

## Leadership Team

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## Working Groups

- Careers & Citizenship
  - Financing Post-secondary Education
  - Post-secondary Access, Completion & Persistence
  - Marketing & Communications

## Contact RHM

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# REACH HIGHER MASSACHUSETTS

**Through effective school counseling programming and strategic partnerships, Reach Higher Massachusetts will inspire every student to take charge of their future by completing their education past high school.**

*September 2016*

## From Bob Bardwell, Reach Higher MA Team Leader



Welcome to the first edition of the Reach Higher Massachusetts (RHM) newsletter!

Since 2014, RHM has been meeting to advance the important work of preparing students to be ready for whatever form of post-secondary education they desire. To date, RHM has created an organizational structure, developed a mission statement and has identified five key measurable goals. In August 2016 RHM conducted a New England regional convening attended by over

200 people engaged in RHI activities and planning.

RHM has a Leadership Team consisting of eight individuals, a Guiding Coalition of associations and professionals and four working groups that are supported by over 100 school counselors, counselor educators, college access partners, college admission officers, organization representatives and policy makers. All interested individuals and organizations who are concerned about improving high school graduation rates and successful post-secondary education access and completion are welcome to participate in the RHM initiative. We plan to produce a RHM quarterly (September, December, February and May).

Since this is the first newsletter, a brief outline of the national Initiative is provided below. Visit our [website](#) to learn more about RHM activities and to check out instructional resources. Please stay informed and better still, get involved. I look forward to working with you!

[Sign up for RHM email updates](#)

## [National Reach Higher Initiative](#)

*Inspiring every student to take charge of their future  
by completing their education past high school*

- Initiative launched at the 2014 ASCA Conference by **First Lady Michelle Obama** with four areas of focus: financial literacy, self-efficacy, rigorous courses, and school counseling.
- 2014 National Convening at Harvard where experts discussed improvements in school counseling and college advising and how to enable school counselors to provide the best support for our nation's students.
- Similar convenings followed in San Diego (2014), Florida (2015), and New England (2016).

## The Early FAFSA is here!

In an effort to make the financial aid process more streamlined, the federal government has instituted changes for families applying for financial aid for the 2017-18 academic year. The changes are outlined below:

- **October 1, 2016:** 2017-18



FAFSA becomes available.

- 2017-18 FAFSA should be completed by every family considering sending a student to college during the 2017-18 academic year.
- 2015 income will be requested.
- The [IRS Data Retrieval Tool](#) facilitates filing by importing tax return information directly from the IRS to the FAFSA.
- Changes to 2015 income or other circumstances affecting the family's financial status should be shared with

These tools provide important information and opportunities for families to openly discuss finances, to help manage expectations and to access needed assistance:

- [FAFSA](#)
- [The FAFSA4caster](#)
- [College Scorecard](#)
- [College Board Expected Family Contribution Calculator](#)
- [College Affordability & Transparency Center](#)

**All students interested in post-secondary education and/or training should be encouraged to file the FAFSA.**

**Meet deadlines! Missing them can be costly.**

appropriate financial aid administrators.

- The early FAFSA doesn't mean that colleges will send financial aid awards in the fall.
  - Refer to college publications and websites for details
- Deadlines and priority dates are critical to receiving full consideration for assistance.
  - Since college financial aid deadlines are all different, encourage families to meet the earliest deadline or priority date.



## College & Career Data Usage Certificate

### ***Why Earn Your Certificate?***

1. Improve professional practice
2. Improve student outcomes
3. Identify at risk students
4. Develop effective intervention plans

#### **Meeting 1**

October 21, 2016 at UTI in Norwood  
OR

October 28, 2016 at Holyoke CC

#### **Meeting 2**

April 3, 2017 MASCA Conference

▶ **REGISTER:** [www.masca.org](http://www.masca.org)

COST: \$35

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Earn the **College and Career Data Usage Certificate** via a new and unique partnership between MASCA, Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, and Reach Higher MA.

- Requirements
  - attend two half day workshops
  - participate in several webinars
  - complete a data project
- Learn how to use EWIS, EDWIN, DART Data
- Earn 15 PDPS

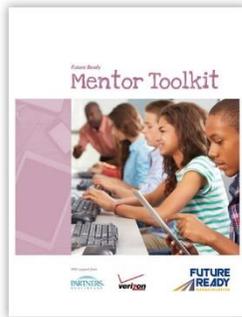
# Future Ready Toolkit: Preparing Students for the Future

## Toolkit

[FutureReadyMA.org/Toolkit](http://FutureReadyMA.org/Toolkit)

## Webinar

[Future Ready Mentor Toolkit Webinar](#)



The **Future Ready Mentor Toolkit** is a digital collection of targeted materials that includes information such as Massachusetts' curriculum requirements, middle and high school checklists, financial literacy activities and career and college planning resources. The Toolkit is flexible enough to use in its entirety or in part, selecting only the resources needed for a particular topic or activity.

The Webinar provides an overview of the Mentor Toolkit assets, examples of how to integrate the Toolkit and college and career readiness into programming and sample activities that can be used to engage students in thinking about and planning for their future beyond high school.

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