

# EMPOWERING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Initiative Update | November 2019

Dear Friends,

We are well into our first year of the Impact Essex County Alpha Project: Empowering Economic Opportunity (EEO) - ECCF's systems philanthropy approach to move the needle on income inequality in Essex County and help the 38 percent of residents living below the living wage make economic gains for themselves and their families.

Since launching this project nine months ago, the energy level throughout continues in strength and impact. It is both joyful and humbling to collaborate each day with the inspiring leaders and doers across these many efforts. Progress across each program is on track and the wheels of our collective work are turning fast. In addition to the programmatic work, ripple effects of our systems change investments are materializing across each initiative in new practices, relationships and partnerships. We see beliefs shifting and new assumptions being formed.

Thank you for your support and investment in ECCF's Empowering Economic Opportunity initiative. I am so pleased to share these updates with you as we continue this critical work.

**Stratton Lloyd**

COO and Vice President for Community Leadership  
 Essex County Community Foundation

## Empowering Economic Opportunity News & Media

[Creating a Vision for the "Blue Economy"](#)

*Salem News, November 2019*

[New Loan Fund to Help Strengthen Small Businesses](#)

*ECCF Feature Story, November 2019*

[President Pat's Podcast: Prior Learning Assessment](#)

*Podcast, North Shore Community College, October 2019*

[Essex County Think Lab Focuses on North Shore Blue Economy](#)

*ECCF Press Release, October 2019*

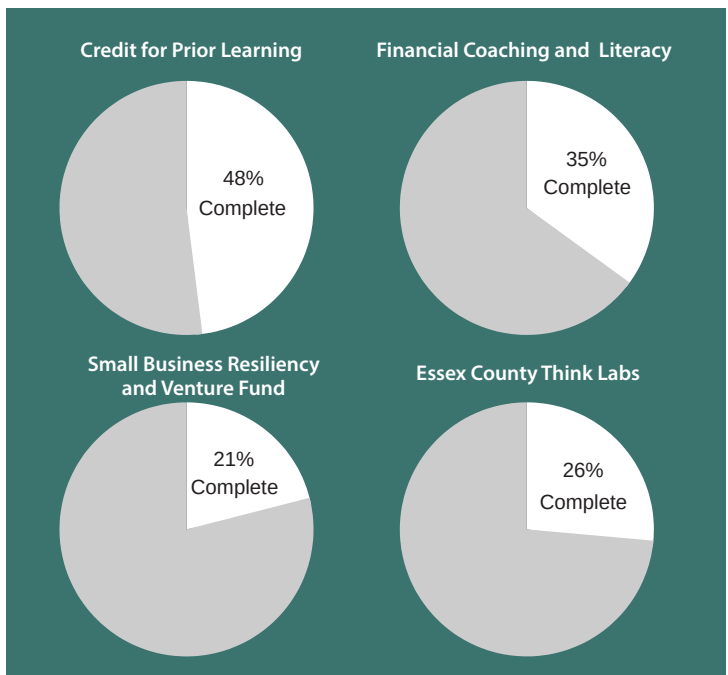
[CPL Can Make a College Degree a Reality for More People](#)

*ECCF Feature Story, October 2019*

[Financial Literacy Helps People Prep for the Future](#)

*ECCF Feature Story, October 2019*

## EEO Progress At A Glance\*



\*Includes an overall status on coalition/team development, strategy definition, program design, program outputs/outcomes, and partner recruitment per plan.

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

## Credit for Prior Learning:

Enabling adult learners to translate their specialized skills and experience into college credits, reducing costs and time to graduate. Learn more about the Credit for Prior Learning program at [eccf.org/EEO](http://eccf.org/EEO).



Credit for Prior Learning NSCC team

The Northeast Regional Prior Learning Assessment Consortium, led by North Shore Community College in partnership with Gordon College, Middlesex Community College, Endicott College, Northern Essex Community College, UMass Lowell and Salem State University, continue their work streamlining a regional Credit for Prior Learning program to benefit thousands of new students.

### Assessments Nearing Complete

Baseline needs assessments of each institution are being conducted by Dr. Cristy Sugarman, Executive Director, the Center for Alternative Studies at North Shore Community College, in conjunction with business and education consultant Dr. Judith Nast.

## Looking Forward

Once complete, the assessments will provide the foundation for the creation of capacity-building strategies for each institution. The Consortium is also focused on a broad-reach marketing plan and training local workforce investment boards and other community organizations to identify and refer potential students to these programs.

**Credit for Prior Learning collective:** North Shore Community College, Northeast Consortium of Colleges and Universities, the North Shore Workforce Investment Board, Wellspring and Action, Inc.

## Financial Coaching and Literacy:

Uniting five Community Action agencies to deliver a financial empowerment model integrated into existing programming. Learn more about the Financial Coaching and Literacy program at [eccf.org/EEO](http://eccf.org/EEO).

Launched in April, the Financial Coaching and Literacy program has already trained more than 40 staff and volunteers and graduated approximately 50 residents.

### Community of Practice Having Impact

The coalition of five Community Action agencies have been working collaboratively to create a community of practice, sharing ideas and best practices for each of their programs. What's more is that the collaborative work has spread beyond financial literacy, and coalition members are sharing resources on common areas of focus, such as strategic planning.

"There's a lot of unanticipated results because of it," said Kerry Perry, development director at Community Action, Inc. in Haverhill. "It's nice to have this conversation starter and I credit ECCF for that opportunity."



Financial Coaching and Literacy Program Graduate

## Looking Forward

Plans to expand the program into Lawrence and Lynn are in process and the program is poised to reach its goal of assisting 150-200 people annually.

**Financial Coaching and Literacy coalition:** Action Inc., Community Action, Inc., Lynn Economic Opportunity, Inc., Greater Lawrence Community Action Council and North Shore Community Action Program

## Small Business Resiliency and Venture Fund:

Providing permanent commercial lending programs and technical assistance for non-bankable businesses in Essex County. Learn more about the Small Business Resiliency and Venture Fund at [eccf.org/EEO](http://eccf.org/EEO).



Business Outreach in Greater Lawrence

Starting this winter, the \$1.6 million Small Business Resiliency and Venture Fund will offer micro-loans (less than \$100K) from a pool assembled by the contributed capital of 10 banks in the region. Additional support will come from Mass Growth Capital Corp and the Lawrence Partnership.

### Expanded Regional Loan Fund

Building on the Merrimack Valley Business Relief Work started in the wake of the gas disaster last year, the loan is being headed by Mill Cities Community Investments, a proven regional provider of commercial lending and services focused on bridging the lending gap in low-to-moderate income communities.

"The impact of the gas disaster will make many businesses that were bankable last year non-bankable this year, so the need will be high," said Derek Mitchell, executive director of the Lawrence Partnership.

## Looking Forward

The collective is actively engaged with other area municipal, nonprofit and bank leaders working towards the long-term goal of establishing a countywide venture collaborative.

**Small Business Resiliency and Venture Fund collective:** Mill Cities Community Investments, Lawrence Partnership, EForAll/EparaTodos, municipal leaders and agencies

## Essex County Think Labs:

Convening stakeholders around special areas of focus to inspire creative thinking that can impact the future economic landscape. Learn more about Essex County Think Labs at [eccf.org/EEO](http://eccf.org/EEO).

### First Essex County Think Lab Launched: Blue Economy

On Oct. 2, in conjunction with the UMass Gloucester Marine Station, ECCF gathered more than 75 community and business leaders, nonprofits, investors and philanthropists for its first Think Lab focused on the Blue Economy.

Defined by the World Bank as the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and jobs, and ocean ecosystem health, the Blue Economy accounts for 11 percent of jobs in North Shore coastal communities.

The Lab, also attended by Massachusetts Secretary for Housing and Economic Development Mike Kennealy, generated ideas, resources and visions for the future of the local ocean-based economy to help inform a forthcoming strategy to build on the region's strengths and capitalize on new and emerging opportunities in the Blue Economy.

Learn more by reading ECCF's [full press release](#) and the [Blue Economy Think Lab summary report](#).

## Looking Forward

Future Essex County Think Lab topics areas including Opportunity Zones, Poverty, and Workforce Development are being explored with plans for a second spring event.

**Essex County Think Labs collective:** Essex County Community Foundation, municipal and government leaders, employers, community leaders and funders



Think Lab Participants Brainstorming Strengths of the North Shore Blue Economy

## GET INVOLVED.

ECCF's Empowering Economic Opportunity initiative is a **3-year, \$1.3 million commitment** to invest in collaborative, systems solutions to make economic inclusion and financial well-being possible for the 300,000 Essex County residents and families living below the living wage. *Join us in this work.*

### » **DONATE.**

Due to the generosity of local philanthropists, corporations, foundations and friends *we have raised nearly 75% of the funding necessary to advance this work and plan to raise the remainder by February 2020.*

### » **VOLUNTEER.**

We need people in all capacities, such as educators, business thinkers, financial literacy coaches and more.

### » **PARTNER.**

Reach out to the backbone leaders of this work, engage with suggestions and ideas and pull up a seat at the table.

### » **CONNECT.**

Reach out and connect ECCF with fundraising or partner leads we should explore.

## Did you know? | [IMPACTESSEXCOUNTY.ORG](http://IMPACTESSEXCOUNTY.ORG)

- Essex County had job growth of 1.1% from 2016 to 2017, below the state and nation.
- 207 bullying incidents were reported by Essex County schools in 2017, a rate of 2.1 per 1000 students, double the state rate.
- In 2017, 88% of days with air quality measurements in Essex County were good air days, a 20 percentage point increase from 2000.

Find out more about these stats and why they are important at [IMPACTESSEXCOUNTY.ORG](http://IMPACTESSEXCOUNTY.ORG)



## Systems Work Articles

Interesting Reads to better understand ECCF's systems approach to Empowering Economic Opportunity and other Community Leadership initiatives.

[Essex County Community Foundation and the Case for Systems Philanthropy](#)

*Essex County Community Foundation (2019)*

[The Water of Systems Change](#)

*John Kania, Peter Senge, Mark Kramer (2018)*

[By Us and For Us: A Story of Childhood Development Systems Change and Results in a Rural Context](#)

*Payne Simon, L., Scobie, K., Backler, P., McDowell, C., Cotton, C., Cloutier, S., & Nolan, C. (2018)*

[The Inner Path to Become a Systems Entrepreneur](#)

*Katherine Milligan and Nicole Schwab (2017)*

