

Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board Strategic Plan FY 2015-2017

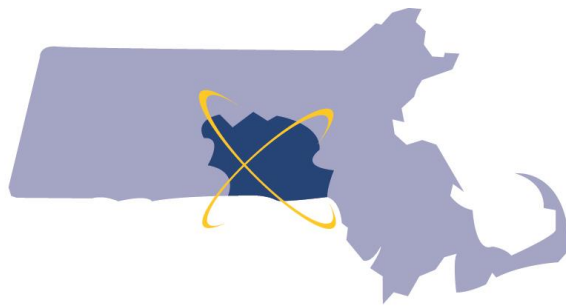


CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS
**WORKFORCE
INVESTMENT BOARD**
guiding resources for a stronger workforce

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I. Introduction

This plan has been developed to help the Central MA Workforce Investment Board set strategic priorities and guide our efforts to strengthen the Central MA region's workforce.

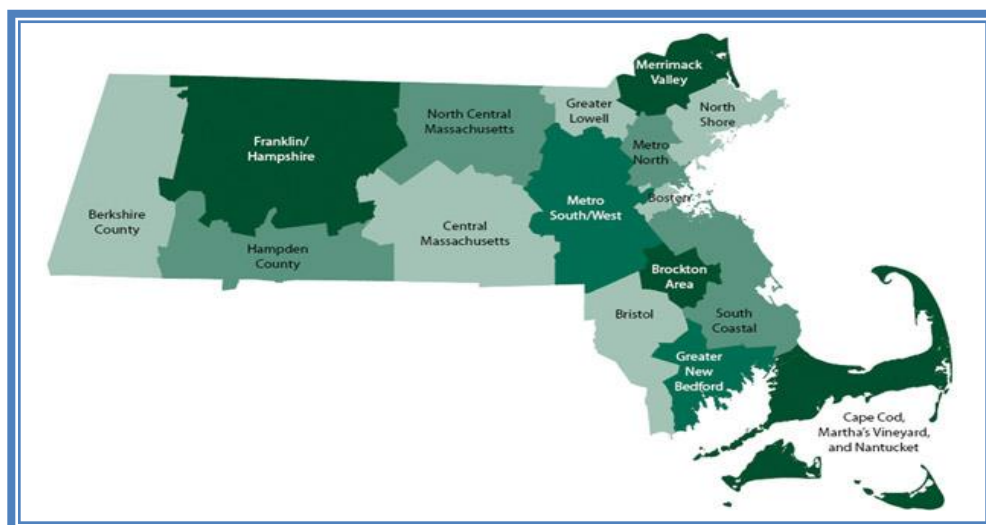
This plan serves as a tool to help us in making decisions – it offers us a touchstone to refer to when deciding upon a course of action; it is our guide by which we set our course. It offers us full flexibility while pointing us in a determined direction. In this regard, the plan is meant to be a fluid and living document.

The plan has developed through an inclusive and collaborative process with feedback from our partners, informed by data and labor market information.

II. Who We Are

Mission Statement: The Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (CMWIB) is a public/private partnership, serving needs of both employers and employees. The board collaboratively develops and implements strategies for job readiness and skills advancement, leveraging community resources that promote economic wellness within the region's 38 cities and towns.

The primary role of the CMWIB is to convene civic and business leadership, and utilize their insights to direct public funds aimed at building the skills of the workforce in our area. The CMWIB also oversees the region's three One Stop Career Centers (Workforce Central) located in Worcester, Milford, and Southbridge.



The CMWIB serves the following 38 cities and towns in Central Massachusetts.: Worcester, Auburn, Oxford, Webster, West Boylston, Boylston, Shrewsbury Grafton, Millbury, Sutton, Douglas, Uxbridge, Northbridge; Upton, Northborough, Westborough, Milford, Hopedale, Mendon, Millville, Blackstone, Southbridge, Charlton, Sturbridge, Leicester, Spencer, Paxton, Holden, Rutland, Dudley, Oakham, New Braintree, Hardwick, North Brookfield, East Brookfield, Brookfield, West Brookfield, and Warren.

III. How We Operate

To help visualize the Workforce Development System within which CMWIB operates, we have included the Central Massachusetts Workforce Development System Chart (below).

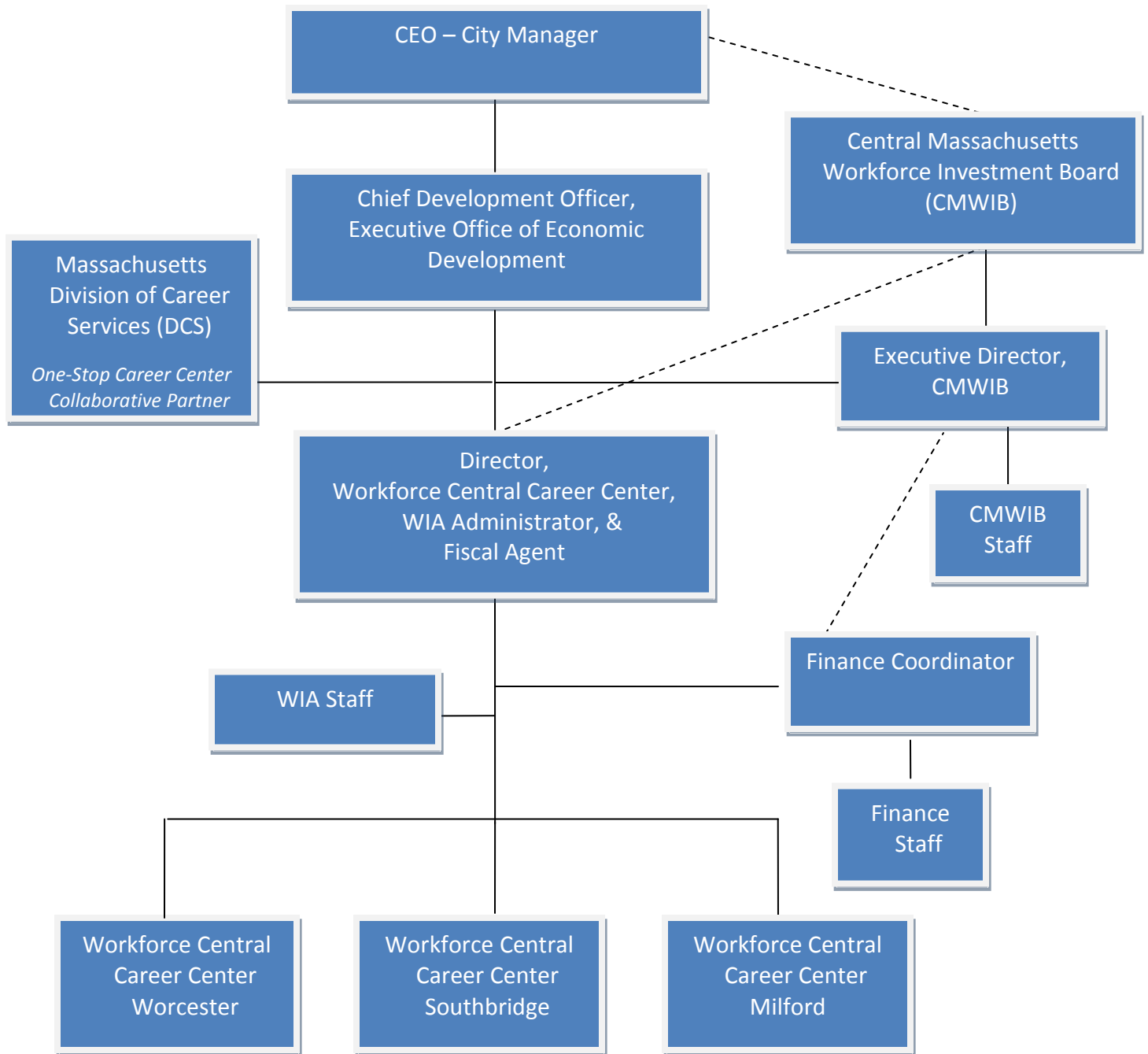
You will notice at the top of the chart that our system is led by a Chief Elected Official (CEO). In our region this position is held by the Worcester City Manager. The CEO holds primary fiduciary responsibility for the entire system and appoints members to the CMWIB.

The Central MA Workforce Investment Board and Workforce Central Career Center (WCCC) operate as separate divisions within the City of Worcester's Executive Office of Economic Development. Both the Career Center and the CMWIB receive administrative support from the Finance Coordinator and staff.

The CMWIB oversees the policies and performance of the three career centers, youth programs, and other initiatives. WCCC's Director manages the operations of the three career centers in Worcester, Milford, and Southbridge, overseeing the day-to-day efforts of City of Worcester and the State Division of Career Services staff.

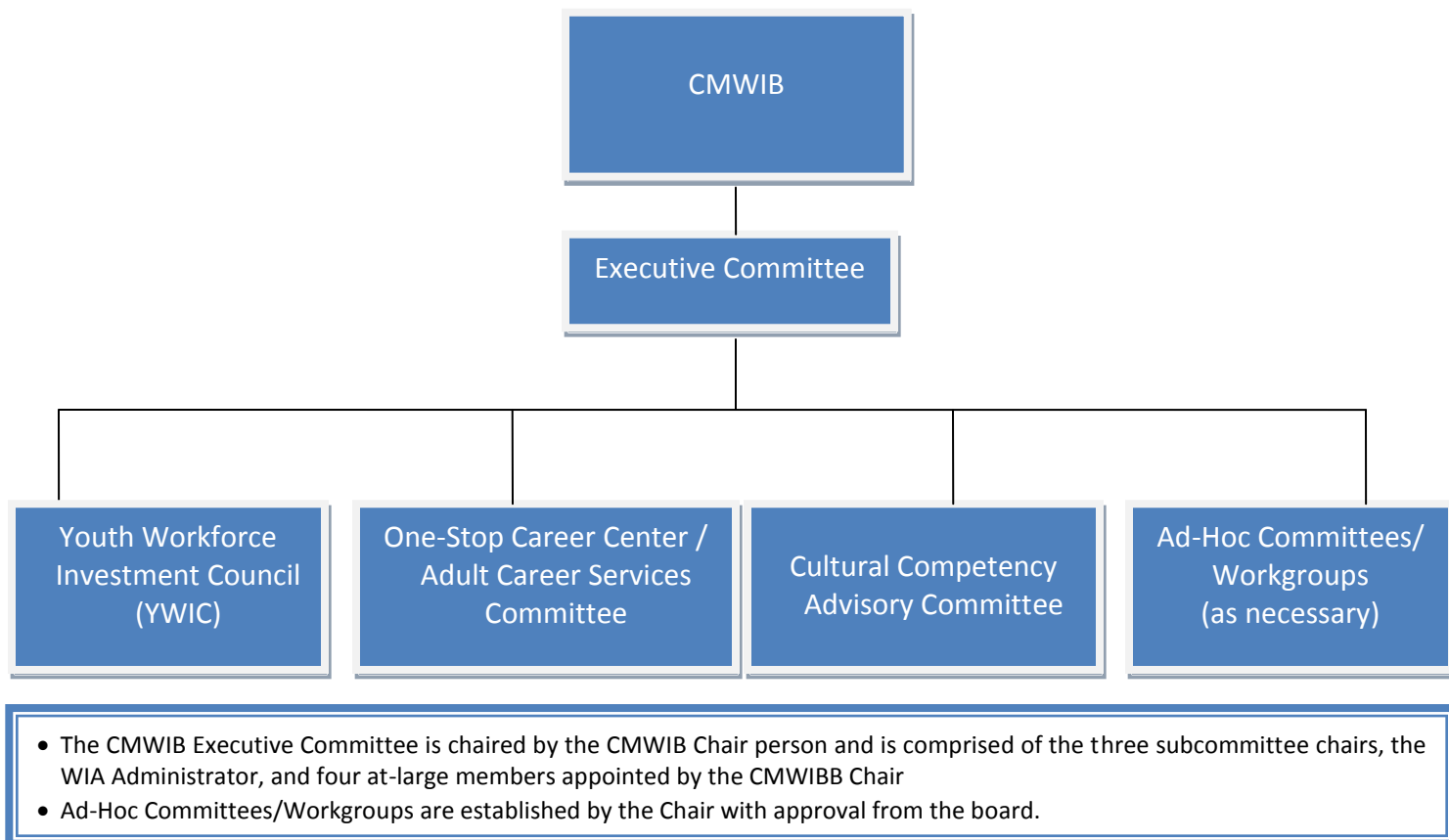
Within the Workforce Development system, the CMWIB has been structured to have a full board which serves as the overarching and directing body, and sub-committees which focus on priority areas (please refer to the CMWIB Committee Structure Chart).

Central MA Workforce Development System Chart



- The solid line from the CEO, to the Chief Development Officer, to the Director of the Workforce Central CC, WIA Administrator & Fiscal Agent indicates direct authority and financial accountability. The CEO retains financial liability.
- The dashed line from the CEO to the CMWIB reflects the role the CEO has in appointing the Board.
- The dashed line from the CMWIB to the Finance Coordinator reflects the support role the Finance Coordinator plays to the Board.
- The dashed line from CMWIB to the Workforce Central Career Center reflects the Board's policy making and oversight responsibility.

The CMWIB relies heavily on its sub-committees to assist in carrying out its mission. See below for a brief outline of each of the CMWIB's committees, their roles, and information about when they meet.



Executive Committee: The Executive Committee is comprised of the CMWIB Chairperson, all Chairs of the standing sub-committees, the Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Area (WIA) Administrator, and at least four other appointed members. The Executive Committee has many of the same powers as the Board, with the exception of those not relegated to the Committee, based on the By-Laws. The Executive Committee meets monthly, except for months when the full Board meets (January, April, July, and October).

Youth Workforce Investment Council (YWIC): The YWIC is comprised of youth service providers, community based organizations, private sector businesses, and CMWIB members. The duties of the YWIC include developing the portions CMWIB's Strategic Plan relating to eligible youth. This includes recommending eligible providers of youth services to be awarded grants or contracts on a competitive basis by the CMWIB to carry out these services, conducting oversight of the CMWIB-funded youth service providers, and coordinating youth activities authorized under Section 129 of the Workforce Investment Act. Meetings are held bi-monthly.

Career Center/Adult Career Services Committee: The Career Center/Adult Career Services Committee is comprised of members from the CMWIB, private sector businesses, and community based organizations. This committee is responsible for making recommendations to the CMWIB with respect to the One-Stop Career Centers and other career services offered to adults within the Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Area. Meetings are held bi-monthly.

Cultural Competency Advisory Committee: The Cultural Competency Advisory Committee is comprised of CMWIB members, Workforce Central Career Center and CMWIB staff, and other interested community and business representatives. This committee helps to ensure that the programs and services offered through the CMWIB and Workforce Central Career Center effectively serve the broad range of populations within the Central Massachusetts Workforce Investment Area. Meetings are held on a monthly basis.

Operating Principles

The following operating principles have been established to help guide the manner in which CMWIB staff and members work toward the goals and activities identified in the strategic plan:

- **Integrity:** The CMWIB will follow all local, state, and federal rules and regulations and conduct our business with honesty and integrity.
- **Timeliness:** The CMWIB will respond to inquiries from partners and the public in a timely manner and will meet deadlines for reporting and programming.
- **Transparency:** The CMWIB will conduct its business and make decisions in a transparent manner and communicate these actions to members and the public to ensure that the CMWIB is viewed as an honest broker in the community.
- **Inclusivity:** The CMWIB will seek input from a representative sample of the communities we serve when making policy and funding decisions and will seek to convene and connect numerous stakeholders when addressing workforce development issues.
- **Impact:** The CMWIB will seek to utilize its limited resources in a way that maximizes the positive outcomes of our efforts. We will track and monitor our work to measure our impact.
- **Innovation:** The CMWIB will strive to seek new and creative approaches to meeting workforce development challenges and will aggressively work to gather the resources necessary to implement these new approaches.
- **Technologically Savvy:** The CMWIB will integrate the use of new technologies to improve its effectiveness and efficiency.
- **Relevant:** The CMWIB will publically address issues relating to workforce development and strive to be viewed as an authoritative voice in these matters by the community.

IV. Strategic Planning Process

This plan builds upon CMWIB's past work and accomplishments to set a future course for successful workforce development in our region, designed to ensure that the area's workforce is ready to meet the needs of our employers.

Starting in October 2012, Board members and staff from both the Central MA and North Central MA regions came together for a Labor Market Information Summit, sponsored by the Commonwealth Corporation and the Boston Federal Reserve. The summit provided members with current labor market trends and data concerning the economic state of the two regions. Attendees representing a wide variety of stakeholders from Central MA, including employers, K-12, higher education, labor, One-Stop Career Center staff and partners, and community based organizations offered feedback related to the data presented. The Summit helped to ensure that our Board leadership was equipped with the most relevant and current information and analysis for the Central MA region to begin the strategic planning process.

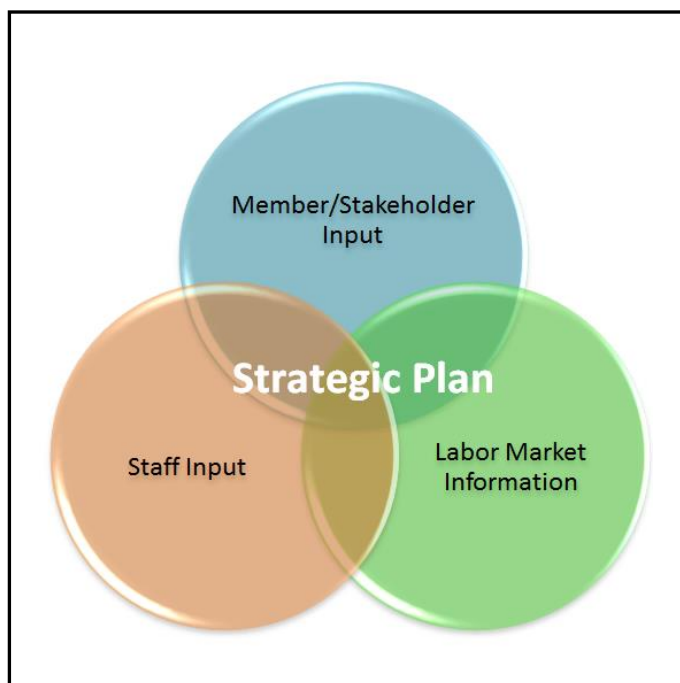


Figure 1: The CMWIB Strategic Planning Process involved a collaboration of Board Members, Key Stakeholders, and Career Center/CMWIB Staff

The regional economic information from the Summit was then used to guide the Board's discussion regarding priorities and goal development at the CMWIB's Leadership Retreat later that year. At the full day retreat, staff met with the Board's leadership team which included the Chairs of all of the CMWIB Committees and developed 'overarching goals' to align with the work of the CMWIB's Committees.

Armed with these overarching goals, the Committee Chairs worked within their Committees with support from the CMWIB staff to define data-driven activities for each goal.

In addition to these efforts, the CMWIB took additional steps in 2014 to refine its strategic goals. The CMWIB Executive Director met with key community stakeholders including the leadership at the Greater Worcester Chamber of Commerce, Quinsigamond Community College, Worcester Public Schools, Worcester Community Action Council, Local Labor Officials, etc. to gain insight and feedback on regional issues and priorities. Additionally, all CMWIB and Committee members were asked to complete an online survey to identify and clarify regional needs and priorities.

The capstone for this process was the CMWIB Spring Board meeting where a representative from the Greater Worcester Chamber of Commerce presented its 'Worcester Regional Economic Competitiveness Outlook' to the Board and a consultant from Strategy Matters guided a strategic planning discussion and assisted the group in refining its locally identified goals, activities, and benchmarks.

IV-A. Central MA Regional Demographic Data

As noted in the previous section, the CMWIB staff and members reviewed a number of labor market sources and data points to inform its strategic planning process. This section contains a compilation of some of this information and provides a snapshot and context for the planning process in terms of our regional economy and workforce.

Charts 1A through 1E below provides an overview of the population in the whole of Worcester County, giving context to the demographics of our local economy and the changes which have implications for our workforce development efforts.

Worcester County Population Profile

Worcester County Households		Worcester County Population		Worcester County Household Income	
HOUSEHOLDS		TOTAL POPULATION		Total	
Total households	303,080	798,552		Less than \$10,000	5.5%
		MEDIAN AGE (years)		\$10,000 to \$14,999	5.0%
		39.2		\$15,000 to \$24,999	8.9%
HOUSEHOLD TYPE		RACE		\$25,000 to \$34,999	8.0%
In married-couple family	61.5%	White		\$35,000 to \$49,999	11.5%
In other households	35.1%	Black or African American		\$50,000 to \$74,999	17.1%
		American Indian and Alaska Native		\$75,000 to \$99,999	13.9%
HOUSEHOLD SIZE		Asian		\$100,000 to \$149,999	17.1%
Total households	303,080	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)		\$150,000 to \$199,999	7.4%
Average household size	2.55	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander		\$200,000 or more	5.6%
Average family size	3.09	Other			
		29,078		Median income (dollars)	65,968

Charts 1A, 1B, 1C: Worcester County Demographic Profile (Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2012)

The Worcester County Demographic Profile (Charts 1A, 1B, and 1C above) identifies the total population for Worcester County as 798,552 with an average age of 39.2 years. As this data indicates, Central MA has a large population of “working-class” households; nearly 20% of the County’s households have an income under \$25,000 per year; 38.4% have an income less than \$50,000 annually, and more than half earn less than \$75,000 per year. On the other hand, more than 30% of households make more than \$100,000 annually (with more than 13% making more than \$150,000 per year). This highlights the dichotomy and income inequality of our region’s economy between high earners and their middle-wage (and below) counterparts. This wide income spread also exists within our career center customer base and has implications for the services we provide to both job seekers and employer hiring demand.

Chart 1D below profiles the county's population as a whole and the changes between the year 2000 and the economic downturn of 2008-2010. As indicated in the 2012 joint Commonwealth Corporation and Boston Federal Reserve Regional research report, *Labor Market Trends in the Central Mass Region*, the number of people living in Central MA increased at an annual rate of 0.7 percent. This increase was largely fueled by growth in the region's immigrant population and accompanied by slight growth in the native-born population, which declined in most other regions of the state. Central MA also became more diverse over the past decade, with strong growth among Black, Asian, and Hispanic populations. The region's population also became considerably older as baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) neared retirement age.

	2000	2008-2010	Absolute Change	Annual Growth Rate (Percent)
Resident Population	628,644	667,115	38,471	0.7
Gender				
Male	304,428	325,996	21,568	0.8
Female	324,216	341,119	16,903	0.6
Nativity				
Native Born	557,843	568,814	10,971	0.2
Immigrant	70,801	98,301	27,500	3.7
Race/Ethnicity				
White, non-Hispanic	538,545	534,042	-4,503	-0.1
Black, non-Hispanic	15,628	26,035	10,407	5.8
Asian, non-Hispanic	15,701	28,658	12,957	6.9
Hispanic	46,575	65,550	18,975	3.9
Other race, non-Hispanic	12,195	12,830	635	0.6
Age				
Less than age 16	148,132	142,791	-5,341	-0.4
Age 16-24	62,184	73,151	10,967	1.8
Age 25-34	89,305	80,580	-8,725	-1.1
Age 35-44	110,086	99,029	-11,057	-1.2
Age 45-54	88,698	108,934	20,236	2.3
Age 55-64	50,966	78,624	27,658	4.9
Age 65+	79,273	84,006	4,733	0.6

Chart 1D: Worcester County's Population Demographic Changes (From: *Labor Market Trends in the Central Mass Region*; A joint project of the Commonwealth Corporation and New England Public Policy Center of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, October 2012; Source: US Census Bureau 2000 Decennial Census PUMS data files and 2008-2010 American Community Survey PUMS data files)

Chart 1E reinforces the importance of the fact that immigrants are driving the growth of the civilian labor force in our region. Between 2000 and 2005-2007, and 2005-2007 to 2008-2010, the number of immigrants in the civilian labor force (those people who live in the region and are either working or unemployed but actively looking for work) increased at a much higher rate than the rates in Massachusetts and the United States. This propelled the total civilian labor force to growth rates of 1.3% and 1.8% respectively over this time period, again exceeding the growth rates for both Massachusetts and the United States.

Civilian Labor Force Growth by Nativity Status, 2000 - 2010

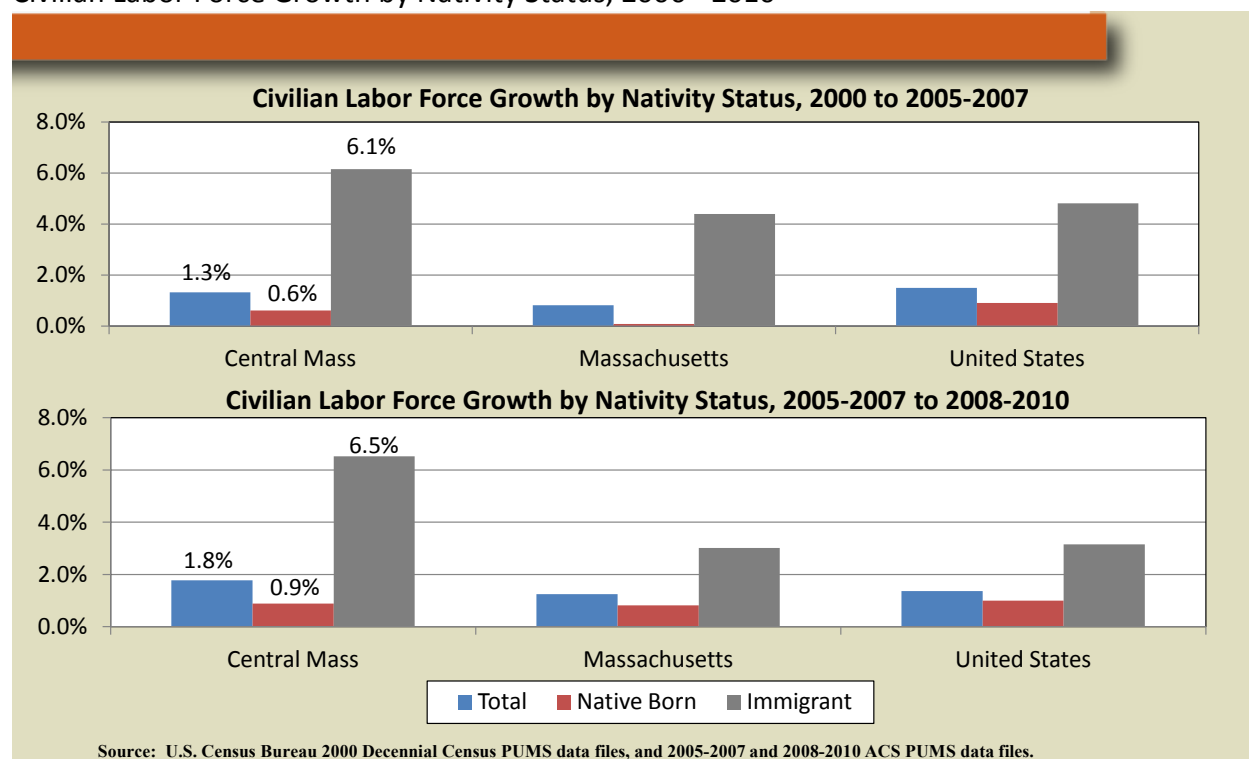


Chart 1E: Worcester County's Civilian Labor Force Growth by Nativity Status (From: Labor Market Trends in the Central Mass Region; A joint project of the Commonwealth Corporation and New England Public Policy Center of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, October 2012; Source: US Census Bureau 2000 Decennial Census PUMS data files, 2005-2007 and 2008-2010 American Community Survey PUMS data files)

Chart 1F below outlines regional demographic data from a different perspective which allows for a comparison of the populations with the job seekers served by the region's three career centers. This chart indicates the demographic breakdown of the working age population in the City of Worcester and Worcester County, as well as the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claimants in the Central MA Workforce Investment Area, and compares them with the career centers' job seeker customer demographic profile.

Demographic Data for Select Local Populations

Demographics of Select Local Populations					
	City of Worcester Working Age Population	Worcester County Working Age Population	Central MA UI Claimants	Total Served-Workforce Central Career Center FY14 Q3 Year-to-Date (July 1, 2013- March 31, 2014)	
Total Served	83,197	396,075	7,101	13,813	100.0%
Female	50%	49%	44%	6259	45.3%
Male	50%	51%	56%	7551	54.7%
Afr. American or Black	11%	3.6%	7.0%	1102	8.0%
Amer. Ind. or Alaskan	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	100	0.7%
Asian	5.3%	3.9%	1.8%	418	3.0%
Hawaiian, Pac Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	27	0.2%
Hispanic or Latino	15%	6.9%	11.9%	1535	11.1%
White	77%	88.5%	81.6%	10326	74.8%
Other Race	2.7%	2.1%		265	1.9%

Chart 1F: Selected Local Population Chart (Source: US Census - 2012 American Community Survey and UI Claimant Data from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development Department of Unemployment Assistance Profile of Massachusetts Unemployment Insurance Claimants, June 2013).

This data shows the demographic split in our region between the urban core (the City of Worcester), and its suburban and rural surroundings. It should be noted that large numbers of people of color live in Central MA outside of Worcester, including significant communities of color in specific towns and areas, such as a large Hispanic population in Southbridge, MA. A review of this data also suggests that the career centers have served people of color in proportion to their representation in the unemployed population. However, there is still room for improvement in serving those populations, especially in Worcester, who are not attached to the labor market or currently collecting unemployment insurance. Programmatically, this translates into continued need for culturally appropriate services and training for these vulnerable populations in our region.

IV-B. Youth Education and Employment

The CMWIB is committed to collaboration with the numerous school districts within the Central Massachusetts region, recognizing a vibrant economy is closely linked to educational success. Much like other investment areas, Central MA recognizes the challenge of securing employment for young adults. The Worcester Public Schools is the largest district in Central Massachusetts, an area that also includes the school districts of Milford, North Brookfield, Southbridge, Webster, Southern Worcester County Regional Vocational Technical, Wachusett, Oxford, Blackstone, and Leicester, among others.

Charts two and three provide an overview of the public school system enrollment by race, gender, and key indicators for three school districts that represent the geographical diversity of the Central Massachusetts Workforce area (Worcester, Milford, Southbridge). Chart four offers an analysis table that provides a snapshot of district and school achievement and tracks selected data for a period of 1 year.

Public School Enrollment Demographics

Public Schools Enrollment			
	Worcester	Milford	Southbridge
Race	% of District	% of District	% of District
African American	14.5 %	2.7 %	1 %
Asian	7.7 %	2.8 %	0.8 %
Hispanic	38 %	19.8 %	37.9 %
White	35.8 %	70.2 %	59.8 %
Other	3.8 %	2.7 %	0.3 %
Gender			
Male	12,735 (51.8%)	2,158 (51.6%)	1,156 (51.6%)
Female	11,827 (48.2%)	2,024 (48.4%)	1,083 (48.4%)
Total	24,562	4,182	2,239

Chart 2: District Analysis Review (DART) (Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE])

Key Indicators by District

Key Indicators by District			
	Worcester	Milford	Southbridge
	# or % of District	# or % of District	# or % of District
Grade 9-12 Dropout Rate	3.4 %	3 %	3.7 %
Attendance Rate	95.1 %	95.5 %	92.5 %
Average # of days absent	8.3	7.7	12.3
Unexcused absences >9	29.8 %	15.4 %	32.9 %
Four-Year Graduation Rate	73.4 %	86.5 %	70.6 %
Low Income	70.6%	71.4%	72.9%
Afr. American/Black	76.9%	(sample size too small)	(sample size too small)
Asian	85.6%	88.3%	(sample size too small)
Hisp./Latino	63.1%	62.1%	68.7%
Amer. Ind. Or Alaskan	42.9%	(sample size too small)	(sample size too small)
White	79.9%	90.0%	70.2%
Total # of High School Graduates	1,402	249	96
% Still in school	11.3 %	5 %	4.2 %
% Non-grad completers	1.3 %	0.4 %	1.7 %

Chart 3: District Analysis Review (DART) (Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE])

A review of this data shows that while schools in our region are doing fairly well with student retention, there is still a need for support, especially in the Southbridge area, which lags behind the other districts in key areas, including attendance rate, retention rate, and graduation rate. Additionally, the education gap, as evidenced by the four-year graduation rate, continues to exist in our region and is most pronounced for Hispanic/Latino students which lag behind their white classmates by 16 percentage points in Worcester and more than 27 percentage points in Milford. Southbridge, while having a lower graduation rate gap among white and Hispanic students, has a lower rate overall.

Chart four below indicates Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test proficiency rates for these same three districts and indicates that while Milford shows strong results, Worcester and Southbridge lag, especially Southbridge.

MCAS Outcomes by District

	2013-14 October Enrollment				2013 MCAS % Proficient of Higher			2013 MCAS Growth Median SGP	
District Name	Total Enrollment #	Low Income %	SWD %	ELL %	ELA %	Math %	Science %	ELA %	Math %
Worcester	24,562	73	20	31.7	51	42	31	51	49
Milford	4,182	31.9	16.4	8.8	72	62	64	55	52
Southbridge	2, 239	76.3	18.9	12.7	38	32	22	34	32

Chart 4: District Analysis Review (DART) (Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE])

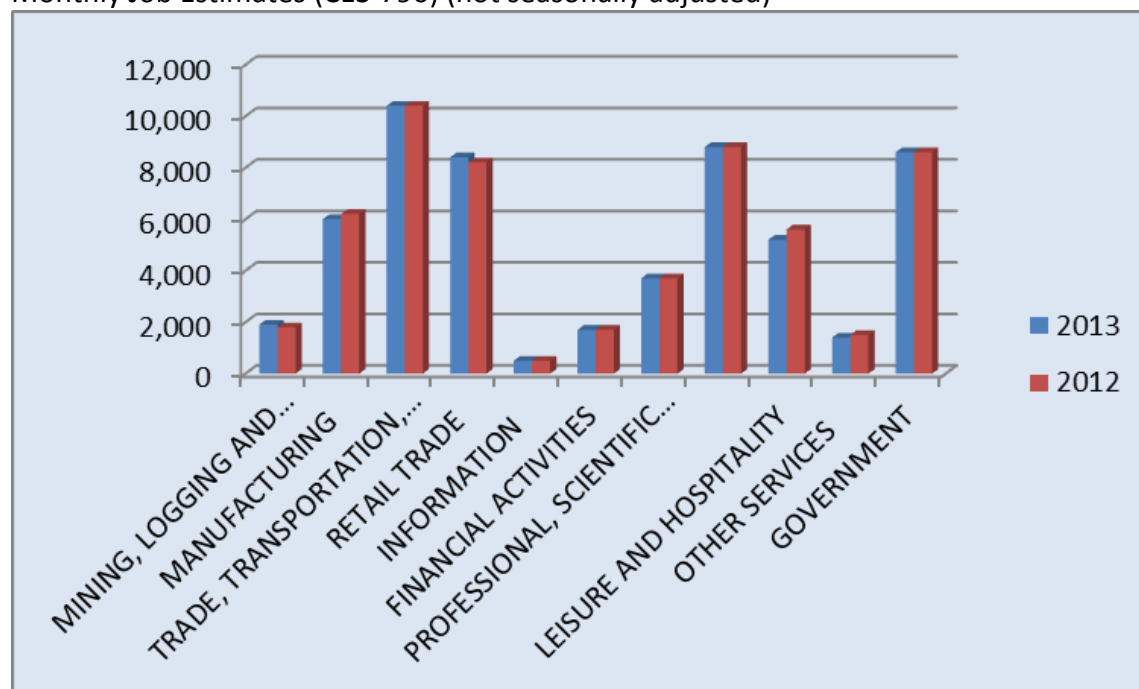
According to information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate for youth 16-19 is 14.9%. This is more than double the unemployment rate for adults 25 and older (6%), and youth of color fare far worse than their white counterparts when it comes to unemployment. These numbers indicate the challenges involved in developing young adult work readiness skills and the continued need for finding suitable employment for this undeserved population.

Overall, when looking at youth education and employment data, it is imperative that the CMWIB continue to support student success and the development of pathways to career readiness and success for both in-school and out-of-school youth throughout our region, with special attention paid to vulnerable youth, including youth in both the urban core and beyond.

IV-C. About the Region's Current Employment and Industries

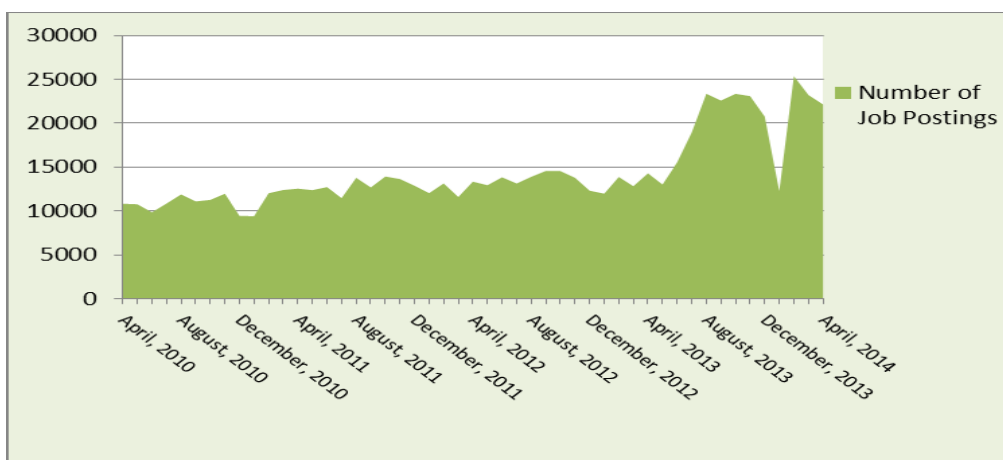
As part of our review of labor market information, we have compiled a variety of data points concerning our region's employment and job vacancies. The graphs below outline this data to help provide further context to the goals and activities stakeholders have identified for our focus areas. Graph One indicates the total non-farm job estimates by industry cluster for the Worcester MA-CT Metropolitan NECTA (New England City and Town Areas). We see that trade/transportation, professional, scientific, retail, and government are keys sectors, with manufacturing and leisure/hospitality also sharing a significant percentage of the total.

Monthly Job Estimates (CES-790) (not seasonally adjusted)



Graph 1: Monthly Job Estimates (CES-790) (not seasonally adjusted), Source: Mass.gov, Central Region Fact Sheet, June 2013

According to data from the Help Wanted Online data series (Graph 2), the Central MA economy has experienced a sharp increase in online job postings since the months of December 2013 to present.



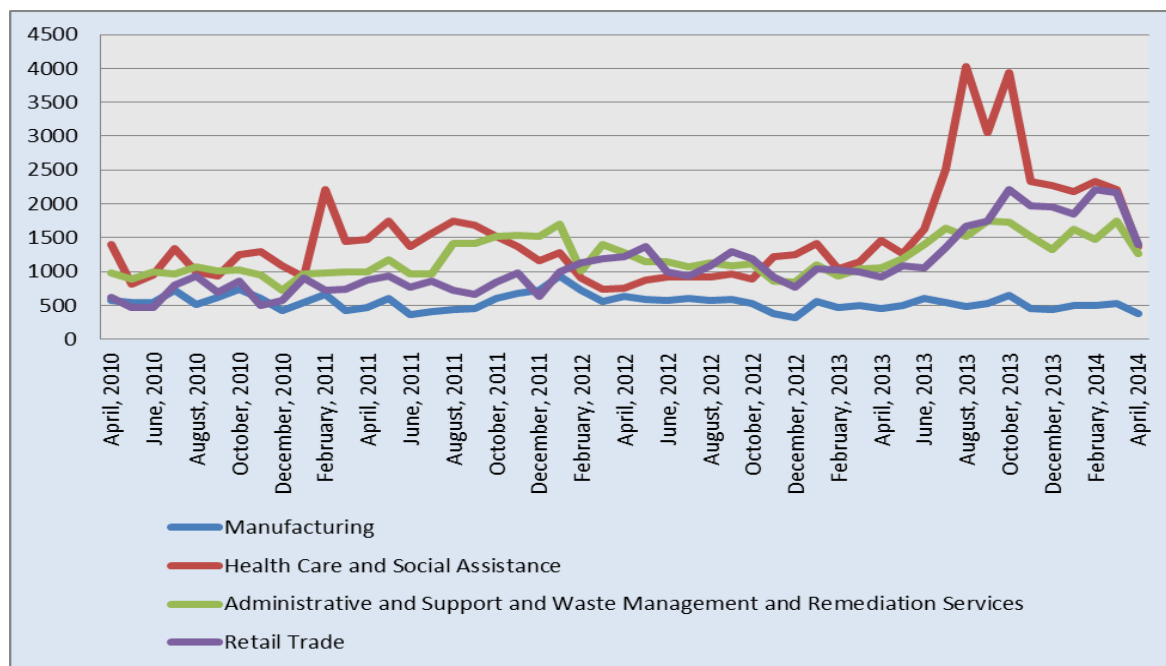
Graph 2: Total Number of Job Postings in Central MA (Source: WANTED Analytics: data provider for The Conference Board's Help-Wanted Online Data Series)

Our region's top three industry sectors, Health Care and Social Assistance; Administrative Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services; and Retail Trade have all experienced growth in online job postings during December, 2013 (Graph 3, below) especially Health Care and Social Assistance which went from roughly 3,000 online job postings to nearly 4,000 from October-December of 2013.

All three of these top industries have begun a decline in online job postings however, beginning in February of 2014 to present, with Retail Trade having the largest decline from close to 2,200 jobs to just about 1,800.

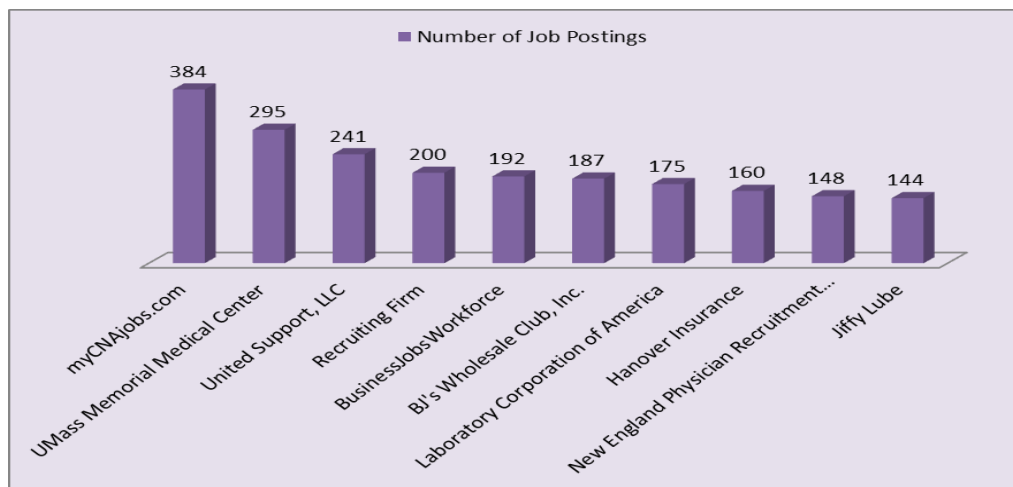
Manufacturing job postings have also trended downward from a high of 800 in January of 2012 to its current level of 480.

Given the recent downward shift in all four industry clusters, hiring demand has seemingly returned to their pre-surge levels and current swings appear to represent more seasonal shifts as opposed to larger structural trends.



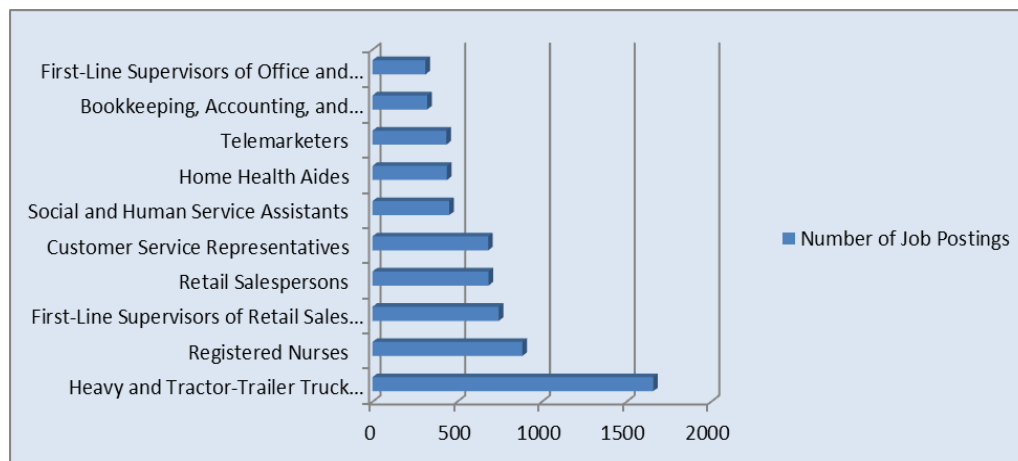
Graph 3: Online Job Postings in Central MA by Select Industries (Source: WANTED Analytics: data provider for The Conference Board's Help-Wanted Online Data Series)

Graph four outlines that between April-May, 2014, Central MA's top employers included myCNAjobs.com, UMass Memorial, United Support, LLC Recruiting Firm, BusinessJobsWorkforce, BJ's Wholesale Club, Laboratory Corporation of America, Hanover Insurance, New England Physician Recruitment, and Jiffy Lube. It is incumbent upon the CMWIB and the region's career centers to engage these employers to connect them with the employment services they need to grow, including assistance with employee recruitment.



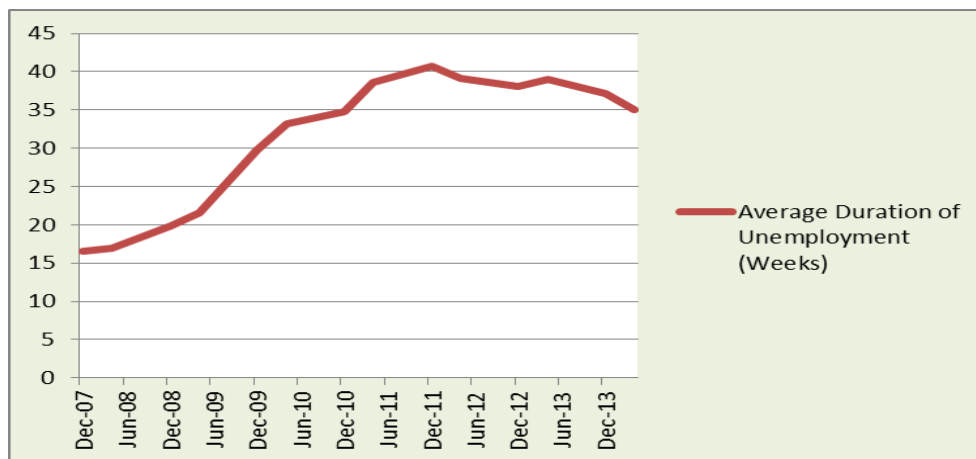
Graph 4: Job Postings in Central MA by Top Employers (Source: WANTED Analytics: data provider for The Conference Board's Help-Wanted Online Data Series)

Also according to the Help Wanted Online data series in Graph five, the top occupations in Central MA by number of online postings have been Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (1,658), Registered Nurses (885), First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers (746), Retail Salespersons (685), Customer Services Representatives (683), Social and Human Service Assistants (453), Home Health Aides (440), Telemarketers (436), Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks (323), and First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers (313).



Graph 5: Job Postings in Central MA by Top Occupations (Source: WANTED Analytics: data provider for The Conference Board's Help-Wanted Online Data Series)

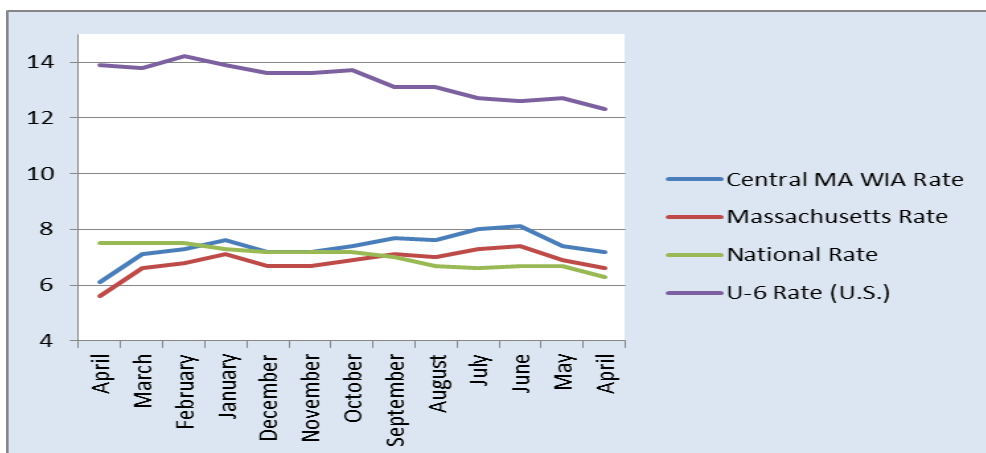
The duration of unemployment tracked by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics in Graph six has increased dramatically from an average of 16.1 weeks in December, 2007 to 35.1 weeks in December, 2013. The average peaked at 40 weeks in December, 2011 and began a gradual decline, but remains well above historical averages. As the long-term unemployed face additional barriers to re-employment, including the perceived (real or imagined) erosion of skills, and the personal/emotional trauma associated with lack of steady employment, the CMWIB must continue to provide additional services and programming for this customer population.



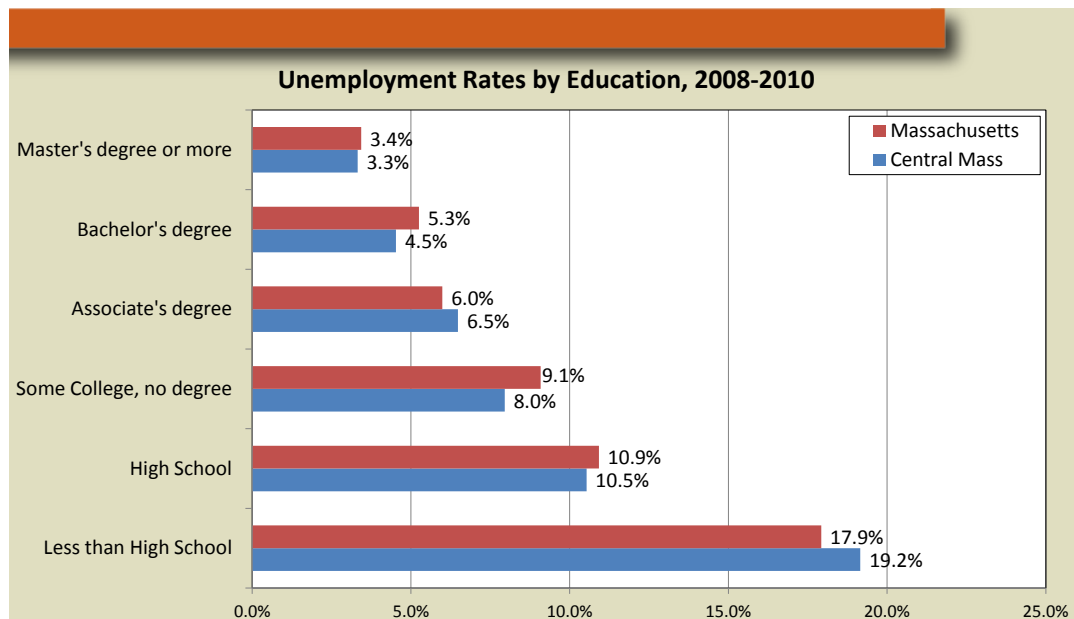
Graph 6: Average Duration of Unemployment in Weeks (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics)

In addition, although higher than the state and national average, Central MA has seen a gradual decline the in the unemployment rate. Most currently, in April, 2014, the Central MA WIA unemployment rate came in at 7.2% compared to the lower Massachusetts State rate of 6.6% and the National rate of 6.3%. However, these figures do not capture the number of unemployed that have dropped out of the labor pool.

The expanded unemployment rate (U-6) measure includes the total unemployed population, plus all marginally attached workers, plus all persons employed part-time for economic reasons. The National U-6 rate has been gradually declining but still remains high at 12.3% in April, 2014 (see Graph 7).



Graph 7: Unemployment Rates for Central MA, Massachusetts, and U.S. (Source: Mass.gov, Federal Reserve Economic Data (FRED), and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics)



Graph 8: Unemployment Rates by Education, 2008-2010 (From: *Labor Market Trends in the Central Mass Region*; A joint project of the Commonwealth Corporation and New England Public Policy Center of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, October 2012; Source: US Census Bureau 2008-2010 ACS PUMS data files)

These employment and vacancy data points, taken together, identify some key challenges the region is experiencing in workforce development:

- Increasing income inequality in the region
- A declining but still high regional employment rate
- An increase in the duration of unemployment
- An increase in the number of unemployed low-income residents of color, especially immigrants
- A high unemployment rate for youth
- Changing employment trends, in terms of in-demand industries and top employers

CMWIB's leadership took these challenges into consideration in creating this strategic plan, and in outlining its seven key goals, listed below. It recognizes the need to continue its approach of connecting job seekers with employment in our region's top industries and in serving our top employers more directly. It also recognizes the need to serve those struggling the hardest to maintain connection to employment: the long-term unemployed as well as those with the most limited educational levels and the least amount of access to services and resources

V. CMWIB Strategic Goals

After its robust strategic planning process outlined above, CMWIB has arrived at seven major goals:

1. CMWIB will be viewed as the region's workforce development authority
2. CMWIB will increase the resources available for workforce development in the region
3. The CMWIB will increase its organizational effectiveness and capacity
4. Central MA employers will have access to the support they need from the public workforce system to foster growth
5. All job seekers in Central MA will have access to the information and services needed to support quality reemployment
6. All Central MA youth will be prepared for career success by age 21
7. All CMWIB programs and services will be conducted with cultural competence so that all customers, both internal and external, feel welcomed and valued

The following chart outlines each goal, related activities, and how CMWIB will measure success.

Goal	Activities	Benchmark for Success
The CMWIB will be viewed as the region's workforce development authority	Develop CMWIB and Workforce Central social media platforms	CMWIB Linked-In, Twitter and YouTube sites are launched by summer 2015; WCCC Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages launched by summer 2015 and a minimum of 1,000 views are achieved across these platforms annually.
	Create and distribute monthly CMWIB & Workforce Central "Central Connection" newsletter	12 monthly Central Connection newsletters are created and distributed
	Produce, air, and upload monthly CMWIB radio/TV show, <i>The Working Lunch</i>	12 monthly episodes are produced, broadcast and uploaded to CMWIB YouTube site
	Produce and distribute	Four regional economic

	quarterly regional economic snapshot report and CMWIB regional impact reports	snapshot reports and regional impact reports are created and posted on the CMWIB website by August 1, 2014
The CMWIB will increase the resources available for workforce development in the region	CMWIB will seek out and apply for additional grants and funding for new and existing programming, either as the lead entity or as a supporting partner	CMWIB will apply (or support) a minimum of six grant funded projects separate from formula-funded allocations annually
	Work with City of Worcester officials to research a method to establish 501c3 support foundation	Determination regarding the appropriate method for applying for 501c3 status is made in FY 15 (with follow up as appropriate)
The CMWIB will increase its organizational effectiveness and capacity	The CMWIB will create an annual revenue plan outlining fundraising goals	Revenue plan is created and updated annually
	All CMWIB sub-committees will develop annual work plans and incorporate member involvement in implementation where possible	Subcommittee work plans are completed and updated annually
	Develop resource development, nominating, marketing, and public affairs work groups to determine annual priorities for these respective areas	Ad-hoc work groups are established and meet as necessary to advise staff regarding resource development (revenue plan), membership recruitment (nominations), marketing, and public affairs.
	Conduct staff listening sessions with members individually to understand their priorities and ways to better engage them and their support	Member listening sessions conducted annually
	Provide an annual half-day member “retreat” to explore an issue(s) in greater depth	Half-day retreat conducted annually
	Develop a WIA Scorecard to measure program	Scorecard produced and utilized by the CMWIB and

	effectiveness using qualitative and quantitative metrics	subcommittees by September, 2014
Central MA employers will have access to the support they need from the public workforce system to foster growth	Conduct quarterly integrated business services meetings with regional economic development and industry groups and workforce system representatives to align and coordinate activities, resources, and best practices	Four business services meetings are conducted annually
	CMWIB and Workforce Central staff will utilize the state MA Bizworks resources guide (and include local addendum as appropriate) to support business growth	CMWIB and WCCC staff will have access to and be trained on the use of the MA Bizworks guide and supporting online information resources by the end of FY 15
	Support incumbent worker training for regional employers in high-demand fields, including STEM and healthcare industries	The CMWIB will promote and support incumbent worker training to STEM and healthcare employers, including the state Workforce Training Fund Program, and will develop at least one consortium training project in these areas annually
All job seekers in Central MA will have access to the information and services needed to support quality reemployment	Expand the post-high school career technical education/training that is offered in the region aligned with in-demand jobs	Additional post high school CTE training/education programs/slot capacity is developed and offered for manufacturing and other high-demand fields from FY 14 baseline level each year
	Enhance and align basic skills training offered in the region, including access to work-readiness, English as a Second Language, and Adult Basic Education training	WCCC basic skills programming is increased and coordinated; a regional ABE and ESL program provider group is established in FY 15
	Develop additional holistic programming for the long-term unemployed and other population groups facing barriers to employment	Bounce Training program is developed and offered to WCCC customers starting in FY 15

	(Bounce Training)	
	Continuation of industry sector-based services at Workforce Central (i-Team) supported through connection to CMWIB members and partners	WCCC i-Team services are established; CMWIB members engaged in i-Team programming starting in FY 15
	Expand digital services to job seekers at Workforce Central, including online peer groups, training, and placement strategies	Online peer groups, training, and placement assistance services established by the end of FY 15
	Increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities in Central MA and pre-apprentice training	The number of companies in the region offering apprenticeship is expanded, the number of apprentices in the region are also increased annually
All Central MA youth will be prepared for career success by age 21	Increase and align career readiness and work-based learning opportunities for youth, including the number of youth participating in YouthWorks, Connecting Activities, and Job1 partner programs,	The number of youth participating in YouthWorks is increased by 5% from FY 14 baseline; the number of schools affiliated with the Connecting Activities program increases by a minimum of two from FY 14
	Develop a standardized work readiness credential for use in CMWIB and Job1 partner programs and promoted to area employers	A work-readiness credential is established and promoted among the regions' youth programs & to a minimum of 50 businesses annually
	Establish work-readiness training and retention support strategies at Workforce Central for youth in the region	A youth work-readiness training program and retention support services are developed and delivered by the end of FY 15
	The CMWIB will promote professional development for staff working with youth workforce training/career	A minimum of two professional development training opportunities will be offered to regional youth staff

	development in our region	each year.
All CMWIB programs and services will be conducted with cultural competence so that all customers, both internal and external, feel welcomed and valued	Ensure the CMWIB and its subcommittees align with regional diversity	CMWIB and committees are reflective of the region's population; nominations sought from diverse sources
	Ensure the programs and services offered through CMWIB-funded entities are offered in a culturally competent manner	CMWIB reviews cultural competence when making-funding decisions for programming and service delivery beginning July, 2014
	Increase data tracking capacity for CMWIB and Workforce Central programming such as Connecting Activities, WCCC recruitment efforts (outreach), service utilization, and training referrals	Data collection process and tools developed and utilized by staff and committees by January, 2016
	Create a matrix report comparing CMWIB and Workforce Central program participation with regional demographics	The demographic matrix report is completed and utilized by the Cultural Competence Committee to review service delivery performance beginning July, 2014
	Increase community connection to CMWIB and Workforce Central programming through revitalization of the Access Point Initiative and through utilization of a community partner staff "train the trainer" model	Workforce Central access points are established at a minimum of three new partner locations with staff at each location trained to deliver basic information and services to clients by the end of FY 15

VI. Performance Oversight

In order to ensure the above goals and activities are met, each will be assigned to the appropriate CMWIB sub-committee which will then be responsible for developing the specific implementation strategies necessary to meet the goals/activities and will track performance using the tracking matrixes below.

Executive Committee				
Goal	Activities	Benchmark for Success	Strategies	Status Update
The CMWIB will be viewed as the region's workforce development authority	Develop CMWIB and Workforce Central social media platforms	CMWIB Linked-In, Twitter and YouTube sites are launched by summer 2015; WCCC Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages launched by summer 2015 and a minimum of 1,000 views are achieved across these platforms annually.		
	Create and distribute monthly CMWIB & Workforce Central "Central Connection" newsletter	12 monthly Central Connection newsletters are created and distributed		
	Produce, air, and upload monthly CMWIB radio/TV show, <i>The Working Lunch</i>	12 monthly episodes are produced, broadcast and uploaded to CMWIB YouTube site		
	Produce and distribute quarterly regional economic snapshot report and CMWIB regional impact reports	Four regional economic snapshot reports and regional impact reports are created and posted on the CMWIB		

		website by August 1, 2014		
The CMWIB will increase the resources available for workforce development in the region	CMWIB will seek out and apply for additional grants and funding for new and existing programming, either as the lead entity or as a supporting partner	CMWIB will apply (or support) a minimum of six grant funded projects separate from formula-funded allocations annually		
	Work with City of Worcester officials to research a method to establish 501c3 support foundation	Determination regarding the appropriate method for applying for 501c3 status is made in FY 15 (with follow up as appropriate)		
The CMWIB will increase its organizational effectiveness and capacity	The CMWIB will create an annual revenue plan outlining fundraising goals	Revenue plan is created and updated annually		
	All CMWIB sub-committees will develop annual work plans and incorporate member involvement in implementation where possible	Subcommittee work plans are completed and updated annually		
	Develop resource development, nominating, marketing, and public affairs work groups to determine annual priorities for these respective areas	Ad-hoc work groups are established and meet as necessary to advise staff regarding resource development (revenue plan), membership recruitment (nominations), marketing, and public affairs.		

	Conduct staff listening sessions with members individually to understand their priorities and ways to better engage them and their support	Member listening sessions conducted annually		
	Provide an annual half-day member “retreat” to explore an issue(s) in greater depth	Half-day retreat conducted annually		
	Develop a WIA Scorecard to measure program effectiveness using qualitative and quantitative metrics	Scorecard produced and utilized by the CMWIB and subcommittees by September, 2014		
Central MA Employers will have access to the support they need from the public workforce system to foster growth	Support incumbent worker training for regional employers in high-demand fields, including STEM and healthcare industries	The CMWIB will promote and support incumbent worker training to STEM and healthcare employers, including the state Workforce Training Fund Program, and will develop at least one consortium training project in these areas annually		

Career Center/Adult Services Committee				
Goal	Activities	Benchmark for Success	Strategies	Status Update
Central MA employers will have access to the support they need from the public workforce system to foster growth	Conduct quarterly integrated business services meetings with regional economic development and industry groups and workforce system representatives to align and coordinate activities, resources, and best practices	Four business services meetings are conducted annually		
	CMWIB and Workforce Central staff will utilize the state MA Bizworks resources guide (and include local addendum as appropriate) to support business growth	CMWIB and WCCC staff will have access to and be trained on the use of the MA Bizworks guide and supporting online information resources by the end of FY 15		
All job seekers in Central MA will have access to the information and services needed to support quality reemployment	Expand the post-high school career technical education/training that is offered in the region aligned with in-demand jobs	Additional post high school CTE training/education programs/slot capacity is developed and offered for manufacturing and other high-demand fields from FY 14 baseline level each year		
	Enhance and align basic skills training	WCCC basic skills programming is		

	offered in the region, including access to work-readiness, English as a Second Language, and Adult Basic Education training	increased and coordinated; a regional ABE and ESL program provider group is established in FY 15		
	Develop additional holistic programming for the long-term unemployed and other population groups facing barriers to employment (Bounce Training)	Bounce Training program is developed and offered to WCCC customers starting in FY 15		
	Continuation of industry sector-based services at Workforce Central (i-Team) supported through connection to CMWIB members and partners	WCCC i-Team services are established; CMWIB members engaged in i-Team programming starting in FY 15		
	Expand digital services to job seekers at Workforce Central, including online peer groups, training, and placement strategies	Online peer groups, training, and placement assistance services established by the end of FY 15		
	Increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities in Central MA and pre-apprentice training	The number of companies in the region offering apprenticeship is expanded, the number of apprentices in the region are also increased annually		

Youth Workforce Investment Council (YWIC)				
Goal	Activities	Benchmark for Success	Strategies	Status Update
All Central MA youth will be prepared for career success by age 21	Increase and align career readiness and work-based learning opportunities for youth, including the number of youth participating in YouthWorks, Connecting Activities, and Job1 partner programs,	The number of youth participating in YouthWorks is increased by 5% from FY 14 baseline; the number of schools affiliated with the Connecting Activities program increases by a minimum of two from FY 14		
	Develop a standardized work readiness credential for use in CMWIB and Job1 partner programs and promoted to area employers	A work-readiness credential is established and promoted among the regions' youth programs & a minimum of 50 businesses annually		
	Establish work-readiness training and retention support strategies at Workforce Central for youth in the region	A youth work-readiness training program and retention support services are developed and delivered by the end of FY 15		
	The CMWIB will promote professional development for staff working with youth workforce training/career development in our region	A minimum of two professional development training opportunities will be offered to regional youth staff each year.		

Cultural Competency Advisory Committee				
Goal	Activities	Benchmark for Success	Strategies	Status Update
All CMWIB programs and services will be conducted with cultural competence so that all customers, both internal and external, feel welcomed and valued	Ensure the CMWIB and its subcommittees align with regional diversity	CMWIB and committees are reflective of the region's population; nominations sought from diverse sources		
	Ensure the programs and services offered through CMWIB-funded entities are offered in a culturally competent manner	CMWIB reviews cultural competence when making-funding decisions for programming and service delivery beginning July, 2014		
	Increase data tracking capacity for CMWIB and Workforce Central programming such as Connecting Activities, WCCC recruitment efforts (outreach), service utilization, and training referrals	Data collection process and tools developed and utilized by staff and committees by January, 2016		
	Create a matrix report comparing CMWIB and Workforce Central program participation with regional demographics	The demographic matrix report is completed and utilized by the Cultural Competence Committee to review service delivery performance beginning July, 2014		

	Increase community connection to CMWIB and Workforce Central programming through revitalization of the Access Point Initiative and through utilization of a community partner staff “train the trainer” model	Workforce Central access points are established at a minimum of three new partner locations with staff at each location trained to deliver basic information and services to clients by the end of FY 15		
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Additionally, each committee will utilize the recently developed CMWIB Scorecard, Regional Services Demographic Matrix, Career Center Survey results, as well as other state and local tools and reports.

VII. Contact Information

For information regarding this plan, please contact:

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