

# IMPACT REPORT 2020



LAWRENCE  
PARTNERSHIP

IDEAS | INVESTMENT | ACTION



# A MESSAGE ABOUT OUR WORK



Marianne Paley Nadel  
Board Chair



Derek Mitchell  
Executive Director

This year's impact report represents the conclusion of the Lawrence Partnership's 5th year as an organization, which prompts reflection for how far this organization has come—and the city it was established to support. At the city level, we have seen our unemployment rate drop nearly in half, while both household income levels and high school graduation rates have increased by double digits. Real estate occupancy is up as development activity has taken hold in all corners of the city. At the organizational level, we have grown from a compelling idea with the backing of a high-profile and committed board to a staffed organization that over the last year has added a dynamic Deputy Director, Alex Nova, as well as a communications manager to continue promoting Lawrence's story. We have established a track record of convening strategic conversations and catalyzing systems-level initiatives in a breadth of areas from small business lending to workforce development pathways. We have expanded our work to include a 100-person Advisory Council and established the infrastructure that has allowed us to effectively project manage the \$10,000,000 comprehensive business recovery efforts from last year's Columbia Gas disaster.

This year's impact report focuses on our recent **Strategic Plan** that included more than 50 individual conversations, numerous focus groups and surveys, peer organizational review, and in-depth strategic conversations with our board. We are doubling down on our commitment to an **inclusive economic development strategy** that continues to leverage our community's greatest asset: its people. The Partnership will continue to convene the growing number of people who care about Lawrence and want to be involved in shaping its future as we evolve our Advisory Council into **The Partnership Network**. We are excited to work alongside of you as we develop and promote a collaborative **10-year economic vision** for the city, building on our work and that of our partners to continue moving Lawrence forward.

For the growth and evolution of the Partnership and the expansion of the ideas, investment, and actions that contribute to our work, we want to give an especially large shout out to our Board of Directors and Executive Committee. These committed individuals continue to be the anchor, conscience, and strategic drivers of our work through their steady support of the Lawrence Partnership and the continued advancement of the City of Lawrence.

We are looking forward to making the next five years as exciting, dynamic, and impactful as the last five through collective action!

Derek and Marianne

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# OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

We are committed to our mission of

**Fostering economic development that is equitable and inclusive**

Which we define as increasing both

### Growth

Growing Lawrence's GDP



### Opportunity

Investing in education, skills, and access for all Lawrencians to participate in this growth

Through our approach, which includes



**Engaging and collaborating across sectors** to build trusted working relationships and "connect the dots"

To achieve our vision of



**A resilient, dynamic economy** that benefits all Lawrencians



“We believe in the power of systems-work, that through strong public-private-municipal partnerships a community can thrive and prosper. Authentic collaborative efforts are happening across Lawrence, and at the heart of much of this work is Lawrence Partnership. They deploy their trusted relationships and deep community engagement to create economic resiliency for all those who call Lawrence home. We are proud to stand side-by-side as a partner in their work.”

**–Beth Francis**

*CEO, Essex Community Foundation*

# A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION



“No one does it better than The Lawrence Partnership—pioneering and leading the way in thinking about (and acting upon) actionable economic development initiatives that work for both residents and businesses. As a Commonwealth, we have scores of gateway cities with a similar set of assets and challenges to Lawrence, and I think that the playbook being executed here should serve as a model for others across the state.

**—Juan Carlos Morales**

*Managing Partner, Surfside Capital Advisors  
Board Member, Mass Development Corporation  
Commissioner, Governor Baker  
Latino Advisory Commission  
Co-Chair, Latino Legacy Fund  
at The Boston Foundation*

Our work spans three key enablers of economic development in Lawrence: **Visioning**, **Problem-Solving**, and **Civic Infrastructure**.

Our long-term commitment is to ensure a shared and compelling aspiration among private and public sector leaders and a robust platform for collaboration.

We will also take on critical topics where the Partnership can uniquely accelerate the design of solutions.



## VISIONING

Articulate and promote a collaborative and inclusive 10-year economic vision and narrative for Lawrence



## PROBLEM-SOLVING LEADERSHIP

Grow our economy through a people-first strategy that invests in workforce and business development, and creates opportunity by cultivating the skills, capacities, and networks of Lawrencians



## CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Support cross-sector collaboration and advocate for key policies and resources

# VISIONING



Lawrence's history is enriched by the people who have made a life for themselves here and who have made and remade the city according to their vision.

Lawrence was created in 1840 of a vision as the nation's first planned industrial city and it fostered the vision of the American Dream for wave upon wave of immigrants since then. Today, with a manufacturing hub that contributes to 35% of our economy, with ample, affordable mill space right off of Interstates 93 and 495, with a network of walkable parks, world-class medical services, quality adult education opportunities, and a wide array of recreational, historical and cultural attractions, Lawrence stands poised for its next manifestation.

## But what will Lawrence's economy-of-tomorrow look like?

Without a collective vision of our own, our city could be shaped by someone else's vision. Our collectively built and clearly articulated vision is critical to aligning a diverse set of stakeholders and securing the investments we need to ensure that our local economy is productive, resilient, and growing, while also making sure that it works for our local residents. Equally important is the promotion of our vision to rally wider awareness of our work and support toward our progress.

## *Case Study*

### Why Lawrence?

Too often, only the negative and sensational news about Lawrence makes its way through to the outside world. How can we tell a more complete story of Lawrence, the one that we all know from working and living here? We do it by telling our story ourselves, and by focusing on our city's greatest assets—our people.

Our 'Why Lawrence' campaign allows the many voices of our community to

be heard and the many stories to be shared. Leveraging our networks and our partners, Lawrence Partnership convened a working group to develop the concept, raise funds, and launch the 'Why Lawrence' initiative. 'Why Lawrence' highlights the determination, work ethic, entrepreneurship, and optimism of our everyday heroes - the real faces of the city—and through whom a new narrative is emerging.



Equitable and inclusive economic growth in Lawrence means that as the city's economy prospers, Lawrence residents prosper too.



## PROBLEM-SOLVING LEADERSHIP

In an age where income inequality is upending communities across the country, resident prosperity can no longer be assumed to be a by-product of a city's economic growth. Rather, the dual goals of increasing a city's economic vitality while positioning its residents to successfully secure or create new jobs and assume leadership positions must be woven into the process of economic revitalization.

The Lawrence Partnership is committed to the design and execution of strategies that work at the systems level to address the root causes of economic stagnation, reduce barriers to investment and opportunity, and increase connectivity and development of solutions.

### **Leadership Development**

[Our human capital is the core of Lawrence's potential for growth and prosperity.](#)

The skills, capacities, and networks of Lawrencians will serve as the foundation for the expansion of jobs, upward economic mobility, and the advancement of people of color. But leadership takes many shapes and sizes, and needs to be cultivated intentionally to ensure that our leaders of today are positioned to move the city forward and that the leaders of tomorrow can emerge and flourish. We believe that leadership is both a personal and collective process: our leaders need the skills, resources, and support to grow their businesses and organizations while also being able to work together to address the hard issues that require broad vision and strong coalitions to tackle.

### **Workforce Development**

[Like many other parts of the state and the country, Lawrence has a workforce supply-demand gap.](#)

Residents are eager to participate in the local workforce and many only lack the required skills, training, credentials, or language proficiency to do so. At the same time, regional employers are hungry to hire new talent to grow their firms as the labor market further tightens. As this labor chasm grows, it represents lost opportunities to both employers and residents. Understanding employer needs will enable our educational and training institutions to align their programs with real job opportunities for students. Expanding employers' capacity to recognize, recruit, hire, and advance local workers will allow them to grow.

These systems-level solutions require strategic thinking and engagement of partners that are already doing good and important work in this space. The Lawrence Partnership will continue spearheading the collaborative design and launch of workforce strategies which strengthen the connections between employers and those who source and place talent and those who prepare and connect Lawrencians with jobs and advancement.

## Talent Development

The seeds of talent and leadership that exist in all of us can be nurtured.

An inclusive society flourishes under inclusive leadership where many viewpoints, across all sectors and cultures, interplay to bring about needed systemic change. A vibrant ecosystem provides opportunities both for the advancement and increased connectivity of existing leaders and creates space for new leaders to emerge and be supported. Lawrence Partnership looks to identify and cultivate emerging leaders and networks, and build a diverse network of changemakers to lead our city forward.

## Case Study

### Lawrence LEADS

Last year, 30 Lawrence leaders participated in classroom learning at Harvard Business School and experiential learning in Lawrence and Boston. Founded by the Lawrence Partnership, The Alliance for Business Leadership, and collaborating faculty and staff at Harvard Business School, Lawrence LEADS' core content helped these leaders develop skills

to better position their organizations for growth and increased their capacity for responsible social and corporate leadership. The network within the cohort and the connection of participants to other Lawrence and Boston business and civic leaders will further their ability to effect change through their own organization and through cross-sector projects.

## Case Study

### Bilingual Manufacturing

The Lawrence Bilingual Manufacturing Initiative comprises a group of cross-sectoral partners (listed below) focused on a demand-side approach to the Lawrence workforce gap. The approach involves extracting the bilingual workplace lessons and strategies from local best practitioners that have identified and implemented strategies to leverage the skills of the area workforce to increase retention and productivity while decreasing open positions. These best practitioners have recognized that the city's immigrant

workforce had a strong work ethic and critical skills but were not able to overcome the English language barrier. Their solution: embrace a bilingual approach to operations allowing them to recruit, hire, train, and advance people with limited English skills. This solution simultaneously makes these firms more resilient and competitive, while also opening up access to good jobs for local residents. By extracting these practices and supporting other employers' ability to incorporate them, the initiative aspires to close the skills gap.

Project Partners: Lawrence Partnership, Lawrence CommunityWorks, Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board, Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium, Marathon Manufacturing, Greater Lawrence Technical School, United Way.

The best workforce-development solutions happen when leading employers come together to address the talent problem for an entire sector.

Source: *Closing The Skills Gap: Creating Workforce-Development Programs that Work for Everyone* (2017), Martha Laboissiere and Mona Mourshed



A healthy local economy includes businesses that compete in regional and global markets, local service providers who meet the needs of people in the community, and a robust Main Street.

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

**From 2014 to 2016, the overall number of minority-owned employer businesses rose 11%, while the non-minority figure rose 1%.**

Sources: *Annual Survey of Entrepreneurs* (2016), U.S. Census Bureau; *Small Business Facts: Spotlight on Minority-Owned Employer Businesses* (2019), Nora Esposito, U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy

Large businesses offer workers steady jobs with opportunity for learning and advancement while entrepreneurship contributes to wealth creation and economic resilience. Collectively, the vibrancy of this comprehensive business community allows us to invest in education, infrastructure, and services. The Lawrence Partnership works across the public and private sectors to strengthen the availability of critical business inputs, such as quality facilities and real estate, capital and investment, and workforce.

### Small Business Development

Small businesses are the engines of economic growth and job creation, adding unique character to communities and keeping money circulating in the local economy.

Small business ownership offers a path to financial independence and generational mobility, along with the ability to meet the unique needs of a community. This is particularly true in Lawrence, where there are many immigrant and minority small business owners who are improving their lives by offering food items, services, and goods which are hard to find elsewhere. There is a high correlation between immigrants and entrepreneurship, yet language and cultural barriers, along with gaps in “bootstrap capital” and access to social capital, can make it hard for even the most dedicated entrepreneur to turn a good idea into a viable business. The Lawrence Partnership develops and connects the small business ecosystem of support and resources to entrepreneurs who need them.

### Business Attraction, Retention, and Expansion

Our region is growing, with startups scaling and larger businesses and institutions expanding with demand and opportunity.

Rising rents, labor shortages, and transit challenges are pushing businesses out of the Boston/Cambridge core. With our inventory of commercial and industrial space and our talent pool, Lawrence is poised to attract businesses that will benefit from greater affordability while contributing new investment and opportunity. The Lawrence Partnership promotes the city across the region and connects businesses with real estate, workforce, and other resources.

## Case Study

### The Revolving Test Kitchen

Built through a transformative investment by Lupoli Companies and matched by operating support from Northern Essex Community College, the Revolving Test Kitchen (RTK) has granted a “golden ticket” to three successive entrepreneurs to trial, develop, and grow their food-based businesses in Lawrence. After three years, we recognize the demand for this kind of resource for other businesses, as well as the opportunity to connect them with

an even greater scope of services (licensing, marketing, inventory and staffing support, etc.). Therefore, the RTK is expanding to serve multiple businesses simultaneously, while also building out a shared commercial kitchen space. The project’s success, however, will be built upon the alignment and coordination of many organizations working together to create the ecosystem in which participating businesses will thrive.





# CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE

When a community's civic infrastructure is robust, its residents live better lives because they can easily make connections to one another and to needed resources and opportunities.

Like the physical infrastructure of a city, which weaves together streets, buildings, parks, pipes, houses, and more all working together, civic infrastructure represents the people, relationships, and connections that enable people to effectively work together in a community. We call it the cell phone test at the Partnership, which simply means that having someone's cell phone number both indicates a level of trust as well as facilitates better communication, coordination, and collaboration built on that trust. A community that communicates, coordinates, and collaborates seamlessly is one that is more innovative and resilient.

Lawrence Partnership fosters a robust Lawrence civic infrastructure by bringing together our business community, major institutions, and public officials to communicate and collaborate, ensuring that their efforts are closely aligned with each other and with other local and regional agencies and organizations. The resulting network enables Lawrencians to work together over time toward a common future and to quickly come together in times of crisis. Thanks to its strong civic infrastructure, Lawrence steadily recovered from the gas explosion disaster (see below).

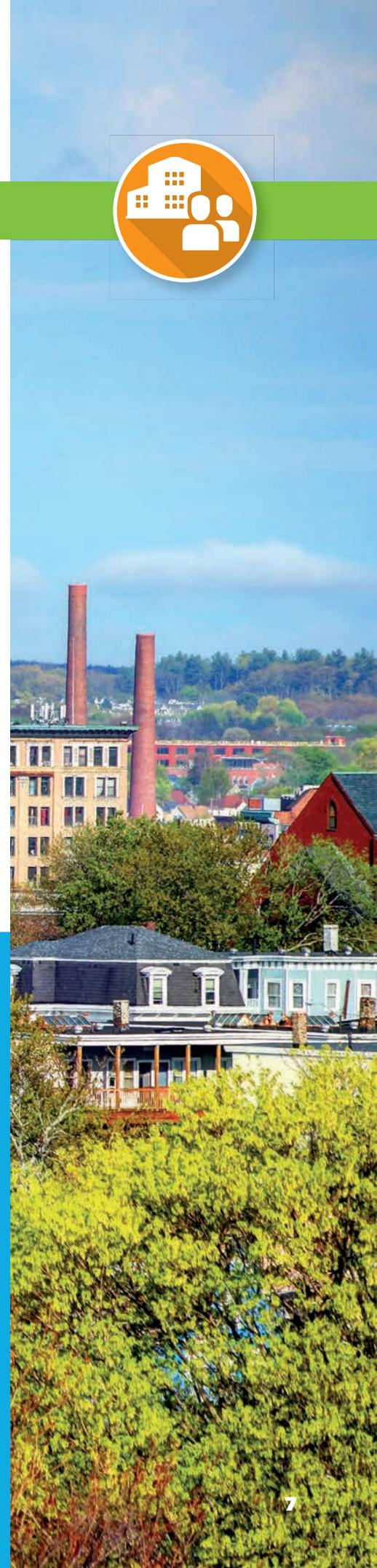
## *Case Study*

### **Gas Explosion Response**

On September 13, 2018, excessive pressure in natural gas lines caused a series of explosions and fires to break out in homes across Lawrence, Andover, and North Andover. In the wake of the disaster and subsequent gas service disruptions, markets and restaurants lost their inventories and customer base; closed businesses lost their employees and key staff. Owners struggled to pay their bills, feed their families, and afford housing.

Lawrence's robust civic infrastructure played a crucial role in our ability to rebound as quickly and completely as we did. Business leaders, employees from all three towns, state officials, and staff from EforAll/EparaTodos and Mill

Cities Community Investments comprised the heart of a coalition convened by the Lawrence Partnership and Essex County Community Foundation. The coalition developed and implemented integrated programming to support impacted business in real time as the needs continued to evolve. The coalition aligned resources, developed strategies, and implemented a variety of critical services to help businesses reopen their doors and get back to business, a prospect that is nearly impossible to imagine happening had there not been so many working relationships already in place when the disaster initially struck. This is robust civic infrastructure in action.



# THANK YOU TO OUR FISCAL 2019 INVESTORS



“I am proud to invest my time and personal resources to support work of the Lawrence Partnership, which is effectively cultivating my community and investing in its greatest asset, its people. As this organization grows, so does the momentum in Lawrence.”

**–Ramon I. Quezada**

*Co-Founder/Director of Business Development, Labor on Site Board Member, Lawrence Partnership*

## LEADERSHIP ROLE

- Board of Directors
- Executive Committee
- Lenders' Circle Member
- Leadership Council

### TRANSFORM LEVEL (\$10,000 - \$50,000)

DCU: **James F. Regan**, President & CEO ■

Eastern Bank: **Bob Rivers**, Chair & CEO ■ ■

Enterprise Bank: **Chester J. Szablak, Jr.**, Executive Vice President, Chief Sales, Community & Customer Relationship Officer ■ ■ ■

Jeanne D'Arc Credit Union: **Mark S. Cochran**, President ■ ■

Merrimack Valley Credit Union: **John J. Howard**, President & CEO ■ ■

TD Bank: **Daniel Griggs**, Market President–Eastern Massachusetts ■ ■

### GROW LEVEL (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

Abel Womack: **John Croce**, CEO ■

Align Credit Union:

**Ray Wrobel**, Vice President, Business Development ■

Northern Essex Community College:

**Lane A. Glenn**, President ■ ■

Pentucket Bank: **Charles A. Walker**, President ■

Reading Cooperative Bank:

**Julieann M. Thurlow**, President & CEO ■ ■

### INVEST LEVEL (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley:

**Joan Hatem-Roy**, CEO ■

Estrella Law Offices, P.C.: **Wendy Y. Estrella**, Attorney ■ ■

Everett Mills Real Estate:

**Marianne Paley Nadel**, Owner & Manager ■ ■

The Gem Group: **Jonathan Isaacson**, Chair & CEO ■ ■

Greater Lawrence Family Health Center:

**John Silva**, President & CEO ■ ■

Guardian Healthcare:

**Jose De La Rosa**, Founder & CEO ■

Holy Family Hospital: **Craig A. Jesiolowski**, President ■

Home Health Foundation:

**Karen Gomes**, President & CEO ■

Lawrence General Hospital:

**Dianne Anderson**, President & CEO ■

Lupoli Companies: **Salvatore Lupoli**, CEO & Founder ■ ■

Merrimack Valley YMCA:

**Gary Morelli**, Executive Director ■

North of Boston Media–*The Eagle Tribune*:

**Karen Andreas**, Regional Publisher ■ ■

Pentucket Medical: **John Sarro**, Executive Director ■

### INCUBATE LEVEL (\$500 - \$2,499)

512 Media Inc.–*Merrimack Valley Magazine*:

**Glenn Prezzano**, President & Publisher ■

Bell Tower Management: **Gary Sidell**, President ■ ■

The Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence:

**Markus Fischer**, Executive Director ■

Central Catholic High School: **Christopher F. Sullivan**,

President

DLC Law Group: **Socrates De La Cruz**, Founding Partner, Attorney, & Real Estate Developer ■ ■

Gomez & Palumbo: **Zoila Gomez**, Managing Partner ■

Greater Lawrence Community Action Council:

**Evelyn Friedman**, Executive Director ■

Groundwork Lawrence:

**Heather McMann**, Executive Director ■ ■

HomeShop Properties: **Walkiria Manzueta**, Business Development/Realtor ■

Labor On Site:

**Ramon I. Quezada**, Director of Business Development: ■

Lawrence Community Works:

**Jessica Andors**, Executive Director ■ ■

Mary Immaculate Health/Care Services:

**Jeanne Leydon**, President & CEO ■

Nunez Properties: **Alberto Nunez**, Developer ■

Regis College: **Antoinette M. Hays**, President ■

Silverio Insurance Agency:

**Evan Silverio**, Vice President of Sales & Operations ■

### GRANT INVESTORS

Amelia Peabody Foundation

Highland Street Foundation

Barr Foundation

MassDevelopment

Essex County Community Foundation

Stevens Foundation

### SUBSTANTIAL IN-KIND CONTRIBUTORS

Alliance for Business Leadership

Harvard Business School

*Merrimack Valley Magazine*

Northern Essex Community College

### EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

City of Lawrence:

**Theresa Park**, Planning Director

**Dan Rivera**, Mayor

**Kendrys Vasquez**, City Council

President

MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Development Board:

**Abel Vargas**, Executive Director

Merrimack Valley Chamber of

Commerce:

**Joe Bevilacqua**, President & CEO

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission:

**Karen Sawyer Conard**, Executive

Director

State of Massachusetts:

**Marcos Devers**, State Representative

**Barry Finegold**, State Senator

**Christina Minicucci**, State

Representative

**Frank Moran**, State Representative

U.S. Congress:

**Lori Trahan**, U.S. Representative,

Massachusetts 3rd District



# THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## COLLECTIVE ACTION

### PLANNING COALITIONS

Industry-specific coalitions that align organizations and individuals around systems-level solution making in areas of priority.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

A diverse set of cross-sectoral local leaders, as well as statewide influencers, and participants of coalitions and working groups, committed to furthering the mission of the Lawrence Partnership through coalition building, promotion of the city, and deepened engagement and collaboration.

### STEERING COALITIONS

High-level thought leaders working on projects with a specific goal and timeline.

## THE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

## THE PARTNERSHIP NETWORK

### OPERATING COALITIONS

Aligned partners supporting development and implementation of innovative programming and initiatives.

Business leaders, non-profit executives, and elected officials working together to support a shared vision for the community.





The historic Duck Bridge in Lawrence is a truss bridge, a structure composed of connected elements. This image was chosen for our cover to represent the mission of the Lawrence Partnership—connecting people and businesses to develop solutions that lead Lawrence forward. (Photo by Heidi Bersen)

**Lawrence Partnership**

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