



Report and Recommendations to Improve
Employment Outcomes Among Populations Facing
**Chronically High Rates
of Unemployment**

January 2016

www.mass.gov/opportunityforall



**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Charles D. Baker, Governor
Karyn E. Polito, Lt. Governor
Ronald L. Walker II, Secretary,
Labor and Workforce Development

TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP

Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development,
Ronald L. Walker, II, Chair

External:

- Marisol Amaya-Aluigi, La Alianza Hispana
- Anthony Benoit, Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology
- Gerald Chertavian, YearUp
- Greg Croteau, UTEC
- Donna Cupelo, Verizon
- Lyndia Downie, Pine Street Inn
- Dr. Michael Fitzpatrick, Blackstone Valley Regional Technical
- Deborah Hicks, Dana Farber Cancer Institute
- Mark Isenberg, Action for Boston Community Development
- Dr. William Kiernan, Institute for Community Inclusion
- Jerry Rubin, Jewish Vocational Services
- Dr. Alicia Sasser-Modestino, Northeastern University

TASKFORCE ENGAGEMENT:

- Target Populations Subcommittee hosted seven public meetings in Boston (2), Lowell (2), New Bedford, Springfield, and Worcester.
 - More than 1400 citizens visited the website (mass.gov/opportunityforall), created for the Task Force's efforts, and participated in the public meetings.
- Public Workforce Subcommittee held meetings with representatives from the Public Workforce and reviewed academic research, government reports, and previous Task Forces and commissions.
- Employers Subcommittee held 12 industry-focused and general business listening sessions across the Commonwealth.
 - Approximately 180 representatives of employers attended these listening sessions.

Administration:

- James A. Peyser, Secretary, Education
- Francisco Ureña, Secretary, Veteran Services
- Nicky Osborne, Commissioner, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Designee of Secretary, Health and Human Services
- David D'Arcangelo, Director, Massachusetts Office on Disability
- Jabes Rojas, Deputy Chief, Office of Access and Opportunity
- Paul McMorrow, Designee, Secretary, Housing and Economic Development

Staff support:

- Ronald G. Marlow, Undersecretary for Workforce Development, EOLWD
- Sarah K. Schoff, Program Coordinator, Research, Policy, and Evaluation, EOLWD
- Molly R. Bode, Associate Chief for Cabinet Relations, Office of the Governor

ARE YOU CURRENTLY UNEMPLOYED?

HAVE YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW EXPERIENCED PERIODS OF UNEMPLOYMENT?

A state task force designed to get at the root causes of high unemployment rates among certain populations and to recommend public policies to improve employment outcomes would like to hear your struggles and successes during a public hearing.

WHAT: A public hearing to discuss high unemployment rates

WHO: A state task force formed by Governor Charlie Baker

WHEN: Monday, October 26th, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

WHERE: UTEC (United Teen Equality Center), 35 Warren Street, Lowell, MA 01852

While the state unemployment rate is 4.7 percent, African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Persons with Disabilities, Native Americans, and recently-retired Veterans, continue to experience high unemployment rates, ranging from 7 to 12 percent.

Earlier this year, Governor Charlie Baker created a task force to look at the reasons for the higher unemployment rates among these groups, and find ways to solve the problem.

Labor and Workforce Development Secretary, Ronald L. Walker, II is leading the task force to improve economic opportunities for these populations, and will advise the Governor.

For information, visit:
www.mass.gov/opportunityforall

Please send accommodation requests and inquiries to:
opportunityforall@massmail.state.ma.us

 THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction:

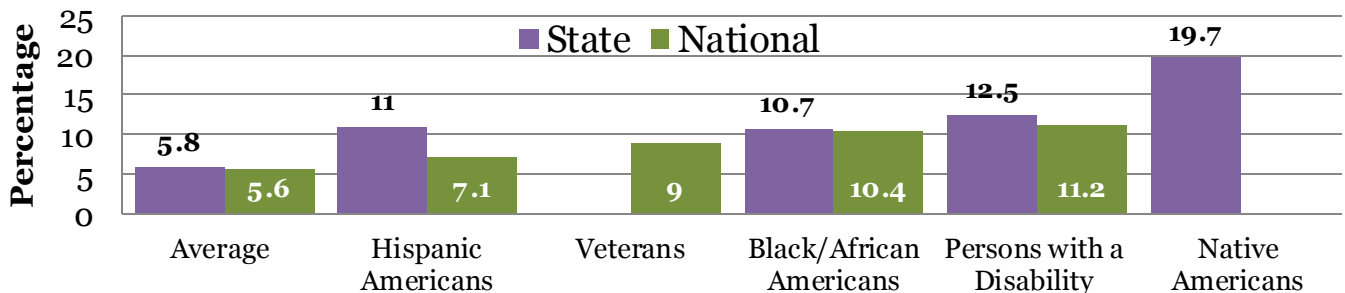
The Commonwealth is in the midst of a relatively strong economy, yet approximately 163,000 individuals are unemployed. Economic disparity for some minority individuals, veterans, and individuals with disabilities has remained consistent, despite the state's economic recovery after the end of the Great Recession.

In March, Governor Baker, through Executive Order 561, created a Task Force to recommend solutions to help end persistent economic disparities for certain populations. These populations - called the target populations - included African Americans, Latinos/Hispanics, Native Americans, people with disabilities, and recently returned veterans which experienced rates of unemployment from 7-20% while the overall unemployment rate was 5.8% (See Figure 1.)

Based on calendar year 2014 unemployment populations numbers (and rates), it is estimated that 35,100 (11.0%) Hispanics/Latinos, 27,000 (10.7%) Blacks/African-Americans, 24,400 (15.1%) Persons with a Disability, and 1,300 (19.7%) Native Americans were unemployed. While there is overlap in some of the numbers, they do not account for those out of the labor force thus the disparity is likely greater. (Note: state data for Gulf-era II Veterans and national data for Native Americans was not available.)

The Task Force, chaired by Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Ronald L. Walker, II, was made up of other administration officials, economists, business executives, and community-based leaders who have had experience working with these populations to create opportunities. The Task Force engaged with more than 1,600 individuals through seven public listening sessions and 20+ subcommittee meetings to develop the following findings and recommendations.

Figure 1: Target population state and national 2014 unemployment rates all ages



State Data: BLS 2014 Data National Data: USDOL December 2014

Persons with a disability and Native Americans data are estimates based on 2011-2013 ACS Data

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall Finding:

Through the meetings and public listening sessions, the Task Force found that the **target populations experience complex needs and barriers that require intensive interventions**. Any single barrier can be challenging, but too often these individuals face multiple barriers which require multi-faceted support services to achieve sustained employment.

Barriers to employment across the target populations include, but are not limited to:

- Inadequate workforce skills, both specific and “soft,” and/or experience
- Limited knowledge regarding job market, employer recruitment, and employer screening processes
- Access to supportive services (e.g., child care, transportation, housing, wrap-around services)
- Educational attainment
- Limited English proficiency
- Challenges related to re-entry after time in a correctional facility
- Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) and employers use in screening and inability to correct records

- Poor credit and employers use in screening applicants
- Access to mentors
- Substance Abuse/Mental Health Issues
- Employer bias and stigma
- Understanding benefits (e.g., health, disability, SSA) and how they may change with employment

Barriers to employment for Persons with Disabilities specifically include, but are not limited to:

- Inaccessible work sites, work stations, including lack of access to assistive technology
- For youth, lack of access to job tours, job shadowing, mock interviews, mentors, paid work/internship experiences, which affect ability to gain career ready skills
- For parents and youth, lack of understanding of what to expect from schools and the transition world
- Multiple issues, requiring coordination and management including chronic health issues, (e.g., benefits, housing, health)
- Low expectations/low self-esteem



On March 12, 2015 **Governor Charlie Baker** signed **Executive Order 561**, creating a task force to look at the reasons for the higher unemployment rates among certain populations, and find ways to improve economic opportunities. Secretary **Ronald Walker, II**, Secretary of Veterans Services **Francisco A. Ureña** and other members of the task force joined the governor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Best Practices:

Through meetings and visits, the Task Force identified best-practices that are embedded in the recommendations below.

- Leveraging the work of and collaborating with community-based organizations
- Engaging individuals and employers relationally
- Scaling and replicating what works
- Utilizing conventional and innovative approaches to deliver and finance services

Recommendations:

1) Partner with community-based organizations to meet the complex needs of the target populations

The Task Force recommends building an effective, efficient and equitable

Massachusetts-based public workforce system to complement and supplement the federally-funded system by utilizing community-based organizations to meet the needs of the target populations. This can be achieved by working with Commonwealth Corporation and offering funding opportunities to potential partners through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, which leverages matching funds.

2) Improve the federally-funded workforce system

The federally-funded workforce system (the career centers) was not designed to provide the attention or the scope of services that individuals in the target populations require. The Task Force recommends using requirements and tools

of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 to enhance collaboration and coordination with other state agencies in order to enact key system-wide improvements to:

- A. Refocus service delivery models across state agencies
 - B. Align system elements to be more responsive to clients' needs
 - C. Implement multiple entry points through workforce partner networks
 - D. Engage efforts to improve labor participation and employment outcomes of persons with disabilities
- 3) Finally the Task Force recommends **improvements to the federally-defined labor exchange system by adopting an employer-focused model.** This approach, branded “Demand-driven 2.0,” will improve responsiveness to employer needs and prepare job seekers for high-demand employment opportunities.

Metrics to Measure Success

The Task Force recommends using the following metrics to evaluate the success of recommendations that are implemented:

- Changes in the unemployment and labor participation rates of each target population, in comparison to the state unemployment and labor participation rates, as measured in annual intervals from a specified implementation date

II. BEST PRACTICES

A. LEVERAGING COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

An effective workforce development system leverages the efforts of, and collaborates with, community-based organizations.

The career center system is, by design, a “higher-volume, lower-touch” organization. It is the nature of the universal access requirement that anyone in need of employment services can access a career center. A universal access system serves best those individuals whose needs are minimal, who are better educated, who require limited employment services such as job search and resume improvement services, and/or those with stronger social networks.

For the fiscal year 2014, the career centers served 186,330 individuals. However, for those who require access to education or training services, the system does not have sufficient resources to adequately meet the demand. For example, in 2014, of those individuals served at career centers, only 1.8% (3,346) received assistance through individual training accounts (i.e., subsidized training). The availability of individual training accounts has consistently been insufficient and lack of access to training is an important barrier that inhibits the transition from unemployment to employment.

Community-based organizations exist to meet the need, however they are mostly disconnected from the career center system. In the future, Massachusetts should work with community-based organizations which are often more equipped to meet the complex and multiple needs of the target populations.

EXAMPLE: South Shore Community Action Council, a Plymouth-based community-based organization, received a Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund grant in 2013 to provide Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) training to un/underemployed participants in a range of occupations within the Transportation industry. Partners included: the Plymouth Career Center, First Student, the Town of Carver, the Plymouth and Brockton Street Railway Company, Massasoit Community College, the Plymouth South Vocational High School, and the South Shore Workforce Investment Board.

- 35 individuals enrolled in the training program
- 29 individuals completed the training program (83% of enrollees)
- 29 individuals were placed in employment (100% of individuals completing training; 83% of enrollees)
- Average hourly wage attained of \$18/hour

II. BEST PRACTICES

B. ENGAGING INDIVIDUALS AND EMPLOYERS RELATIONALLY

An effective workforce development system is relational; it is responsive both to the employer and job seeker communities.

From the agency-employer perspective, relational means:

1. identifying and engaging employer partners
2. understanding the hiring needs of the employer-partners
3. understanding the social and task skill sets needed to be an effective employee
4. training the job seeker to be able to bring the needed skills with her/him
5. remaining available to troubleshoot when unexpected things happen

From the agency-job seeker/client perspective, relational means:

1. working to understand the objectives of the client/customer
2. working to understand and address the job seeker/client's needs beyond employment
3. providing social and skills training
4. making the connection between the client/customer and the employer
5. being an available resource to assist the client/customer in maintaining the employment (the "wrap-around services" that are sometimes required)

EXAMPLE: Year Up is a one-year, intensive training program that provides low-income young adults, ages 18-24, with a combination of hands-on skill development, college credits, corporate internships, and support. The program approach focuses on students' professional and personal development to help them achieve economic self-sufficiency. For the first six months of the program, students develop technical and professional skills in the classroom earning credits. Students then apply those skills during the second six months on an internship at one of Year Up's corporate partners earning a weekly stipend. Students are supported by staff advisors, professional mentors, dedicated social services staff, and a powerful network of community-based partners. Year Up works due to its ability to be responsive to its corporate partners and its clients.

- 100% placement of qualified Year Up students into internships
- Over 90% of corporate partners would recommend the Year Up program to a friend or colleague
- 85% of graduates are employed or attending college full-time within four months of completing the program.
- Employed Year Up graduates earn an average of \$16 per hour – the equivalent of \$32,000 per year

Source: www.yearup.org

II. BEST PRACTICES

C. SCALING AND REPLICATING WHAT WORKS

An effective workforce system employs funding models that allow for doing more of what works well; establishes robust performance metrics for programs that receive funding, and makes program outcomes transparently available to the public. Additionally, an effective system directs resources to programs that work and redirects resources from programs that fail.

Task Force members identified that current grant funding models do not recognize and reward programs that have performed well. More likely, a successful program may be curtailed or ended as funding is lost. There is a need for funding models that continue support when a program has demonstrated positive outcomes that meet (or exceed) program metrics. Such a model would be consistent with a philosophy that is built around the notion of “doing more of what works well.”

Additionally, the Task Force has identified the importance of establishing robust metrics by which to judge program performance. Said metrics should be transparently available both at the outset and conclusion of program operations. Consistent with the above observation, programs that meet or exceed outcomes should be replicated or expanded.

EXAMPLE: Massachusetts Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) III Grant is administered through a partnership with five Career Centers, Work without Limits, and the Institute for Community Inclusion.

- Grant supports programs aimed at improving employment outcomes for persons with disabilities
- Of the 535 individuals who have enrolled in the program, 292 (55%) have achieved employment (2014-2015)
- Challenge: despite the demonstrated success of this program the grant is expected to end March 2016

The value of the Massachusetts DEI model is that it links access to education, credential training and job training with benefits counseling with utilization of the federal Ticket to Work Program.



II. BEST PRACTICES

D. UTILIZING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO DELIVER

An effective workforce development system, in addition to conventional approaches, should adopt innovative approaches to programming.

In addition to employing the conventional approach of the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, to serve well the target populations, the Massachusetts-based system will adopt:

Demonstration Programs to test smaller-scale and experimental approaches that allow the program operator and the public workforce system to learn how a larger scale project might work.

EXAMPLE: Hampden County Re-entry Partnership (HCRP) consists of the multiple facilities within the Hampden County Sheriff's Department; the two One Stop Career Centers, CareerPoint and FutureWorks; and the Hampden County Regional Employment Board

- HCRP works with offenders to overcome known barriers through connection with community and business partners
- 3,040 Re-entry customers received 42,560 workforce readiness and retention services over a three year period (2010-13)
- Of those re-entry customers, 58% obtained employment (1st quarter) and 52% retained employment (3rd quarter)

Alternative Financing Models

to drive outcomes. These may include:

- Broader application of social impact bonds and pay for success models
- Providing funding for longer periods of time (e.g., three to five year vs. one to two years)
- Private sector or external matching funds

EXAMPLE: Jewish Vocational Services, a Boston-based community-based organization and career center operator (Career Solution) has been selected by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to deliver adult basic education services under one of the first in the nation social impact bond programs. Programming to begin in 2016.



Governor **Baker**, Boston Mayor **Martin Walsh**, and Labor and Workforce Development Secretary **Ronald Walker** helped announce the opening of JVS Center for Economic Opportunity in downtown Boston in May.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. MASSACHUSETTS-BASED PUBLIC WORKFORCE SYSTEM

Partner with community-based organizations to meet the complex needs of the target populations. The Task Force recommends building an effective, efficient and equitable **Massachusetts-based public workforce system** to complement and supplement the federally-funded system by utilizing community-based organizations to meet the needs of the target populations.

Economic Opportunity Fund:

In order to achieve this vision, an economic opportunity fund can be established by working with Commonwealth Corporation to offer funding opportunities to potential partners through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund. This approach is recommended for the following reasons:

- Utilizes existing organizational structure – the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development chairs the Commonwealth Corporation board of directors (See Slide 12)
- Utilizes existing legislative framework of the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund (WCTF) (See Slide 12)
 - WCTF targets un/underemployed populations

- WCTF employs a sector-based approach, which requires grantees to provide job training (and related services) to meet the needs of employer-partners so that programs are “demand driven”
- WCTF, by statute, requires that grantees provide a 30% match to grant funding encouraging “demand driven”
- Incorporates best practices identified by the Task Force (See Slide 13)
 - Leverages, and encourages collaboration among, the network of vibrant community-based and other organizations that deliver effective job training/workforce development and supportive services, especially to the target populations
 - Allows for enhanced tracking and reporting of performance outcomes
 - Allows for innovative and relational approaches to programming (See Slide 11 and 13) and financing (30% match)



Task force members listen during a monthly meeting. Secretary **Ronald Walker** (center) **Anthony Benoit**, president of Ben Franklin Institute of Technology, (far left) **Donna Cupelo**, from Verizon (left) and **Jabes Rojas**, deputy chief of the Office of Access and Opportunity.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. MASSACHUSETTS-BASED PUBLIC WORKFORCE SYSTEM

Partner with community-based organizations to meet the complex needs of the target populations.

The Task Force recommends building an effective, efficient and equitable Massachusetts-based public workforce system to complement and supplement the federally-funded system by utilizing community-based organizations to meet the needs of the target populations.

Economic Opportunity Fund (continued):

The Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development will seek funding in the 2017 fiscal year to deliver conventional and innovative sector-based job training (including supportive services) programs through this model.

- On the Job Training (OJT), Apprenticeships, Subsidized and/or Graduated Internship models
- Mentoring models (e.g., similar to the Career Collaborative program)
- Other examples previously mentioned

Funding mechanisms - The fund may :

- Utilize Social Impact Bond and pay for success models (e.g., Jewish Vocational Services Adult Basic Education Performance and YearUp programs)
- Provide longer funding periods to allow for deeper levels of engagement with individuals who are confronting multiple barriers

EXAMPLES - Innovative approaches, identified as best practice models, by the Task Force may include:

- “Working Cities” type demonstration models (e.g., Federal Reserve Bank of Boston’s “working cities” program)
- Transitional employment models (e.g., Action for Boston Community Development program utilized under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act)



III. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. MASSACHUSETTS-BASED PUBLIC WORKFORCE SYSTEM

Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

System	Massachusetts-Based System	Federally-Based System
Administrative Agency	Commonwealth Corporation	Department of Career Services
Funding Source	Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Federal Government
Governance	Board of Directors, Chaired by EOLWD Secretary	Reporting structure within EOLWD
Funding Vehicle	Economic Opportunity Fund (Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund)	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Program Operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community-based organizations • Institutions of higher education • Vocational education institutions • One-Stop Career Centers • Local workforce development entities • Non-profit education, training, or other service providers • Employers • Employer associations • Local Workforce Boards • Labor organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Workforce Boards • One-Stop Career Centers
Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Un/underemployed target populations • LTU populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Access
Hallmarks of System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower-Volume/Higher-Touch • Access to job training/supportive services • Complementary/supplemental to federally-funded system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher-Volume/Lower-Touch • Access to labor exchange system • Complementary/Supplemental to Massachusetts-funded system

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. MASSACHUSETTS-BASED PUBLIC WORKFORCE SYSTEM

SAMPLE RFP ELEMENTS (For illustrative purposes only)

Program sponsor	This solicitation is offered by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.
Program funding source	The grant program is funded by the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund and administered by Commonwealth Corporation.
Eligible applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community-based organizations• Employers with operations in Massachusetts• Employer associations• Local workforce development boards• Labor organizations• Institutions of higher education• Vocational education institutions• One-Stop Career Centers• Other local workforce development entities• Nonprofit education, training or other service providers
Program approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sector-focused (i.e., Demand-driven)• Outcomes based• Delivery of job training and supportive services based on client needs
Target populations	Populations experiencing unemployment rates significantly higher than the state unemployment rate, in particular African-Americans/Blacks, Hispanic-Americans/Latinos, persons with disabilities, Native Americans, and/or Gulf-era II Veterans.
Target occupations	Applicants must provide training and placement services that prepare individuals to meet businesses' skill and work readiness requirements for in-demand occupations. Applicants may propose to train individuals for occupations in a single industry sector or for occupations that exist in multiple industry sectors.
Required partners	Partnerships must include a minimum of two businesses with operations in Massachusetts and that employ Massachusetts residents in the target occupations and other partners that can assist in meeting the needs of the client populations.

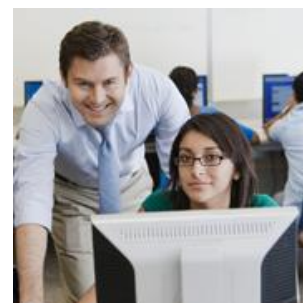
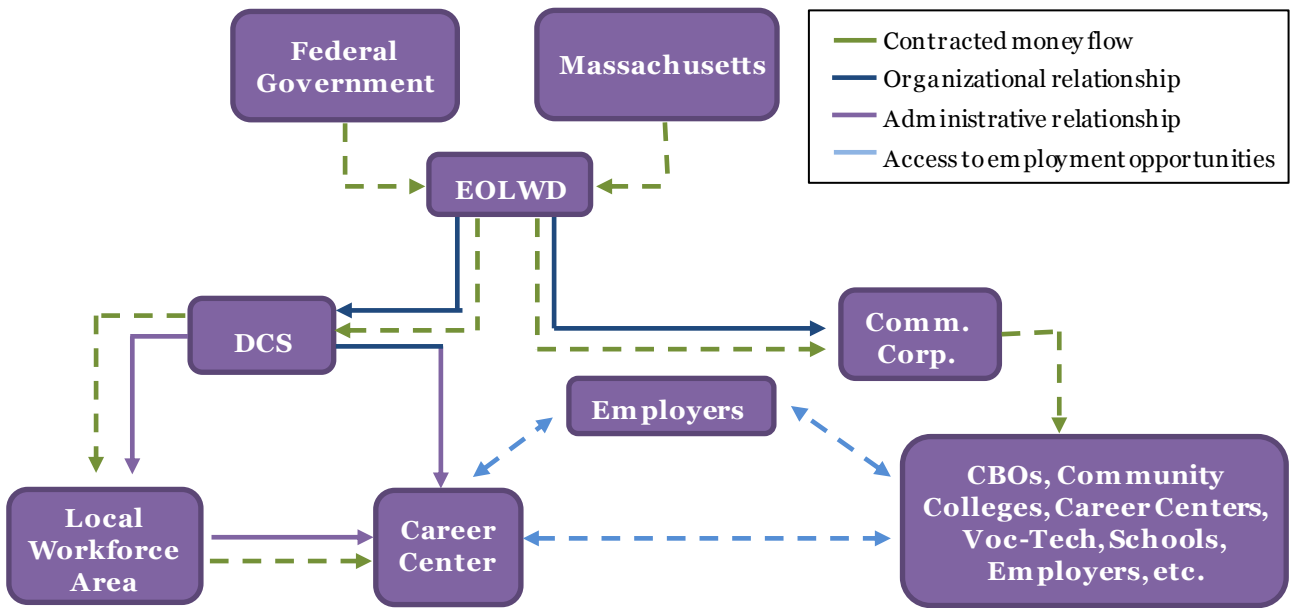


Figure 1: Massachusetts-based public workforce system: the system of tomorrow



System Design: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds federal system and state-based system is funded via the Workforce Competitive Trust Fund

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. MASSACHUSETTS-BASED PUBLIC WORKFORCE SYSTEM

In addition to creating the Economic Opportunity Fund, in order to build the **Massachusetts-based public workforce system and partner with community-based organizations to meet the complex needs of the target populations**, EOLWD will take action on the following items.

Short-term (within FY 16):

- **Incentive Programs:** EOLWD will work with employers and community-based organizations to expand utilization of incentive programs such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the U.S. Department of Labor Bond Program.
- **Disability Employment Initiative:** EOLWD will support the maintenance and expansion of the successful Disability Employment Initiative III grant which targets job training, counseling and other services to persons with disabilities.
- **Long-term Unemployed:** EOLWD will develop a strategic approach to address the challenges that confront the Long-Term Unemployed, those who have been unemployed longer than 26 weeks.



- **Effective Re-entry Programming:** EOLWD will work with appropriate state agencies to establish an Inter-Agency Workgroup on Ex-Offender Employment to promote and support successful “behind the wall” (pre-release), transitional planning and employment efforts. The group may explore:
 - Utilizing the Massachusetts-based public workforce system to expand the capacity of regions and build formal regional connections between public safety, education, health and human services, and workforce systems
 - Implementing data tracking and analysis needed in order to evaluate the impact of programming
 - Providing state-issued identification cards at release to enhance chance of successful re-entry

Intermediate-term (within FY 17):

- **Soft Skills:** EOLWD will work with the Executive Office of Education and Commonwealth Corporation to expand “soft-skills” curriculum (e.g., Signaling Success) that complements job training activity.
- **Innovative Incentive Models:** EOLWD will work with the Executive Office for Administration and Finance to explore targeted tax incentives and continuation of existing, or application of new, Social Impact Bond and/or Pay for Success models to fund workforce development efforts.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

B. IMPROVE THE FEDERALLY-FUNDED WORKFORCE

The federally-funded workforce system and the career centers were not designed to provide the attention or the scope of services that individuals in the target populations require. The Task Force recommends **using requirements and tools of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 to enhance collaboration and coordination** with other state agencies in order to enact key system-wide improvements .

State agencies partnering through WIOA include:

- Department of Career Services
- Department of Unemployment Assistance
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
- Department of Transitional Assistance
- Executive Office of Elder Affairs
- Department of Veteran Services
- Community Colleges
- Vocational Technical Schools

While the mechanisms for collaboration are detailed in the combined plan to be submitted in March 2016, the below will also help enhance collaboration and drive outcomes.

Short-term (within FY16):

- **Performance Metrics:** EOLWD to develop and utilize performance metrics to leverage and target future expansions and to document career centers success in helping employers and job seekers.

Intermediate-term (within FY17):

- **Labor-exchange System:** EOLWD to expand the “labor exchange” delivered through the career centers into a “labor/education exchange” to expand and enhance connecting job seekers with access to skills training and education. Currently the career centers have focused on referring individuals to vendors who appear on the Eligible Training Providers List. Referral activity will be expanded to allow referrals to those vendors who deliver services under the Massachusetts-based workforce system widening awareness and access to opportunities.
- **Online Inventory:** EOLWD to create an online inventory of community- and industry-based programs performing workforce development and training functions that meet and exceed performance outcomes.

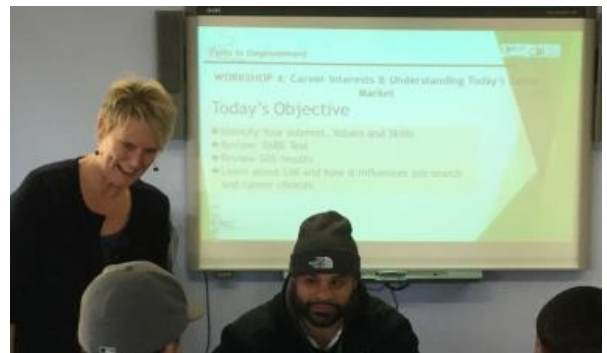
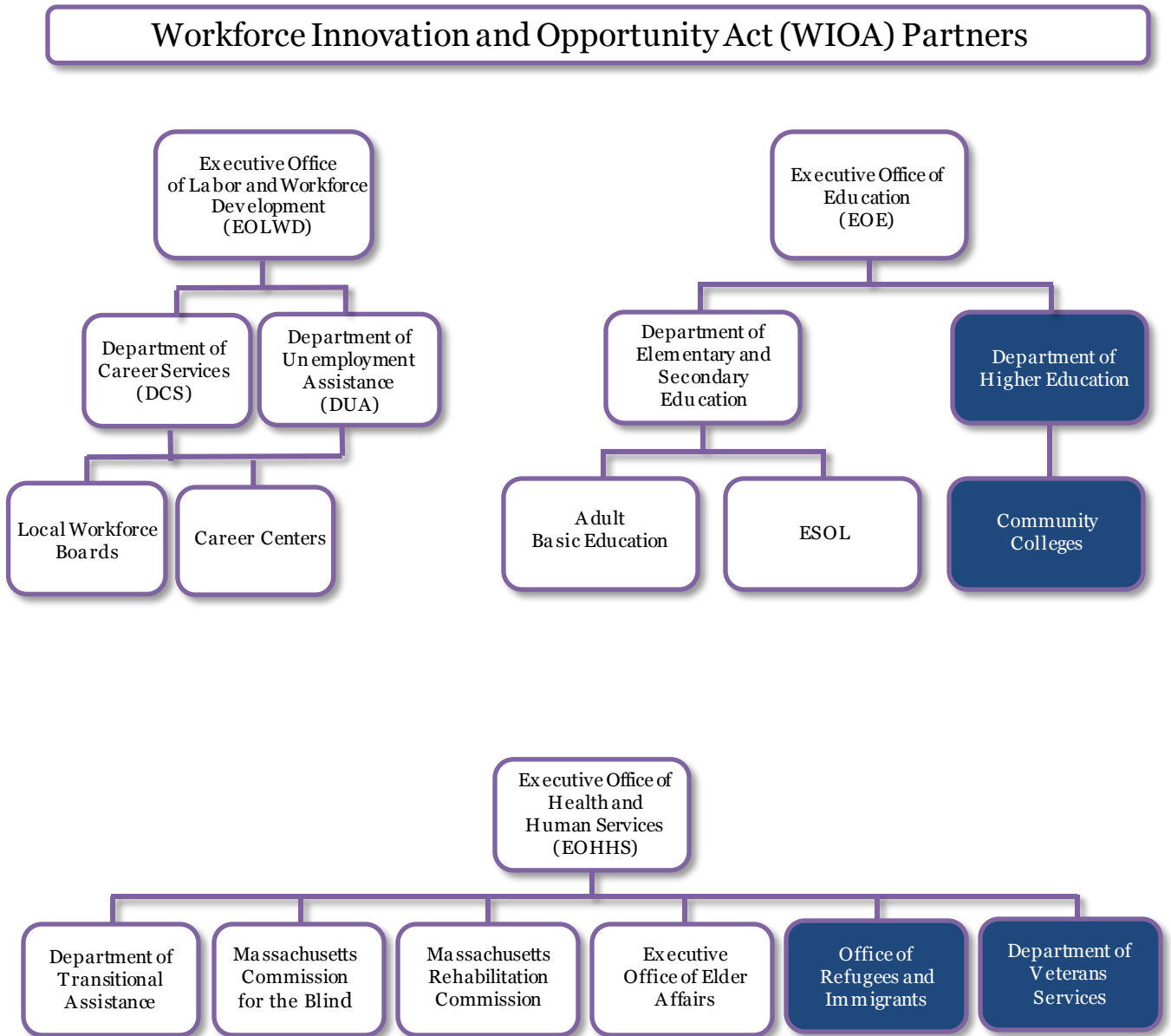


Figure 2: Workforce Development System: WIOA Partners



*WIOA Optional partners are in blue

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

C. DEMAND-DRIVEN 2.0

Finally the Task Force recommends **improvements to the federally-defined labor exchange system by adopting an employer-focused model.** This approach, branded “**Demand-Driven 2.0**,” will improve responsiveness to employer needs and prepare job seekers for high-demand employment opportunities.

Short-term (within FY16):

- **Stakeholder Outreach:** EOLWD to promote career center services through active outreach and education by career centers with business associations and trade organizations, such as Massachusetts Business Roundtable, Associated Industries of Massachusetts, local chambers of commerce, community based organizations, and others. Additionally, EOLWD to promote and make known to employers resources and opportunities available at the state and local levels, including the availability of workforce development and training grants.
- **Employer Engagement Metrics:** EOLWD to develop and utilize performance metrics to leverage and target future expansions and to document career centers success in helping employers and job seekers. Metrics to include salary and compensation information, length of employment, etc. Transparently report on metrics as frequently as appropriate but at least annually.
- **Employer Engagement Process Model:** EOLWD to develop a consistent and reliable employer-engagement process model to be implemented by all career centers. The model will be used to develop meaningful partnerships with employers.
- **Demand-driven/Talent Pipelines:** EOLWD to identify public policies and programs to improve talent pipelines to meet the hiring needs of employers.
- **Job Fairs:** EOLWD to work with workforce state partners to increase the number of hiring events.
- **Employer-Schools Partnerships:** EOLWD to work with the Executive Office of Education to support efforts by employers to partner with schools and communities through initiatives (e.g., Workforce Innovation Collaborative of the Manufacturing Advancement Center of Worcester and Worcester Polytechnic Institute’s Bio manufacturing Education and Training Center).



III. RECOMMENDATIONS

C. DEMAND-DRIVEN 2.0

Finally the Task Force recommends **improvements to the federally-defined labor exchange system by adopting an employer-focused model.** This approach, branded “**Demand-Driven 2.0,**” will improve responsiveness to employer needs and prepare job seekers for high-demand employment opportunities.

Intermediate-term (within FY17):

- **Career Center Branding:** EOLWD to create better branding/promotion of the services afforded by Career Centers and to identify existing online portals that can be leveraged by employers and job seekers to facilitate matching.
- **Professional Development:** EOLWD to create and implement regular professional development opportunities for Business Services Representatives to ensure their knowledge and expertise is current.
- **Social Enterprises:** EOLWD to identify meaningful ways to support and engage with social enterprises, which are non-profit or for-profit entities that create social impact while also generating revenue. Social enterprises often focus on helping their employees develop skills that are applicable both to that particular job as well as to future career growth.

- **School-to-Career Connecting Activities:** EOLWD to work with Education to expand or enhance School to Career Connecting Activities Program administered by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) which links schools to employers to create work based learning and career development experiences for students.
- **Regional and Local Vocational Technical Programming Investment:** EOLWD to work with Education and the Work Force Skills Cabinet to:
 - Review and recommend the development of a capital / operational investment in the expansion of career technical education programming. Such an investment should require documentation of employment needs, placement potential, opportunities within job markets, as well as employment outcomes.
 - Explore ways to support the expansion of career technical education programming, offered through vocational technical schools, in evenings and weekends.
 - Explore ways to enroll more under-represented students and/or encourage awareness and preparation at middle school age to increase the number of successful applications to regional vocational-technical schools. (e.g., “Prep for Tech”)



IV. ITEMS REQUIRING FURTHER STUDY

The Task Force was charged with making recommendations to improve employment opportunities for the target populations that could be executed by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. However, Task Force members recognize there are several other arenas where program and policy changes would help unemployed residents. The Task Force recommends the following items for further study, with the corresponding state agency that has oversight responsibility.

Working with Health and Human Services

- **Cliff Effects:** Cliff effects are disincentives to employment that are built into public benefit programs that are real and prevent individuals from transitioning into employment. This issue requires further study by the state and policy alterations to remove or mitigate the disincentives. (EOLWD, Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Department of Housing and Community Development)
- **Two-Generation Approach:** Explore the feasibility of adopting a two-generational approach to achieve family self-sufficiency, (support to parents and children through the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and EOLWD).

