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**UTEC Executive Director appointed to Governor’s Task Force on Economic Opportunity for Populations Facing Chronically High Rates of Unemployment**

*A seat at the table for “impact youth” facing barriers to employment*

March 12, 2015 – Today, through the signing of an executive order, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker appointed **UTEC executive director Gregg Croteau** to his new task force on Economic Opportunity for Populations Facing Chronically High Rates of Unemployment.

Over the next 8 months, the task force will develop a strategic plan to address chronic unemployment among target populations. Croteau will bring his expertise from a career of working with proven-risk youth and the particular employment challenges in Gateway Cities like Lowell and Lawrence.

“UTEC is honored to contribute to the workplan based on our experience with young people who must overcome barriers from their past criminal activities or gang involvement as they work toward social and economic success,” said **Croteau**. “UTEC also brings a unique perspective since we are both a direct service provider and an employer of proven-risk youth through our social enterprises.”

“For too long, the target populations have suffered from chronically high rates of unemployment,” said **Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Ronald Walker**. “The task force is charged with understanding how best to reshape our public workforce system to meet the needs of the target population and how best to assist individuals in achieving their goals of meaningful employment.”

For 15 years, Croteau has led UTEC’s extensive work in both direct service to unemployed young people ages 16-24 and in policy improvements to help target youth redefine their futures. He has served on a variety of commissions and task forces, as a Fellow for MassINC’s Gateway Cities Innovation Institute, and provided testimonial in numerous legislative briefings at the state and federal levels. UTEC’s own Workforce Development and Social Enterprise model has been recognized as a high-performing program by Social Impact Research (at Root Cause) and is part of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation’s PropelNext national cohort of promising organizations serving youth.


**About UTEC:** UTEC serves young people labeled “proven-risk” who have a history of serious criminal or gang involvement. With a recidivism rate of 15% compared to the 65% statewide average, UTEC is a model for a community-based program demonstrating significant cost-benefit value around the outcomes of recidivism, employment and education. [www.utec-lowell.org](http://www.utec-lowell.org)

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