

Raija Vaisanen

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PROFILE

Passionate about lifting up the challenges and opportunities experienced by workers in our economy to inform policymakers and workforce development practitioners. Accomplished public policy manager with more than 12 years experience in applied social science research and economic development policy implementation. Strategic, analytical thinker and leader with strong written and verbal communication skills. Expertise in the analysis of complex data, policy issues, project management and technical report writing. Interests include social, economic, workforce development and education policy issues.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Commonwealth Corporation, Boston, MA

May 2014—Present

Director of Research: Work closely with executive team to shape and execute a research strategy that informs workforce development practice and policy and establishes Commonwealth Corporation as a thought leader. Lead efforts to identify emerging workforce challenges in Massachusetts that require shifts in policy and practice. Collaborate with academic research partners and other state agencies to design and carry out research. Use research and business intelligence to guide demand-driven employability strategies for youth and development of sector strategies. Design, manage and produce research products to inform policymakers, local leaders in business, education and workforce organizations, philanthropic organizations and workforce development practitioners. Present research findings publicly and facilitate learning forums for workforce development, business and education partners.

Project Highlights:

- *Webinar with JobsFirstNYC: “Exploring New Models For Recruitment and Retention in a Tight Labor Market” (May 2018)*
- *Co-Author (with Naome Jeanty) “Promoting Success: What it Takes to Move Beyond an Entry-Level Job” (May 2018)*
- *Co-Author (with Fogg, Harrington, et.al): “The Changing Nature of the Health Care Workforce in Massachusetts” Produced for the Massachusetts Office of the State Auditor (2014-2017)*
- *Closing the Skills Gap: Meeting the Demand for Skills in a Growing Economy (January 2017)*
- *Member of Strategic Plan Steering Committee for FY17-FY20*
- *Co-Evaluator (with Gene White) for the GPSTEM Project, TAACCCT Round 4 Statewide Consortium grant*
- *U.S. Department of Labor, Women’s Bureau, Massachusetts Paid Family Leave Analysis Grant (2014)*

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Boston, MA

April 2013—May 2014

Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

Project Manager for Manufacturing & Innovation: Worked with the Assistant Secretary for Innovation on a variety of initiatives, including the Massachusetts Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative, to enhance the competitiveness of manufacturing, expand innovation-based economic development, and expand entrepreneurship and the culture of innovation in regions throughout the state. Responsible for managing projects with stakeholders, including convening stakeholders, designing strategies, project schedules, tasks and deliverables and working with colleagues to coordinate the plan with other EOHED priorities. Prepared project plans and organized and managed project schedules. Coordinated and managed internal and external communications regarding projects. Prepared reports and memoranda.

University of Massachusetts, Donahue Institute, Hadley, MA

2007—April 2013

Economic & Public Policy Research Unit

Research Manager: October 2010 – April 2013; Research Analyst: June 2008 – October 2010; Research Assistant: May 2007 – June 2008: Managed a wide array of social and economic policy studies involving client relationship building, scope development and negotiation. Collaborated with other unit managers and staff on project development and unit-wide management. Worked with clients to identify project parameters, anticipate project needs, execute projects, and develop final product. Researched industry clusters and analyzed data for industry studies. Evaluated and estimated economic contribution of new and existing economic development projects and industries using economic impact analysis software. Experienced in designing survey instruments and methodologies. Skilled in writing and editing detailed reports for a lay audience. Contributor to *MassBenchmarks*, a journal of the Massachusetts economy.

Project Highlights:

- Co-Contributor (with Gaviglio and Koshgarian): *“The Massachusetts Due Diligence Report” Produced for the Massachusetts State Treasurer’s Office of Debt Management (2008-2013)*
- Co-Author (with Hodge, Wilkinson, Bernstein and Garland): *“Berkshire Advanced Manufacturing Study: For the Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation” (2013)*
- Co-Author (with Hodge, Wilkinson and Bernstein): *“Pioneer Valley Growth Business Study” (2013)*
- Co-Author (with Wilkinson, Loveland and Bernstein): *“Cable’s Impact on the State’s Economy Report Series” (2011)*
- Co-Author (with Gaviglio and Nakosteen): *“Massachusetts Migration: A Survey Reveals State Domestic Trends” MassBenchmarks, Volume 13, Issue 1 (2011)*
- Author: *“A Renter’s Market? Think Again!” Endnotes, MassBenchmarks, Volume 12, Issue 1 (2010)*
- IMPLAN analysis for: Foster, Terkla and Laubacher; *“Film and Television Production in Massachusetts: An Industry Overview and Analysis” (2010)*
- Data analysis for: *“A Framework for Action: The State Regional Economic Development Strategy” (for the MA Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development) (2009)*
- Co-Author (with Loveland, Nakosteen, and Williams): *“Income Inequality in Massachusetts, 1980-2006” MassBenchmarks, Volume 10, Issue 2 (2008)*
- Co-Author (with Koshgarian, Goodman, Curtis, and Wolf): *“Veterinary Medicine in New England: State-by-State Industry Characteristics and Economic Impacts” (2008)*
- *“The State of the Massachusetts Housing Market: A Statewide and Regional Analysis” (2008)*
- Co-Author (with Hoover and Loveland): *“Telephone Survey of Boston Small Businesses Regarding the Adoption of Green Business Practices (for the Boston Redevelopment Authority and Lowell Center for Sustainable Production)” (2008)*

EDUCATION

University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA

M.P.P.A.

B.A. Political Science, *summa cum laude*

BOARDS & VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

New England Public Policy Center, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston

June 2017 - Present

Advisory Board Member

WBUR Sounding Board, Boston, MA

October 2016 - Present

Board Member

The Co-operative Central Bank, Boston, MA

September 2016 - Present

Board of Directors, Public Interest Director

UMass Women into Leadership (UWiL), Amherst, MA

January 2015 - Present

Mentor