Riverside Employment Collaboratives
A SERVICE OF RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CARE

Institute for Community Inclusion
PROMOTING THE INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON · BOSTON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Massachusetts Regional Employment Collaboratives
FY25 Annual Report

Background

Individuals with disabilities in Massachusetts face unemployment rates two to two-and-a-half times higher than those without disabilities. The labor force participation rate for people with disabilities is 40% lower than for people without disabilities. Fortunately, Massachusetts has a resource to address this issue - the Regional Employment Collaboratives.

As partnerships of state agencies, employers, workforce development entities, and employment service providers, the seven Massachusetts Regional Employment Collaboratives work across these groups with the common goal of advancing a critical statewide priority: increasing employment opportunities and outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The Employment Collaboratives' efforts focus on broadening the types of employers providing opportunities for the job seekers served by our employment services provider partners and enhancing access to career-oriented training and resources. Designed to create an efficient and coordinated approach to hiring, the Employment Collaboratives streamline employer access to qualified candidates while supporting service providers in preparing job-ready individuals with differing abilities for competitive employment.

In recent years, the Massachusetts labor market has experienced significant fluctuations resulting from ongoing economic pressures and, more recently, decreased government funding. Workforce disruptions, staffing shortages, and shifts in employer protocols have required rapid adaptation from businesses. Despite these challenges, the Employment Collaboratives remained steadfast in their mission to increase employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities by growing and maintaining their network of employers and by providing or connecting job seekers to necessary training.

Since their inception fifteen years ago, the Employment Collaboratives have partnered with hundreds of companies and maintain active relationships with approximately 300 employers statewide. Many of the employers we have partnered with are Fortune 10, 100 and 500 companies as well as multinational and regional organizations with a strong presence in Massachusetts including CVS Health, Amazon, Enterprise Mobility, RTX/Raytheon, Dell EMC, Ahold Delhaize, TJX, Sodexo, Dunkin Brands, Marriott, Chik Fil A, Staples, Wegmans Food Markets, Lowe's, Home Depot, Yankee Candle, BJ's Wholesale Club, and Whole Foods Market. In addition, the Employment Collaboratives work closely with prominent Massachusetts employers such as Mass General Brigham, The College of the Holy Cross, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Market Basket, Canobie Lake Park, Big Y World Class Market, Shaw's, Ocean State Job Lot, the Worcester Red Sox, MBTA, Gillette Stadium, Nouria Fuel, Baystate Health, Mass Mutual, Macy's, Valet Park of America, University of Massachusetts, and Beth Israel Lahey Health.

Massachusetts' labor market growth sectors such as healthcare, technology, education, biotech, construction, retail, and clean energy are all industries that require employees to have specialized skills to keep pace with evolving technologies and business practices. The Employment Collaboratives offer several training programs to upskill individuals, some in collaboration with multinational companies with operations throughout Massachusetts, so job seekers will have the qualifications to meet labor market demands. Current key training programs include the following: CVS Health Retail Training, Sodexo Culinary Training, Walgreens REDI Training, Ocean State Job Lot Work Experience Training, and Foundational Soft Skills and Workplace Skills training. The Employment Collaboratives have also worked with Google to offer career training scholarships through their Grow with Google program; and have used fundraised dollars to provide scholarships which allow individuals with disabilities to obtain training or education needed to obtain specific job skills.

The Employment Collaboratives continue to offer a proven, cost-effective statewide model which:

- Strengthens the labor force by connecting employers with an underutilized talent pool
- Creates efficiencies through coordinated employer engagement with businesses in need of hiring
- Supports economic mobility for individuals with disabilities which decreases their need for public benefits
- Provides consistent, measurable outcomes across regions of the state
- Provides critical support for employment service provider partners including training and mentoring through regional Job Developer Network meetings; along with sharing real-time job leads though a cloud-based platform, Basecamp

FY25 Outcomes

As a result of the efforts outlined above, this past fiscal year the seven Regional Employment Collaboratives collectively achieved the following:

Total job seekers placed: 922
Total hours of career/job skills related training provided to job seekers: 894
Total hours of professional development training provided to job developer staff: 1806

The FY25 outcomes are consistent with previous years. Over the last four fiscal years, 3704 individuals have found jobs through the work of the Employment Collaboratives. Examples of the types of industries job seekers have been placed in include retail, hospitality, healthcare, logistics, entertainment, sports facilities, automotive, manufacturing, human services, tax preparation services, accounting, eldercare, and education.

Employer Partner Feedback

Here is what two of our employer partners say about partnering with the Regional Employment Collaboratives:

Rick Laferriere, Lead Director, Workforce Initiatives at CVS Health - CVS Health

CVS Health is so fortunate to have an incredible community partner like the Regional Employment Collaboratives here in Massachusetts. As a Fortune 5 company committed to building inclusive and diverse pipelines from the communities we serve, we partner with community-based organizations across the country to attract talent to CVS Health. Here in Massachusetts, where we have nearly 400 CVS pharmacy locations, the Employment Collaboratives have been instrumental in helping to attract and equip talented people with disabilities for roles in our workforce through direct referrals and through the RECs remarkably successful customer service training program. Our longstanding partnership has resulted in well over 300 hires over the past number of years. We are so fortunate to live and do business here in Massachusetts, where we are part of a supportive community that is developing innovative programs and partnerships to help people with disabilities on their path to independence. Without hesitation, our partnership with the Employment Collaboratives is simply one of the absolute best community partnerships we have anywhere across the country.

Jeff Monahan, Senior Staffing Manager, New England Division - Wegmans Food Markets

Since Wegmans Food Markets first came into Massachusetts in 2011, we have enjoyed a productive and valuable relationship with the Regional Employment Collaboratives. For all our store openings within this region, the Employment Collaboratives have supported us. They are immensely helpful in their role as a central liaison and connector between our Recruitment team and the Job Developers in the region. The Employment Collaboratives support extends past our store openings. For example, Wegmans has had the opportunity to conduct Employer Spotlight Webinars through the Employment Collaboratives, which reaches a statewide audience of job developers. This is not something we would have been able to do without the Employment Collaboratives.

More information on the Massachusetts Regional Employment Collaboratives

The seven Regional Employment Collaboratives in Massachusetts are:

Central Mass Employment Collaborative (CMEC) – Serves Auburn, Bellingham, Blackstone, Boylston, Brimfield, Brookfield, Charlton, Cherry Valley, Douglas, Dudley, East Brookfield, East Douglas, Franklin, Grafton, Holden, Holland, Hopedale, Jefferson, Leicester, Linwood, Medway, Mendon, Milford, Millbury, Millville, North Brookfield, Northbridge, Oxford, Paxton, Rochdale, Shrewsbury, Southbridge, Spencer, Sturbridge, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge, Wales ,Warren, Webster, West Boylston, West Brookfield, Whitinsville, and Worcester.

Greater Boston Employment Collaborative (GBEC) – Serves Belmont, Boston (including Allston, Beacon Hill, Brighton, Charlestown. Chinatown, Dorchester, Downtown Crossing, East Boston, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Milton, North Dorchester, North End, Roslindale, Roxbury, South Boston, South End, West Roxbury), Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Revere, Somerville, Waltham, Watertown, and Winthrop.

Metro West Employment Collaborative (MWEC) – Serves Ashland, Canton, Dedham, Dover, Foxboro, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Medfield, Millis, Natick, Needham, Newton, Norfolk, Norwood, Northborough, Plainville, Sharon, Sherborn, Southboro, Sudbury, Walpole, Wayland, Wellesley, Westborough, Weston, Westwood, and Wrentham.

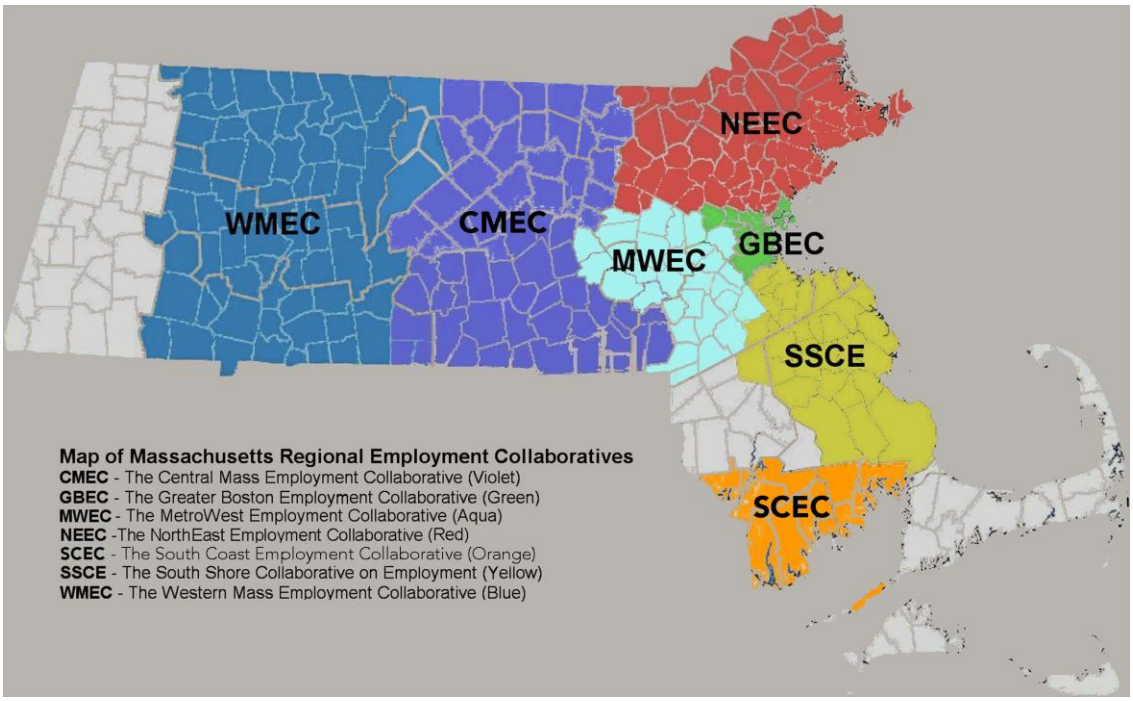
NorthEast Employment Collaborative (NEEC) – Serves Acton, Amesbury, Andover, Arlington, Bedford, Beverly, Billerica, Boxborough, Boxford, Burlington, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, Danvers, Dracut, Dunstable, Essex, Everett, Georgetown, Gloucester, Groveland, Hamilton, Haverhill, Ipswich, Lawrence, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Lowell, Lynn, Lynnfield,

Malden, Manchester, Marblehead, Maynard, Medford, Melrose, Merrimac, Methuen, Middleton, Nahant, Newbury, Newburyport, North Andover, North Reading, Peabody, Reading, Rockport, Rowley, Salem, Salisbury, Saugus, South Hamilton, Stoneham, Stow, Swampscott, Tewksbury, Topsfield, Tyngsboro, Wakefield, Wenham, Westford, West Newbury, Wilmington, Winchester, and Woburn.

South Coast Employment Collaborative (SCEC) – Serves Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Fall River, Freetown, Gosnold, Marion, Mattapoisett, New Bedford, Onset, Rochester, Somerset, Swansea, Wareham, and Westport

South Shore Collaborative on Employment (SSCE) – Serves Abington, Avon, Braintree, Bridgewater, Brockton. Carver, Cohasett, Duxbury, Easton, East Bridgewater, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Hingham, Holbrook, Hull, Kingston, Marshfield, Milton, Norwell, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Quincy, Randolph, Rockland, Scituate, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, Weymouth, and Whitman.

Western Mass Employment Collaborative (WMEC) – Serves Agawam, Amherst, Ashfield, Athol, Belchertown, Bernardston, Blandford, Bondsville, Buckland, Charlemont, Chesterfield, Chicopee, Colrain, Conway, Cummington, Deerfield, East Longmeadow, Easthampton, Erving, Feeding Hills, Florence, Gill, Goshen, Granby, Granville, Greenfield, Hadley, Hampden, Hatfield, Hawley, Haydenville, Heath, Holyoke, Huntington, Leverett, Leyden, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Middlefield, Millers Falls, Monson, Montague, Montgomery, New Salem, Northampton , Northfield, Orange, Palmer, Pelham, Petersham, Phillipston, Plainfield, Rowe, Royalston, Russell, Shelburne, Shelburne Falls, Shutesbury, South Hadley, Southampton, Southwick, Springfield, Sunderland, Thorndike, Three Rivers, Tolland, Turners Falls, Ware, Warwick, Wendell, West Springfield, Westfield, Westhampton, Whately, Wilbraham, Williamsburg, Worthington.



Six of the Regional Employment Collaboratives are funded by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), with the Central Mass Employment Collaborative (CMEC), the Western Mass Employment Collaborative (WMEC), and NorthEast Employment Collaborative (NEEC) being co-funded by the Department of Mental Health (DMH). The South Coast Employment Collaborative, (SCEC) is funded by DMH.

CMEC, GBEC, MWEC, NEEC, SCEC, and WMEC are facilitated by Riverside Community Care.
SSCE is facilitated by the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI).

For more information about the 6 Riverside Community Care facilitated Employment Collaboratives please contact Stephanie L. Marks • Director, Riverside Employment Collaboratives at Smarks@riversidecc.org • 781-686-8146.

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