



SkillWorksSM
PARTNERS FOR A PRODUCTIVE WORKFORCE

**USCM-WDC/NCEE Meeting
September 25, 2007**

For more information, please contact SkillWorks c/o The Boston Foundation 75 Arlington Street Boston, MA 02116 tel 617/ 338 1700 or visit www.skill-works.org

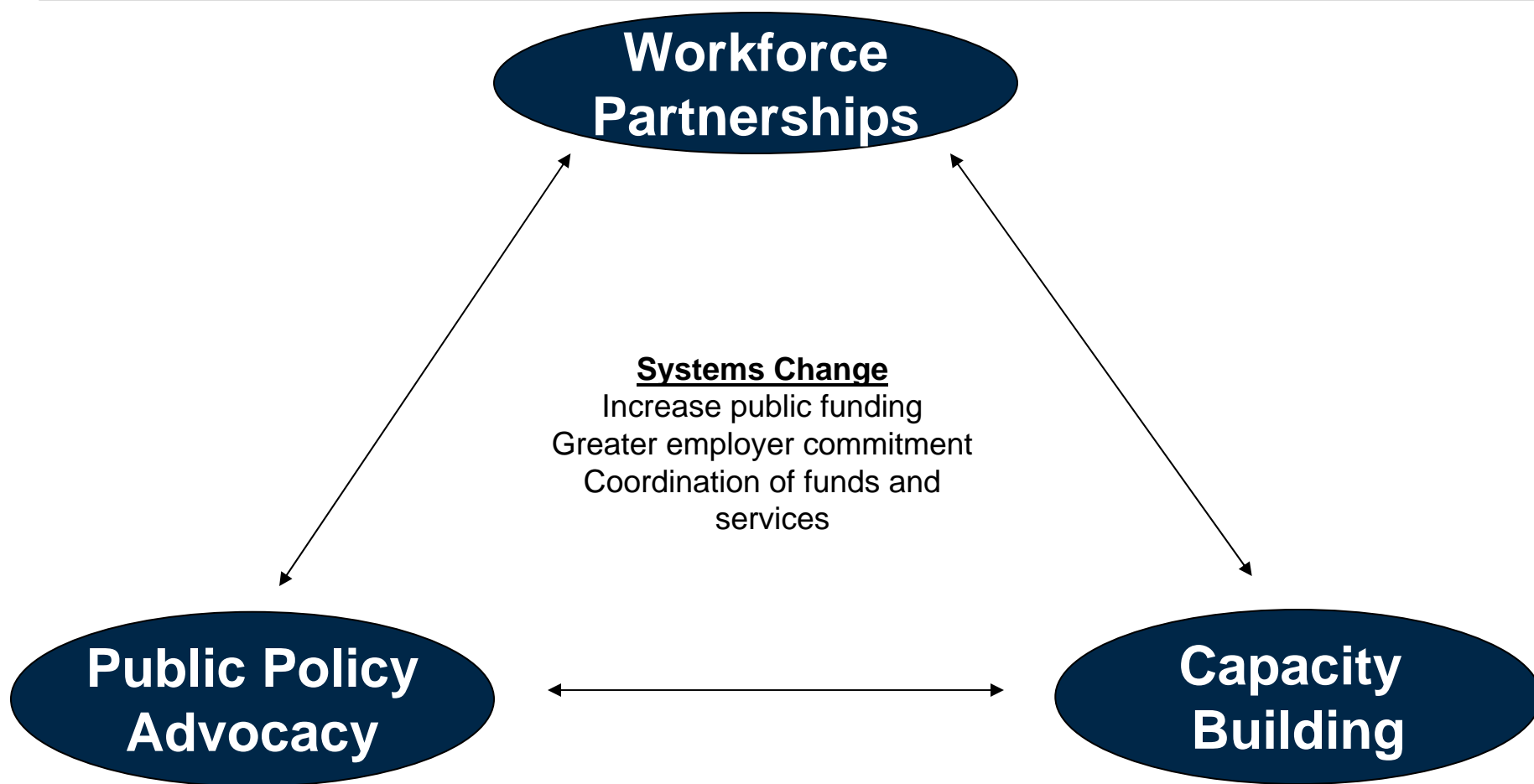
About SkillWorks

- 5-year Initiative with \$15 million goal
- \$15 million raised from 16 funders
 - 10 local and 4 national foundations, City of Boston, Commonwealth of MA
 - 50% local foundation funding, 30% national foundation funding, 20% public funding
- Phase II planning underway

SkillWorks Principles

- Promote a “dual focused” system concerned with the needs of both employers and workers
- Provide flexible capital for industry-specific interventions with significant employer engagement
- Focus on career and educational pathways and progress toward family economic self-sufficiency through wage and benefits increases

A three-pronged approach



Programmatic approach

Workforce Partnerships

- RFPs to select planning and/or implementation grantees
- \$50,000 10-month planning grants
- \$1 million, three-year implementation grants
- Currently fund partnerships in the following sectors:
 - Health Care
 - Hospitality
 - Building Services
 - Automotive
 - Community Health

Programmatic Approach

Capacity Building

- Phase I: technical assistance and operational supports to five workforce development providers; four organizations now participate in SkillWorks partnership grants
- Phase II: individual technical assistance, peer exchange, documentation of best practices, and mini-grants for SkillWorks partnerships

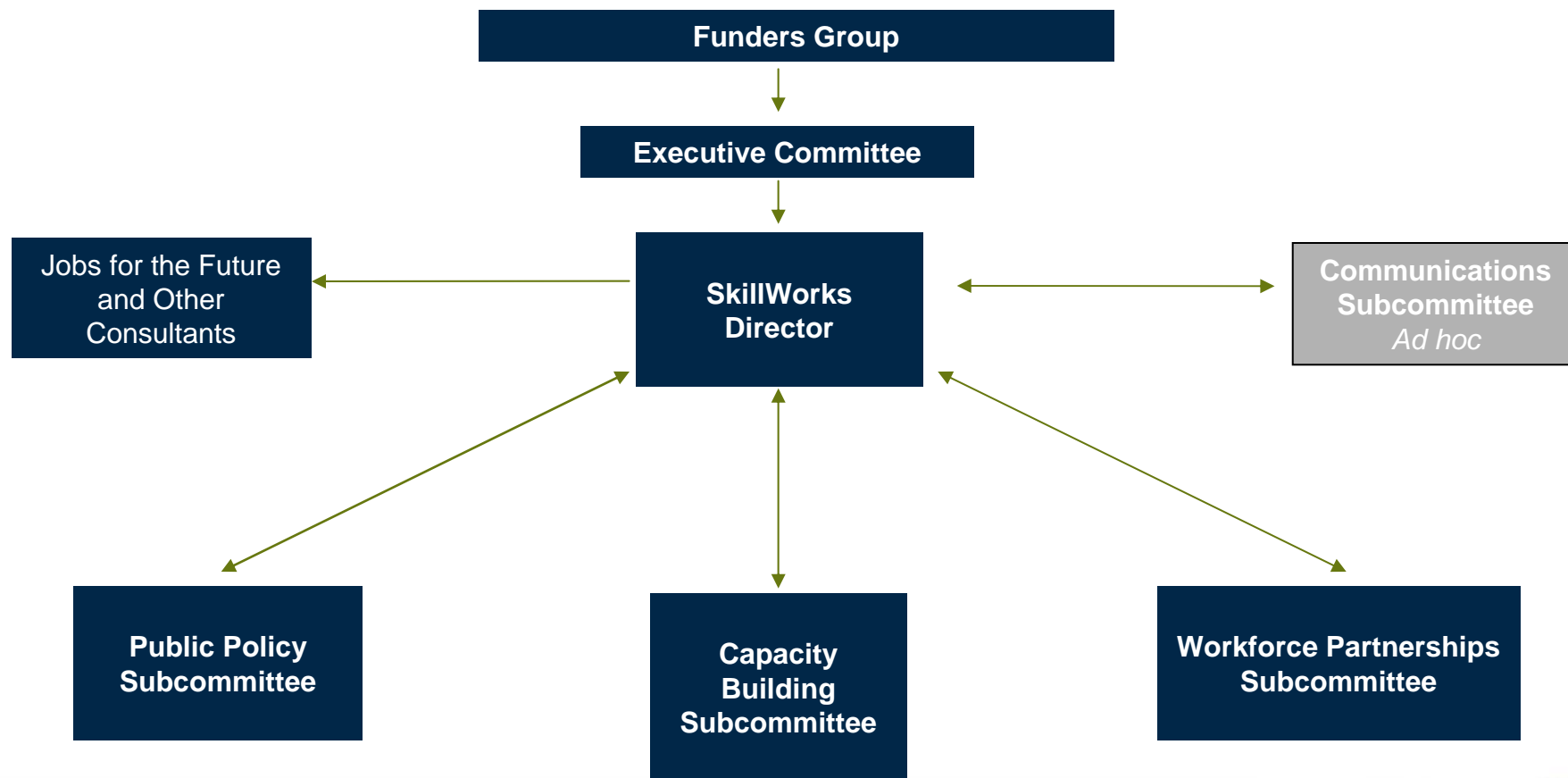
Programmatic Approach

- Public Policy Advocacy
 - RFP to select grantee for five-year, \$1.5 million grant
 - Selected Workforce Solutions Group, a coalition led by the Women's Union, MA Workforce Investment Board Association, Mass AFL-CIO, and Massachusetts Communities Action Network

Progress made to date

- **Workforce Partnerships**
 - Nearly 2,700 participants: 30% pre-employment and 70% incumbent worker
 - 435 job placements
 - Over 300 program-related wage increases and over 200 program-related promotions
 - Incumbent retention rate between 67 and 97 percent
 - Cost per placement/wage gain: approx. \$5,800
- **Capacity Building**
 - Formation of new partnerships and intermediaries in industries without clear career ladders
- **Public Policy Advocacy**
 - Increased public/state investments: \$30.5 million total in 2004 and 2006 state economic stimulus packages
 - FSET (Food Stamp Employment & Training Program)
 - Educational Rewards Program

Organizational Structure



Initiative Management

- Funders Group governs collaborative; one vote per institution
- Funder subcommittees provide direction for each component
- Executive Committee comprised of four subcommittee chairs
- Staffed by a full-time director
- The Boston Foundation is fiscal agent and houses the project
- The Boston Foundation negotiates city and state contracts
- Planning process to develop a collective vision and design

Implementation Challenges

- Coordination and governance of collaborative require a lot of time and attention
- Communications and public relations need to be coordinated among partners
- Staff and organization turnover limit progress
- Collecting data and making cross-site comparisons is difficult
- Integration of public policy and implementation grantees takes careful coordination
- Partnerships have to balance serving the community and creating value for employers

Best Practices

- Develop uniform performance measures
- Early employer investment and support can result in changes to employer practices and increased attention to workforce development
- Focused advocacy can increase state and federal resources for workforce development
- Leadership at one organization is important to shepherd the project along
- Labor market research is a necessary starting point to understand opportunity and leverage