WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS ECONOMIC ECOSYSTEM SUMMIT

Regional Intelligence Report: At a Glance

Four counties, nine convenings, one longitudinal regional record. Findings, methodology, the Regional Intelligence Framework, and a shared advocacy platform for Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden counties.






9	4	2023–2026	7	5
CONVENINGS	COUNTIES	LONGITUDINAL RECORD	CROSS-CUTTING FINDINGS	ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

About the Summit Series

Between 2023 and 2026, the Western Massachusetts Economic Ecosystem Summit (WMEES) grew from an early ecosystem-mapping effort into a four-county, cross-sector regional learning process. Rotating from Springfield to Orange, Pittsfield, Hadley, Greenfield, Adams, Holyoke, and Florence, it engaged municipalities, entrepreneurs, funders, state agencies, researchers, and community stakeholders.

Seven Cross-Cutting Findings

1. **Asset-to-outcome gap:** strong institutions and sectors do not automatically become shared regional outcomes.
2. **Recommendation persistence:** capital access, infrastructure, housing, coordination, workforce, and administrative capacity recur across studies separated by years.
3. **Implementation capacity** is itself economic infrastructure.
4. **Access is not accessibility:** staffing, match requirements, reimbursement structures, grant complexity, and local fiscal capacity shape who can use programs.
5. **Regional equity** requires differentiated implementation rather than identical treatment.
6. **Relationships and intermediaries** function as knowledge infrastructure.
7. **One ecosystem:** housing, transportation, workforce, energy, entrepreneurship, culture, public health, and community development operate together rather than as isolated silos.

Five Regional Advocacy Priorities

A **Economic Development, Capital Access & Business Support**
Capital pathways, a durable warm-referral network, succession planning, and childcare and housing as business-support infrastructure.

B **Infrastructure, Transportation & Energy**
Regional transit, broadband as economic infrastructure, grid and substation capacity, and funding paired with project-delivery capacity.

C **Housing & Quality of Place**
Housing production and rehabilitation, predevelopment and bridge funding, and state tools that recognize rural feasibility.

D **Community, Culture & Environment**
Cultural and creative infrastructure as economic infrastructure, and shared storytelling that reflects the full four-county economy.

E **Workforce, Education & Demographics**
Apprenticeships and sector-aligned training, employer-education alignment, and Human Sustainability for the people doing the work.

Across all five priorities: four-county coordination, accessible state program design, shared data and accountability, warm referrals, project-readiness support, rural inclusion, and preservation of regional knowledge infrastructure.

Shared responsibility: the Commonwealth invests equitably and designs accessible programs; Western Massachusetts builds project pipelines, documents barriers, and preserves its regional intelligence.

CORE CONCLUSION

Western Massachusetts does not primarily suffer from an absence of plans or assets. The recurring challenge is the conversion of assets, programs, research, and relationships into durable outcomes through accessible systems, implementation capacity, cross-county connectivity, and sustained institutional ownership.