

# Massachusetts' Future, Our Mission



Learn more about Bunker Hill Community College's "Latino Student Success" partnership with Chelsea High School on page 4



## A Report to the Legislature on the FY2016 Vision Project Performance Incentive Fund

*Performance Management Set-Aside Line (7066-0025)*

### ABOUT MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION

- 29 CAMPUSES
  - 15 COMMUNITY COLLEGES
  - 9 STATE UNIVERSITIES
  - 5 UMASS CAMPUSES
- 300,000 STUDENTS
- 40,000 FACULTY AND STAFF
- 40,000 NEW COLLEGE-EDUCATED CITIZENS & WORKERS ANNUALLY



MASSACHUSETTS  
Department of  
Higher Education

One Ashburton Place, Room 1401  
Boston, MA 02108  
www.mass.edu | (617) 994-6950

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## What's Inside

### New Campus Projects 4

Including Bunker Hill Community College's "Latino Student Success" partnership with Chelsea High School (pictured on cover)

### New Systemwide Projects 5

Including transforming developmental math education across all public colleges and universities



### Year 3 Campus Projects 6-7

Including mapping clear pathways to college degrees at Bristol Community College



### Year 3 Regional Projects 8

Including the founding of the MetroWest College Planning Center in Framingham

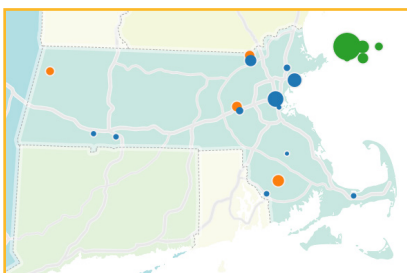
### Year 4 Systemwide Projects 9

Including systemwide transfer agreements in key majors, with campus-by-campus maps to guide students toward their degrees

### VP-PIF Success Story 9

Visiting Northern Essex Community College's Student Success Center, founded through a FY2012-FY2014 VP-PIF grant

### Map: Geographic Distribution of FY2016 VP-PIF Grants Back cover



# Massachusetts' Future,

The **Vision Project Performance Incentive Fund (VP-PIF)** is an annual, competitive seed grant program designed to advance the Vision Project goals of national leadership in key educational outcome areas by launching and/or scaling effective strategies and collaborative partnerships among the Commonwealth's public higher education campuses.

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) projects fewer students enrolling in and graduating from Massachusetts' public colleges and universities in the coming years, based on anticipated declines in the state's population of high school graduates. Unless offset by an acceleration in numbers of graduates, **this population decline, coupled with the wave of retirements hitting the state in the next decade, will lead to a shortage of tens of thousands of skilled workers.**

# +31%

Increase in Massachusetts high school students graduating annually **between 1997 and 2008**

# -9%

Projected drop in Massachusetts high school students graduating annually **between 2009 and 2020**

# 55-65k

Projected shortfall of associate's and bachelor's degrees to be awarded by Massachusetts public colleges and universities **2015-2025**, compared with projected need

Source: *Degrees of Urgency*, 2014 Vision Project Annual Report [www.mass.edu/vpreport](http://www.mass.edu/vpreport)

# Our Mission

To avert this downturn, calls for new campus VP-PIF grant proposals this year placed particular emphasis on high-impact strategies in the “Big Three” outcome areas outlined in more detail in the most recent Vision Project annual report, *Degrees of Urgency* ([www.mass.edu/vpreport](http://www.mass.edu/vpreport)):



## COLLEGE PARTICIPATION

Raising the percentage of high school graduates going to college—and the readiness of these students for college-level work.



## COLLEGE COMPLETION

Increasing the percentage of students who complete degree and certificate programs.



## CLOSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

Closing achievement gaps among students from different ethnic, racial, gender, and income groups in all areas of educational progress.

Continuation and systemwide grants support the above as well as other Vision Project outcome areas:



## WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT

Aligning occupationally oriented degree and certificate programs with the needs of statewide, regional and local employers.



## STUDENT LEARNING

Achieving higher levels of student learning through better assessment and more extensive use of assessment results.



## PREPARING CITIZENS

Providing students with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to be engaged, informed citizens.

And the advancement of **OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES.**

Fostering the implementation of evidence-based, proven strategies at the public campuses to offset the Commonwealth’s projected shortage of educated workers is a **top policy and budget priority of the Department of Higher Education.**



## Performance Incentive Fund

FY2016 Awards

**\$2.75m**

in state funding

**7**

new campus and systemwide projects

**19**

projects continuing from prior years

Explore more VP-PIF funding data at [www.mass.edu/vppif](http://www.mass.edu/vppif)



# New Campus Projects

**Bunker Hill Community College** FY16: \$200,000  
In partnership with UMass Boston

**Middlesex Community College** FY16: \$100,000  
In partnership with UMass Lowell



**Closing participation and completion gaps for Latino students in Chelsea.** The project, titled “Latino Student Success: Building Pathways from High School to Baccalaureate,” is a partnership with UMass Boston (UMB), Chelsea High School (CHS), Chelsea Chamber of Commerce, Intergenerational Literacy Program, and Centro Latino. The goal of this work is to, by 2020, narrow the gap in college participation for CHS Latino students, close the gap in associate degree completion and transfer of BHCC Latino students, and close the gap in bachelor’s degree completion of UMB Latino students.

Partners will work collaboratively on four critical areas:

1. engagement and cultural inclusivity, including faculty professional development, family engagement and student support services;
2. educational and career planning, including development of career and transfer advising strategies;
3. applied and experiential learning, including promoting full-time attendance through incorporation of community-based service learning projects, paid internships, and job shadowing opportunities; and
4. aligned and accelerated pathways to bachelor’s degrees.

**Using predictive analytics for success in transfer, completion and closing achievement gaps for STEM students.** In partnership with UMass Lowell, Middlesex’s project will identify STEM students on a transfer track from Middlesex to UMass Lowell who are at moderate to high risk of non-completion. The campuses will design timely interventions and aligned learning outcomes that support successful transfer and completion across institutions, particularly for low-income, minority and non-traditional students whose achievements gaps tend to be the largest. Once underway, the initiative is anticipated to impact 700+ students per year.

**Salem State University** FY16: \$198,763  
In partnership with North Shore Community College & Northern Essex Community College

**Expediting bachelor’s degree completion through early college programming for Lynn and Methuen students.** “Early College on the North Shore” (ECNS) is a partnership between Salem State University, North Shore Community College, Northern Essex Community College, Lynn Public Schools, and Methuen High School. Building on existing early college programs, ECNS will provide pathways for 40 Lynn and Methuen high school students per year to enroll in early college programming, facilitating completion of college in three years or less and entry into high-need workforce areas of IT, early childhood, and business. It is designed to attract more students from underserved populations by improving college readiness, maximizing portability of credits, shortening time to degree, and reducing higher education costs for students and families. Funds support the development of curricula, admissions and transfer processes, academic supports, peer supports, internships, career-based exploration and soft skill development.

# New Systemwide Projects

## Developmental Math

FY16: \$167,550

All Undergraduate Campuses



**Transforming developmental (remedial) math education.** DHE analysis shows that currently only 21 percent of community college students and 56 percent of state university students who enroll in a developmental math course go on to complete a credit-bearing math course within two years. This data indicates that traditional developmental math approaches have been one of the most significant barriers to student success. Accordingly, in fall 2013, the BHE set a goal to increase the number of students completing a credit-bearing (post-developmental) math course by 20 percent by fall 2018. DHE and campuses have launched a number of initiatives to transform developmental math education and increase success rates. VP-PIF funds are supporting this work, including piloting alternative placement measures; convening campuses to share new, more effective approaches to developmental math education; and scaling these practices, which show promising results, across the system.

## VP-PIF Evaluation Study

FY16: \$50,000

**Retrospective evaluation of the VP-PIF grant program from FY2012–FY2016.** An evaluation conducted by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute will (1) characterize and quantify VP-PIF program outcomes; (2) identify promising practices and explore their potential for scaling; (3) help establish future program outcome metrics; and (4) assess existing data collection and reporting practices. The study is anticipated to be completed August 31, 2016, and will be used to inform improvements in the VP-PIF grant program, including DHE's ability to support campuses and to conduct more robust evaluations in the future.

## Preparing Citizens

FY16: \$115,000

All Undergraduate Campuses

**Preparing students with the knowledge and skills to be engaged citizens.** To combat what has been described as a “civic recession” among the American populace, the BHE adopted a civic learning policy making Massachusetts the first state in the nation to incorporate civic learning as an expected outcome for undergraduate students at the public campuses beginning in the 2014–15 academic year. VP-PIF funds are being used to facilitate and support the development and sharing of best practices in civic learning among the campuses, and to develop new ways to measure and report students' civic learning outcomes to enable campuses to determine what approaches are most effective for students and how civic learning may impact other Vision Project goals, including whether students who take courses with a civic learning component persist and complete at higher rates than those who do not.

## Learning Outcomes Assessment

FY16: \$30,000

All Undergraduate Campuses

**Advancing the practice of assessment in Massachusetts and nationally.** Responding to calls from the federal government, accreditation authorities, and the public for greater transparency and accountability surrounding what students actually learn in college, the DHE and Massachusetts public colleges and universities in 2011 launched several initiatives to develop and scale new practices in student learning outcomes assessment. Within Massachusetts, a heavy focus was placed on helping every campus improve curriculum and learning through professional development in assessment practices. Meanwhile, working within the state and with eight partner states, faculty, administrators, and professional staff developed an assessment model centered on evaluating actual student work while providing relevant reports to both academic and non-academic stakeholders, thus allowing for a simultaneous focus on improving teaching and learning and meeting calls for quality assurance. After successful completion of a pilot study, three additional states joined the Multi-State Collaborative to Advance Learning Outcomes Assessment, bringing the total to 12 participating states.

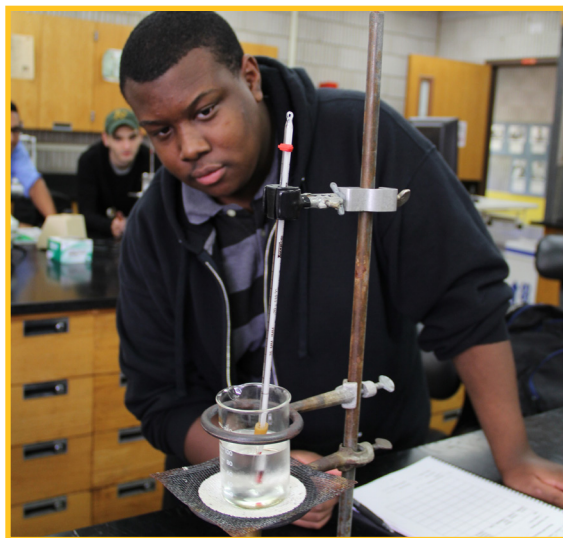
Massachusetts' participation in all of this work was originally funded by the Davis Educational Foundation but has transitioned to receive continuation funding from VP-PIF and the Association of American Colleges and Universities. In FY16, Massachusetts is also focusing on developing a means to assess civic learning and bringing faculty together to agree upon statewide expected learning outcomes in key courses to facilitate successful transfer.

# Year 3 Campus Projects

**Bristol Community College** FY16: \$39,957

**Fostering completion by helping students avoid excessive or unnecessary credits.** “Bristol Community College Pathways to Completion” is intended to significantly increase graduation rates and greatly reduce disparities in the success of underserved college students by mapping clear pathways to college degrees (Guided Pathways to Success, or GPS). With VP-PIF support, GPS maps were implemented in fall 2014, and BCC quickly found several successful outcomes. As of June 2015, on average, GPS students enrolled in 16 credits per semester compared to the average BCC student who enrolls in 10 credits. Persistence rates for GPS students were 18 percentage points higher than the average persistence rate at BCC, 88% to 70% respectively. GPS courses that included a service learning component had 100% completion rates.

FY14 VP-PIF funding supported Bristol’s successful launch of the Open Education Resources (OERs) pilot, which incentivized faculty to replace their textbooks with free and accessible educational materials. Last year, BCC courses that utilized OERs generated a total savings of over \$33,000 for students and decreased DWF (drop, withdraw, fail, incomplete) rates by 16%. In its final year of VP-PIF funding, the project is focused on scaling up proven strategies and exploring additional evidence-based interventions and high-impact practices.



**“GPS STEM gave me the ability to create a block schedule filled with my loves—the math and science courses I needed to graduate on time. Because of that schedule I was able to complete 33 credits my first year, and I am on track to graduate in two years this spring. Being in a cohort helped too; it made it easier to adjust to college.”**

**—JAHZIEL CHASE, STUDENT  
BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

## How Projects Are Funded

Seed grants are awarded to individual campuses or regional consortia through an annual, competitive process open to the state’s 15 community colleges, nine state universities, and five University of Massachusetts campuses. VP-PIF funds are also used to support a small number of projects to improve overall system performance, collaboration and efficiencies. All new grant submissions are reviewed by DHE staff as well as a panel of external education experts.



From FY2012 through FY2014, the program committed three years of seed funding to each project—100% in Year 1, 66% in Year 2, and 33% in Year 3, subject to state appropriation—with the

expectation that long-term sustainability would be supported by the campus(es). “Year 3 Projects” mentioned in this report launched in FY2014 and are in their final year of funding.



## More Year 3 Campus Projects

### Bridgewater State University

FY16: \$17,582

#### Applying proven retention strategies across the campus.

The project expands successful National Science Foundation practices in STREAMS (Student Retention Enhancement Across Mathematics and Science) to other non-STEM academic departments on campus. This initiative focuses on laying the groundwork for advanced coursework and increasing the likelihood of retention in major and timely graduation.

### Bunker Hill Community College

FY16: \$57,511

**Transforming developmental/remedial education.** The project involves significantly expanding the “Summer Bridge” program to at least twice its current capacity. The Summer Bridge enables entering students with need for developmental English/math coursework to receive intensive instruction and to progress through developmental levels prior to fall entry.

### Cape Cod Community College

FY16: \$40,360

**Assessing student learning outcomes to improve student success.** This project is creating a systematic and integrated approach to the program review and student learning outcome assessment process throughout the institution. Cape Cod Community College sees assessment as a core element reviewing and ensuring continued success. This initiative will build on the work already in place and distribute the assessment of learning outcomes across several years, culminating in a streamlined program review.

### MassBay Community College

FY16: \$57,763

**Transforming developmental/remedial education and assessing student learning outcomes.** In one project, high school students and adult learners in the MetroWest region will have access to a fully online math workshop that aims to improve student readiness for college-level math courses. An additional project is focused on assessing student learning outcomes and using results to inform programmatic, curricular, and pedagogical decisions. This includes systematic collection of student learning evidence to aid in identifying disparities among the key gender and racial subgroups targeted by the Vision Project.

### Middlesex Community College

FY16: \$39,960

**Improving completion rates and closing gaps by redesigning advising and course enrollment models.** “Pathways to Achievement, Completion, Career and Transfer” includes a comprehensive review and revision of advising and enrollment, and restructuring of course scheduling. The College has also worked to develop academic curriculum maps (Guided Pathways to Success, or GPS) and enhance professional development across the college. The overall goal is to increase the college’s completion and graduation rates and to decrease the transfer-out rates for all students, with a specific emphasis on racially and ethnically diverse populations.

### North Shore Community College

FY16: \$43,726

**Expanding STEM-oriented early college programming for area high school students.** The project expands upon North Shore’s existing Early College initiative by: 1) revamping a popular College Success Seminar for entering students to improve the course’s applicability across disciplines; 2) developing additional Early College and other program activities to recruit and support diverse students entering STEM programs; and 3) developing STEM elements/modules specifically for the Early College program to increase understanding and awareness of these programs and career fields. As of June 2015, NSCC reported that 84% of the first Early College cohort and 95–100% of the second cohort were enrolled in college.

### Springfield Technical Community College

FY16: \$32,527

**Improving student success rates and closing achievement gaps for Latino students.** The project targets interventions for Latino students to improve their academic performance and educate faculty and staff about the growing population. The project contains both new initiatives and the enhancement or modification of existing ones to create a welcoming campus for Latino students.

### UMass Boston

FY16: \$23,818

**Improving student success rates and closing achievement gaps.** The project includes: 1) data collection and analysis to understand the factors that hinder and facilitate the success of liberal arts students, with a particular focus on identifying and closing achievement gaps; and 2) developing and piloting new models for block scheduling, learning communities, and other retention and completion initiatives aimed at engaging and connecting students to the university and closing attainment gaps. As of October 2015, UMass Boston was reporting that the four-year completion rate for participants in its VP-PIF-supported freshman learning community, CLA First!, was nearly double that of other liberal arts students (25% vs. 13%) and the five-year completion rate of 43% was also higher than the University’s average.

### Westfield State University

FY16: \$26,022

**Improving first-year and transfer student retention.** The project started the implementation of a comprehensive, data-driven retention initiative to enhance the success and graduation of the University’s first-year and transfer students. Included is the development of annual and long-term strategies that engage the entire university community in implementation. The project also enhances programs, services, and interventions to support students to college completion, eliminate disparities and strengthen workforce alignment. As of October 2015, Westfield was reporting a 2 percentage point increase in the University’s overall freshman retention rate from FY13 to FY14.

# Year 3 Regional Projects

## MetroWest Consortium

FY16: \$99,900

Framingham State University & MassBay Community College



**“I always say talent is distributed equally, opportunity is not. I am optimistic about this center making a big difference in opportunity for people in this region.”**

**JAVIER CEVALLOS, PRESIDENT  
FRAMINGHAM STATE UNIVERSITY**

### **Establishing a regional college access and college financing support facility for students and families.**

With VP-PIF support, MassBay Community College and Framingham State University founded the MetroWest College Planning Center in December 2014 and opened its dedicated facility in Framingham in September 2015. The Center is the first such regional center of its kind in the state.

The Center has reached more than 2,500 MetroWest community residents to offer personal assistance with college search and financial aid application processes.

More than 70% of outreach has been delivered to underrepresented and underserved communities. The Center has also offered 58 hours of professional development to K–12, adult basic education and higher education partners and facilitated advising and college visits for more than 450 underrepresented youth. Partnering with local school districts on outreach, the Center has also helped Maynard High School to double and Milford High School to quadruple their dual enrollment participation.

## Lowell Consortium

FY16: \$92,852

Middlesex Community College & UMass Lowell

### **Collaborative faculty-driven work to improve student learning and success.**

Over the last five years, the institutions have worked to better align the curriculum of high-transfer programs, like Criminal Justice and Economics, which has led to strong articulation agreements. Through their VP-PIF project, the Consortium is expanding their focus beyond the already existing aligned programs in order to better facilitate transfers between the two institutions.

## Southeast Consortium

FY16: \$135,509

Bridgewater State University, Bristol Community College, Cape Cod Community College & Massasoit Community College

### **Strengthening transfer pathways from area community colleges to Bridgewater State.**

This project is designing a seamless pathway for transfer students from Bristol Community College, Cape Cod Community College, and Massasoit Community College to gain access to Bridgewater State University's resources that can help them plan for a successful transition and timely degree completion.

## Western Consortium

FY16: \$63,759

Berkshire Community College, Greenfield Community College, Holyoke Community College & Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

### **Engaging local K–12 schools in building interest in and preparation for STEM majors.**

The project builds on the 2013 pilot of the MCLA STEM Academy by engaging new regional schools in providing expanded academic and co-curricular opportunities that leverage student interest in STEM learning and workforce preparation.



# Year 4 Systemwide Projects

## Transfer/Course Mapping

FY16: \$796,520

All Undergraduate Campuses

# MassTransfer

**Creating a seamless system of transfer from two-year to four-year institutions.** Building upon the earlier Common Course Numbering phase of this VP-PIF project, the DHE, community colleges, state universities and UMass campuses have begun collaborating on universally accepted transfer maps that will guide students who wish to begin their baccalaureate studies at a community college. The project funds the convening of faculty in common transfer disciplines, who work together to define a set of foundational courses that will be accepted by any public campus to satisfy the freshman and sophomore requirements of a bachelor's degree in that discipline. These agreements drive the development of web-based, campus-specific maps that will ease the transfer planning process for students and guarantee portability of all credits between campuses. Maps for the first six majors (Biology, Chemistry, Economics, History, Political Science, and Psychology) will go live in fall 2016 as part of the existing MassTransfer website; an additional 10 majors are in progress and will go live in fall 2017. Based on current transfer data, DHE estimates these 16 disciplines will cover 70 percent of students intending to transfer from community colleges to four-year public campuses.

## Partnership to Advance Collaboration & Efficiencies (PACE)

FY16: \$45,000

All Community Colleges & State Universities

**Leveraging economies of scale to achieve cost savings for all community colleges & state universities.** VP-PIF dollars help fund PACE, an effort by the state universities and community colleges that has yielded millions of dollars in savings through a diverse array of initiatives from IT procurement, to energy purchases, to single contracts for campus bookstores, as well as insurance and auditing services.

## VP-PIF SUCCESS STORY

### Northern Essex Community College Student Success Center



**“Helping students to be successful requires an incredible amount of resources. Without this Vision Project Performance Incentive Fund grant, it would have been very difficult to get our Student Success Center off the ground.”**

**LANE GLENN, PRESIDENT  
NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Northern Essex Community College's first VP-PIF grant (FY12–FY14) was centered on the goals of increasing graduation and student success rates and closing achievement gaps. NECC established a Student Success Center on the Lawrence campus, increased tutoring services, and supported an Early Alert Program to identify struggling students in time to design early interventions to increase academic achievement, retention, and graduation rates. The Center uses a holistic approach, connecting students to advising and mentoring, career planning, tutoring, and other activities designed to strengthen their academic and life skills, and to increase student motivation.

“The Student Success Center on our Lawrence campus is providing resources to help students succeed, especially students who are struggling,” says Lane Glenn, NECC president. “The good news is that we have already achieved impressive results. Students who utilize the center's resources are more likely to complete their courses and to stay in college.

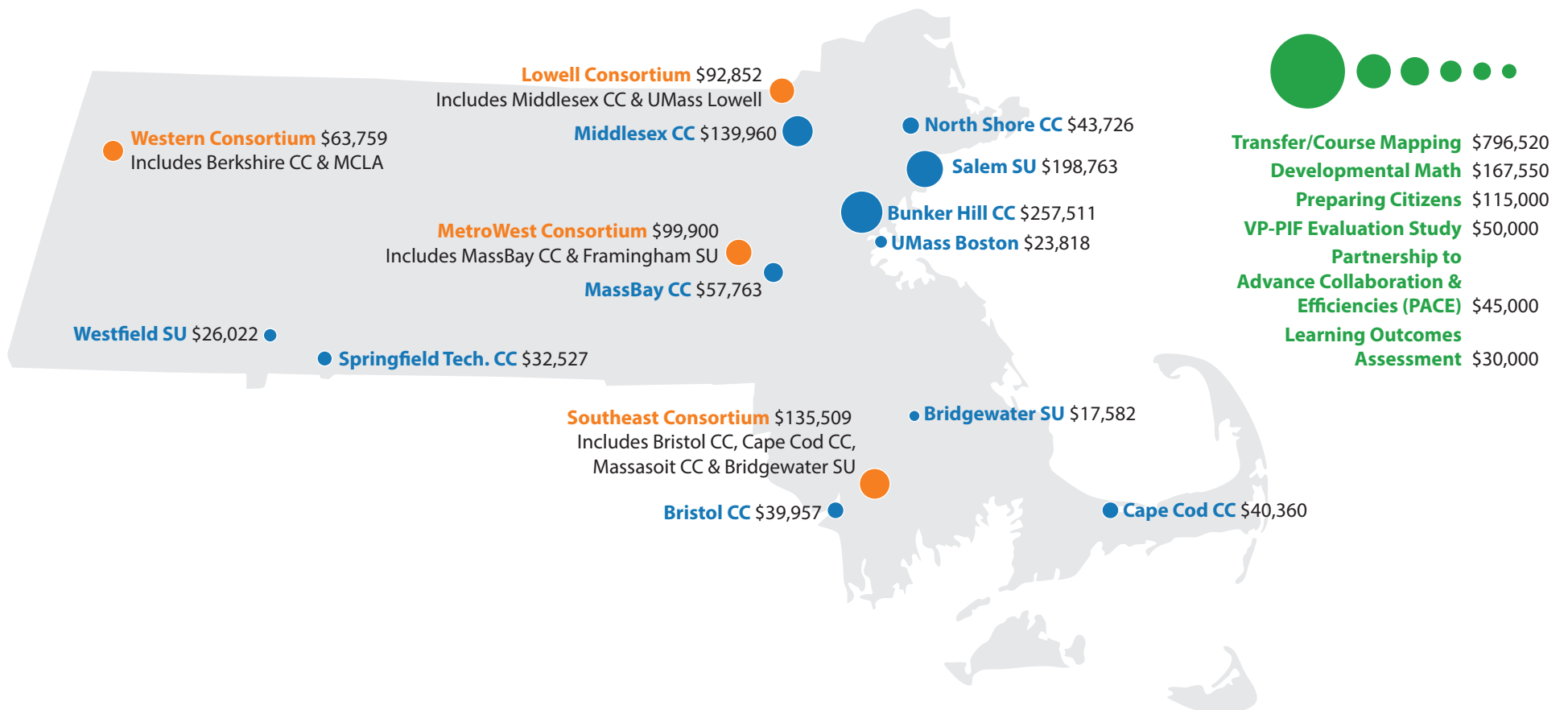
The Center is open to all students; however, the majority of those served are Latino residents of Lawrence. The College reports that Latino students using the Center's services had an 11.3% higher course completion rate and a 19% higher retention rate when compared with Latinos not using the services.

*This project was funded at \$135,053 in Year 1, \$90,035 in Year 2, and \$44,567 in Year 3. (Total of \$269,655)*

# Geographic Distribution of FY2016 VP-PIF Grants

■ = Campus     
 ■ = Regional Consortium     
 ■ = Systemwide

Bubble sizes represent total amount of FY2016 funding awarded to each entity, for both new projects and those continuing from FY2014.



COMPARISON **FY2012–FY2016 Geographic Distribution**  
 Interact with these maps and explore more VP-PIF funding data at [www.mass.edu/vppif](http://www.mass.edu/vppif)

