next page.)

The Chamber has also placed a significant amount of attention on balancing the state budget. It just released a report calling for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to develop a Rainy Day Fund to insulate the state from cyclical economic volatility and contribute to the state's long-term economic health, prosperity and competitiveness. The report recommends the establishment of a constitutionally-mandated state Rainy Day Fund and outlines the methodology by which such a fund should be constructed and utilized.

PREVENTING A BRAIN DRAIN: TALENT RETENTION IN GREATER BOSTON

The Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce and The Boston Foundation commissioned a report by Boston Consulting Group to measure the loss of Boston-based graduates, analyze the reasons for their departure, and develop proposals to keep more graduates in the area. The study found that 50 percent of graduates from Greater Boston colleges and universities leave the region after receiving their degrees. Further, 80 percent of the graduates who leave depart for reasons that are avoidable.

The report recommended several initiatives that would reduce the number of graduates who leave the region. These initiatives are focused on job opportunities, affordability and the city experience. As a result, the Chamber has focused on several strategies including improving connections between employers and soon-to-be graduates; increasing housing affordability; and exploring opportunities to change the city experience in positive ways for college students.

For more information, visit www.bostonchamber.com

Other priorities of the Chamber include promoting the production of new housing units, expanding employer-assisted housing and opposing efforts to repeal the state's affordable housing law. The organization is also concerned about improving and modernizing the metropolitan transportation network — which includes Logan Airport — and the development of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's expansion of the Silver Line. Finally, the Chamber is very focused on advancing development of the Boston waterfront and promoting efficient access to the new Convention Center.