



CHARLES D. BAKER, GOVERNOR
KARYN E. POLITO, LT. GOVERNOR

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Massachusetts Combined State Plan

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CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE • BOSTON, MA 02133
(617) 725-4000

KARYN E. POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR'S LETTER TO BE INCLUDED WITH FINAL SUBMISSION

STATE PLAN FORMAT

The Massachusetts WIOA State Plan is organized based upon the Planning Guidance from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). The questions from the Planning Guidance are retained in the State Plan to provide readers with context.

The federal government will review and approve the State Plan through the relevant federal agencies including: the US Department of Labor (USDOL); US Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE); Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

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I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

✓ **Combined State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs identified below. Indicate which Combined State Plan partner program(s) the State is electing to include in the plan.

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

Introduction to the Massachusetts WIOA Combined State Plan

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is pleased to present the WIOA Combined State Plan for 2020-2024. The Commonwealth takes pride in the work that has been accomplished by all the Core State Partner Agencies throughout the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Therefore, before looking ahead to how Massachusetts will move forward to address the needs of a 21st Century Workforce, it is imperative we look back and celebrate the strong partnerships, successes and innovations that led to real change that has impacted the lives of thousands of our shared customers.

Partnerships

The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), and its sibling agency the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA), joined together in Partnership with the Mass Rehabilitation Commission (MRC); Mass Commission of the Blind (MCB); Adult Community Learning Services (ACLS); Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA). DTA, when approached with the inquiry as to whether they would like to be included or not, opted “All In!” We refer to these agencies as our “Core State Partners”. However, along the way many other agencies have joined our “Partnership,” which will be demonstrated throughout this new Combined State Plan submission.

Our **Partnerships** were born in what would eventually become our Brand Values (see Attachment E for the MassHire Brand Charter):

- ❖ **Collaboration** – It was essential that we all recognized the importance of aligning all matters related to workforce across our agencies. We worked collaboratively with our respective National Offices to ensure that alignment.
- ❖ **Respect** – The partnership was rooted in trust and respect, which allowed us to feel confident, move forward, and not wait for final guidance.
- ❖ **Reliability** - It was essential to rely on each other’s expertise in our own specific fields as well as the regulations that govern the programs, grants, services and activities.
- ❖ **Ingenuity** – Together we pushed ourselves to continue to be forward thinking,” which sometimes moved us out of our respective comfort zones. All of which received support from our Regional and National Offices.

These **Partnerships** have yielded to date:

- ❖ 95 Partner agency staff collocated onsite at MassHire Career Centers
- ❖ MassHire Career Center staff providing services on-site at Partner agency offices. Additional collocations are planned for the current fiscal year.
- ❖ \$33M in WIOA/state adult education funding to reform the Adult Community Learning Services (ACLS) based on a new regional funding allocation using Regional Planning LMI; focused learning performance outcomes, career readiness activities, and expanded integrated training prioritized to occupations identified by Regional Planning Blueprints.
- ❖ 3 new statewide cohort-based pilots with Partners and MassHire:
 - o DTA: \$2M Statewide Work Participation Program for TANF and SNAP recipients (All 16 Regions)
 - o DHCD: Moving to Work, \$3M (4 Regions in Design Phase)
 - o MRC: MassHire Workforce Training Partnership: 1.1M to MassHire to place MRC consumers in workforce training
- ❖ Aligning across systems Cross-Secretariat Working Group (K-12 Education, Higher Education Child Care, SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, Housing, Workforce Development) to analyze and map existing “safety net” benefit programs and develop policies to shift the

focus to an incentive-based, career pathway focused set of supports that promote employment, wage growth and permanent exit from public benefits.

The **Successes** we experienced led to important causal effects for our shared customers:

The collaborative work under WIOA has led to some important legislation to assist TANF customers that may be impacted by the “Cliff Effect” that normally stymied their attempts to progress on a targeted Career Pathway.

- ❖ Legislative changes that allow public benefit recipients to keep more of what they earn while they build work experience, seek credentials and increase wages and establish transition periods and manageable sliding fee scales.
- ❖ Learn to Earn Pilot Grants developing and testing employment and training innovations for public benefit recipients connected directly to high demand industries (that pay family sustaining wages).

The **Innovations** have led to increased alignment and focus on quality:

- ❖ The Cross-Secretariat Working Group (K-12 Education, Higher Education Child Care, SNAP, TANF, Medicaid, Housing, Workforce Development) aligned across systems to analyze and map existing “safety net” benefit programs and develop policies to shift the focus to an incentive-based, career pathway focused set of supports that promote employment, wage growth and permanent exit from public benefits.
- ❖ Regional Planning
 - o The Commonwealth established seven Regional Planning Areas in FY16
 - o Governor Baker addressed Regional Planning Teams to “kick off” the planning process
 - o Regional Planning teams consisted of Community College presidents, Economic Development Regional Office staff, and MassHire Workforce Board members
 - o Teams analyzed local labor market supply and demand, and evaluated the labor pool for measurable gaps in talent
 - o Each region developed a **vision, mission, and measurable goals**; determined **priority industries and occupations**; created an **asset map** of existing pipeline programs for priority industries/occupations; and identified **regional strategies** to achieve goals
 - o Teams presented the Regional Planning Blueprints for review and comment to the Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC) Secretaries (Labor and Workforce, Education, and Economic Development)
 - o This investigation of regional priorities is reflected in the [Regional Planning Blueprints](#)
 - o Regional Planning Blueprints are fluid documents requiring bi-annual updates to the WSC Secretaries

II. STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS

Economic Analysis

The Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis which Massachusetts's workforce system and programs will operate

- (1) Economic and Workforce Analysis
 - (A) **Economic Analysis** includes an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in Massachusetts, including sub-state regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This includes:
 - (i) Existing demand in sectors and occupations, an analysis of the industries and occupation in which there is existing demand.
 - (ii) Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. An analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging
 - (iii) Employers' Employment Needs. With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A) (i) and (ii), an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.
 - (B) **Workforce Analysis** includes an analysis of the current workforce including individuals with barriers-to employment, as defined in section 3 of the WIOA. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes
 - (i) Employment and Unemployment. An analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the state
 - (ii) Labor Market Trend. An analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations
 - (iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce. Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.
 - (iv) Skill Gaps. Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

Massachusetts has recovered from the worst recession - a steep downturn spanning 2007 to 2009 - since the Great Depression of the 1930s. At the peak, the Massachusetts unemployment rate reached 8.8 percent. Since then, unemployment has fallen below 3 percent, following five years of consistent decline. Employment continues to expand and has exhibited a recent strengthening. Other indicators back up the overall conclusion about the strength and sustainability of the recovery over the near-term. Massachusetts has a healthy labor market as of November 2019, which challenges Massachusetts' workforce system to best mold and sustain this expansion and provide better economic opportunities for Massachusetts' citizens.

Today, the fields of education and health services employ the most people in Massachusetts. Another top industry is manufacturing, especially computer and electronic products. Massachusetts' technology sector has flourished in recent years and is among the most concentrated in the nation. With a balance of historical destinations and picturesque beaches

at Cape Cod, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard, the tourism industry also is a major economic powerhouse.

Meanwhile, with record low unemployment and growing labor force participation, the Commonwealth's workforce continues to expand. Yet, within the tight labor market and robust economy are employment, education and income gaps for youth, communities of color, and people with disabilities.

Massachusetts is also a high cost of living state. According to the Council for Community and Economic Research, Massachusetts ranked 43rd in the nation for affordability in 2018. In measuring the affordability of housing in 2018, Massachusetts ranked 41st in the nation. Further, the American Community Survey calculates the median household income in Massachusetts to be \$74,167, while the MIT Living Wage Calculator for 2019 suggests that an individual or a family must earn \$11.88 - \$41.86 per hour to sustain a living wage, depending on region, family size and composition. Both measures far outpace the state minimum wage of \$11.00 in 2019. Thus, Massachusetts faces the challenge of matching economic opportunity with economic prosperity for the Commonwealth's diverse individuals and families. (See Attachment A for detailed information on affordability calculation methodology.)

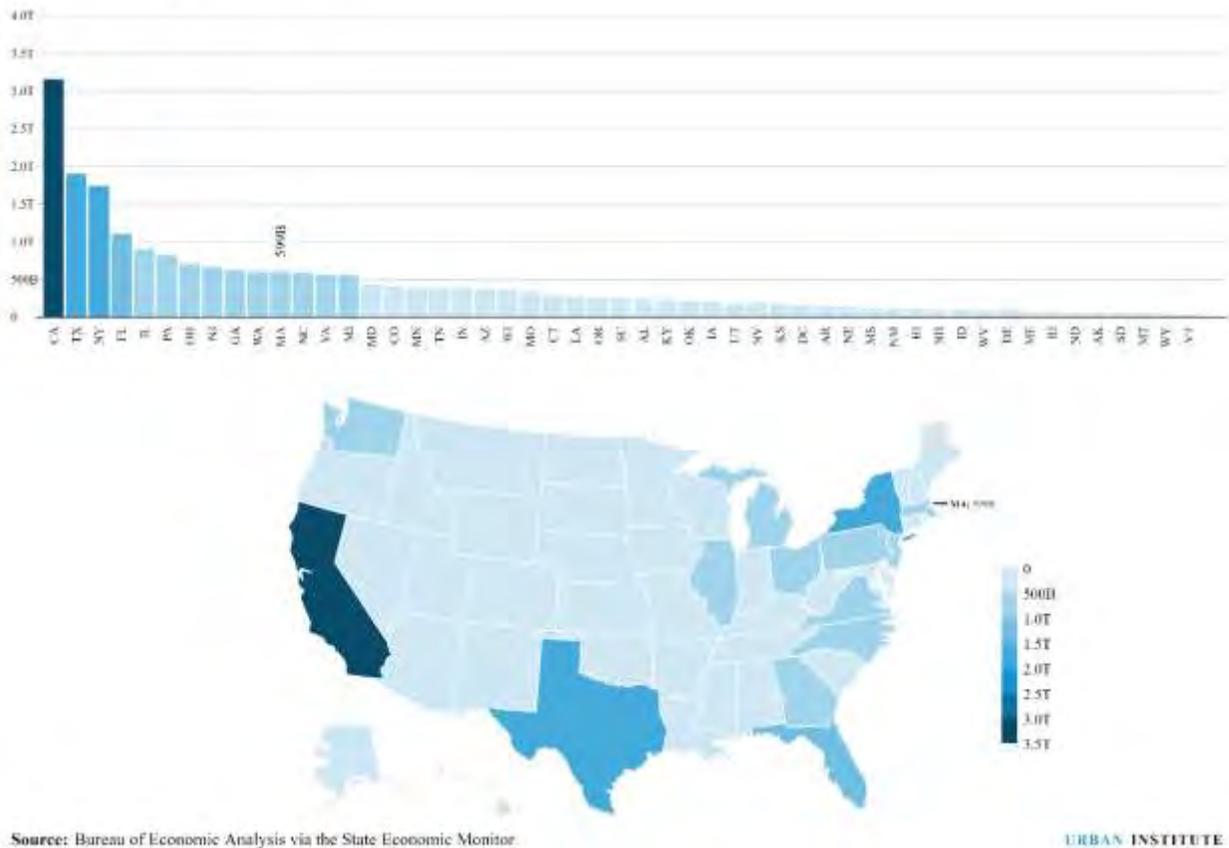
Productivity, Industries and Occupations

Productivity

The growth of Massachusetts' gross domestic product, 3.2 percent on an annualized basis in the first quarter of 2019, was above that of the previous period.

At the end of 2018, Massachusetts GDP was \$567.25 billion, up 4.9 percent over 2017. From 2014 through 2018, the Massachusetts economy, as measured by nominal GDP, grew by 19.8 percent. During this period, Massachusetts GDP had consecutive year-over-year growth, with the 6.2 percent (\$29.2 billion) annual gain from 2014 to 2015 as the high point. As of 2019, Massachusetts ranked 11th in total GDP, nationally (Figures 1).

Figure 1: State Ranking of Gross Domestic Product and National Distribution
State GDP, Q3 2019 *(real dollars)*



In 2018, Massachusetts GDP growth of 4.9 percent exceeded growth in both 2016 and 2017 which were 3.4 and 4.1 percent, respectively. Figure 2 illustrates that for the second year in a row, this growth was primarily driven by Professional, Scientific, and Business Services, which had the largest year-over-year growth rate of 8.6 percent, and Construction, which saw 8.1 percent growth. Figure 3 demonstrates that combined, these two sectors account for just over 20 percent of total GDP. Five of the nine sectors account for approximately eighty-three percent of private sector GDP, with each of the five sectors represented by a varying shade of blue. As a share of total private GDP, the Financial Activities sector maintains its position as the largest, accounting for 25.3 percent. This was followed by Professional, Scientific, and Business Services, which has been the second largest sector for several years. Education and Health Services and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities account for more than 13 percent each. Rounding out the top five is Manufacturing, a sector which is often noted for its continued and gradual decline in jobs. See Attachment D for a profile of all major industries in Massachusetts.

Figure 2: Massachusetts Gross Domestic Product: 2014-2018 (in Millions of Current Dollars)

Industry	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total, All Industries	473,279.0	502,858.0	519,407.6	540,786.0	569,488.0
Private Industries	423,232.1	451,127.3	467,208.4	487,353.4	514,122.6
Financial Activities	108,782.6	116,103.7	121,618.1	125,994.3	133,471.1
Professional and Business Services	78,159.3	84,466.4	87,699.4	94,270.2	102,444.2
Education and Health Services	60,085.6	63,058.0	65,800.1	68,000.2	69,668.9
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	57,657.1	60,751.4	62,025.6	64,925.4	68,017.5
Manufacturing	48,745.0	51,328.1	50,653.7	51,339.8	52,613.6
Information	25,802.5	27,513.9	28,587.9	29,892.2	31,732.2
Leisure and Hospitality	18,508.5	20,238.6	21,519.2	22,136.4	23,388.3
Construction	15,493.4	17,193.3	18,443.1	19,715.3	21,065.4
Other Services	9,075.2	9,463.9	9,810.2	10,047.6	10,692.6

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics, December 2019

Figure 3: 2018 Sector Share of Total Private GDP



Employment

Employment in Massachusetts reached new all-time highs in June 2019, totaling 3,222,800 private sector and 3,682,400 total nonfarm jobs. These numbers declined slightly in July to 3,218,880 private sector and 3,678,900 total nonfarm jobs. From July 2018 to July 2019, total jobs grew by 37,300. The two largest sectors, Education and Health Services and Professional, Scientific, and Business Services, account for more than 43 percent of all jobs and 60 percent of the growth from July 2014 through July 2019. Figure 4 demonstrates this trend.

Figure 4: Massachusetts Annual Employment: 2014-2018

Industry	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total, All Industries	4,447,626	4,631,324	4,709,778	4,788,192	4,872,851
Private Nonfarm Employment	3,974,652	4,159,267	4,234,980	4,314,588	4,397,975
Financial Activities	1,177,189	1,237,976	1,264,836	1,281,094	1,314,634
Education and Health Services	879,426	917,999	933,999	945,288	950,386
Professional and Business Services	726,147	768,564	781,525	792,296	816,785
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	670,914	707,941	719,643	759,669	778,436
Leisure and Hospitality	420,486	435,310	447,796	458,020	468,403
Manufacturing	263,383	263,615	260,850	259,648	260,513
Construction	220,623	236,422	248,872	250,222	259,699
Other Services	229,319	243,189	240,311	240,066	244,565
Information	100,020	103,057	104,597	107,129	107,889

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics, December 2019

Existing Demand Industry Sectors

Figure 5 illustrates the growth of total employment since 2014, noting expansion or contraction by industry. As of October 2019, the industries with the highest demand were service-providing industries. Education and health services generated the most demand (825,400 jobs), followed by professional, scientific and business services (596,500 jobs) and trade, transportation and utilities (579,900 jobs). Educational services (+6.8 percent) and arts, entertainment and recreation (+6.1 percent) were the fastest growing industry sectors over the year.

As of November 2019, the national annual growth rates (seasonally adjusted) in mining and logging (-0.7 percent), information (+0.2 percent), financial activities (+1.3 percent) and other services (+1.5 percent) were less than the expansion rates for Massachusetts.

In November 2019, Massachusetts (+1.3 percent) had the second strongest over-the-year growth rate in total nonagricultural employment among the states in New England, behind Rhode Island (+2.2 percent).

Figure 5 Nonagricultural Employment in Massachusetts, Seasonally Adjusted

Industry	Employment			Over the Year Change		Five-Year Change	
	Oct-19	Oct-18	Oct-14	Numeric	Percent	Numeric	Percent
Total Nonagricultural Employment	3,694,600	3,642,900	3,455,800	51,700	1.42	238,800	6.91
Total Private	3,235,300	3,185,800	3,003,700	49,500	1.55	231,600	7.71
Goods Producing	401,300	402,000	380,700	-700	-0.17	20,600	5.41
Construction	156,700	157,100	131,600	-400	-0.25	25,100	19.07
Manufacturing	243,500	243,800	248,100	-300	-0.12	-4,600	-1.85
Service Providing	3,293,300	3,240,900	3,075,100	52,400	1.62	218,200	7.10
Private Service Providing	2,834,000	2,783,800	2,623,000	50,200	1.80	211,000	8.04
Trade, Transportation	579,900	575,900	564,900	4,000	0.69	15,000	2.66
Wholesale Trade	124,600	122,700	122,600	1,900	1.55	2,000	1.63
Retail Trade	348,400	352,000	351,600	-3,600	-1.02	-3,200	-0.91
Transportation, Warehousing	106,900	101,200	90,700	5,700	5.63	16,200	17.86
Information	94,100	92,200	87,400	1,900	2.06	6,700	7.67
Financial Activities	223,200	220,600	215,400	2,600	1.18	7,800	3.62
Finance and Insurance	175,500	174,100	172,300	1,400	0.80	3,200	1.86
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	47,700	46,500	43,100	1,200	2.58	4,600	10.67
Professional, Scientific	596,500	584,600	531,100	11,900	2.04	65,400	12.31
Professional and Technical Services	338,500	328,600	287,400	9,900	3.01	51,100	17.78
Management of Companies, Enterprises	77,300	74,200	69,900	3,100	4.18	7,400	10.59
Administrative and Waste Services	180,700	181,800	173,800	-1,100	-0.61	6,900	3.97
Education and Health Services	825,400	801,200	742,400	24,200	3.02	83,000	11.18
Educational Services	185,000	173,200	161,600	11,800	6.81	23,400	14.48
Health Care and Social Assistance	640,400	628,000	580,800	12,400	1.97	59,600	10.26
Leisure and Hospitality	373,200	371,100	347,400	2,100	0.57	25,800	7.43
Arts, Entertainment	67,800	63,900	54,800	3,900	6.10	13,000	23.72
Accommodation and Food Services	305,400	307,200	292,600	-1,800	-0.59	12,800	4.37

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics, December 2019

Occupational Groups

Figure 6 displays the distribution of occupations statewide. The largest occupational group in Massachusetts is office and administrative support occupations, with 496,690 jobs (13.9 percent of total jobs), followed by sales and related (317,270 jobs, 8.9 percent), and food preparation and serving (307,710 jobs, 8.6 percent).

Figure 6: Distribution of Massachusetts Employment by Major Occupational Group

Code	Occupational Group	Employment	Percent
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	496,690	13.9%
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	317,270	8.9%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	307,710	8.6%
11-0000	Management Occupations	294,490	8.2%
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	244,590	6.8%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	242,690	6.8%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	205,570	5.8%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	190,150	5.3%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	161,500	4.5%
51-0000	Production Occupations	152,320	4.3%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	141,450	4.0%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	128,570	3.6%
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	106,220	3.0%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	105,470	3.0%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	103,230	2.9%
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	84,380	2.4%
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	77,220	2.2%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	74,860	2.1%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	53,530	1.5%
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	51,750	1.4%
23-0000	Legal Occupations	29,810	0.8%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	1,890	0.1%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics, December 2019

The following tables (Figures 7 and 8) show the absolute and percent distribution of employment by occupational group for the seven major regions in Massachusetts, as defined by the Commonwealth’s Regional Planning Initiative (see the *Regional Workforce Skills Planning* section of this Economic Analysis). Regional variation results from the diversity of economic focus and industry mix across Massachusetts’ geographic areas. For example, the Cape & Islands region has a higher share of employment in food preparation and serving occupations than the state due to the importance of tourism to the local economy.

Figure 7: Region employment by Major Occupational Group

Code	Occupation Group	Berkshire	Greater Boston	Southeast	Cape & Islands	Central	Pioneer Valley	Northeast
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	7,990	227,230	87,270	15,610	52,450	42,070	62,360
41-0000	Sales and Related	5,270	134,790	63,770	13,380	31,120	25,110	43,010
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	6,400	133,870	54,400	14,950	29,790	26,380	41,810
11-0000	Management	3,930	171,430	34,830	6,750	22,610	19,400	34,090
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library	4,850	107,220	37,590	6,650	27,330	27,050	33,780
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	4,150	113,840	39,300	7,640	26,430	20,910	29,900
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	2,090	130,210	24,500	2,760	14,370	11,130	19,350
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	2,310	79,130	35,450	5,260	22,060	19,800	24,010
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	3,450	58,170	28,330	4,460	18,580	24,360	23,990
51-0000	Production	2,780	47,950	30,720	2,060	23,060	18,600	26,550
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	920	101,090	9,030	860	7,770	5,250	15,630
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	3,040	46,990	28,220	6,330	13,130	10,200	19,610
31-0000	Healthcare Support	2,260	38,720	20,180	3,570	12,010	11,930	17,440
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	2,410	51,580	14,480	6,900	9,010	8,290	12,530
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	2,300	40,660	18,980	4,010	11,840	11,020	13,800
21-0000	Community and Social Service	1,670	35,010	13,510	1,560	10,520	12,340	9,750
33-0000	Protective Service	980	37,590	12,640	2,600	8,310	6,250	8,670
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	910	42,190	7,630	1,130	6,350	2,910	13,490
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	320	38,810	3,130	1,250	3,540	2,080	4,310
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	800	31,610	5,260	1,130	4,020	3,570	4,740
23-0000	Legal	260	21,920	2,000	470	1,240	1,610	2,200
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	90	460	170	0	110	200	270

Figure 8: Distribution of Region Employment by Major Occupational Group

Code	Occupation Group	Berkshire	Greater Boston	Southeast	Cape & Islands	Central	Pioneer Valley	Northeast
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	13.5%	13.4%	15.3%	14.3%	14.7%	13.6%	13.5%
41-0000	Sales and Related	8.9%	8.0%	11.2%	12.2%	8.8%	8.1%	9.3%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	10.8%	7.9%	9.5%	13.7%	8.4%	8.5%	9.1%
11-0000	Management	6.6%	10.1%	6.1%	6.2%	6.4%	6.2%	7.4%
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library	8.2%	6.3%	6.6%	6.1%	7.7%	8.7%	7.3%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	7.0%	6.7%	6.9%	7.0%	7.4%	6.7%	6.5%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	3.5%	7.7%	4.3%	2.5%	4.0%	3.6%	4.2%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	3.9%	4.7%	6.2%	4.8%	6.2%	6.4%	5.2%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	5.8%	3.4%	5.0%	4.1%	5.2%	7.8%	5.2%
51-0000	Production	4.7%	2.8%	5.4%	1.9%	6.5%	6.0%	5.8%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	1.6%	6.0%	1.6%	0.8%	2.2%	1.7%	3.4%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	5.1%	2.8%	4.9%	5.8%	3.7%	3.3%	4.3%
31-0000	Healthcare Support	3.8%	2.3%	3.5%	3.3%	3.4%	3.8%	3.8%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	4.1%	3.1%	2.5%	6.3%	2.5%	2.7%	2.7%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	3.9%	2.4%	3.3%	3.7%	3.3%	3.5%	3.0%
21-0000	Community and Social Service	2.8%	2.1%	2.4%	1.4%	3.0%	4.0%	2.1%
33-0000	Protective Service	1.7%	2.2%	2.2%	2.4%	2.3%	2.0%	1.9%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	1.5%	2.5%	1.3%	1.0%	1.8%	0.9%	2.9%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	0.5%	2.3%	0.5%	1.1%	1.0%	0.7%	0.9%
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	1.4%	1.9%	0.9%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%
23-0000	Legal	0.4%	1.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.5%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics, December 2019

Existing Demand Occupations

Existing demand occupations are occupations that have the highest number of projected total job openings. Total job openings reflect: (1) job openings resulting from employment growth; (2) job openings resulting from workers permanently exiting an occupation; and (3) job openings resulting from workers transferring to other occupations. In most occupations, replacement needs provide many more job openings than employment growth does.

Existing demand occupations tend to be occupations that serve the most basic societal needs. The most common existing demand occupations in the U.S. labor market are low-skill, hourly wage occupations with high turnover. Many of the top existing demand occupations in Massachusetts reflect this national pattern, including retail salespersons, personal care aides, food preparation and serving workers, waiters and waitresses, and cashiers. However, other occupations with significant existing demand, such as general and operations managers and registered nurses, are relatively highly skilled and are associated with strong wages and established career ladders.

Out of the five top existing demand occupations in Massachusetts, four are related to customer service and hospitality. Retail salespersons is the top existing demand occupation, with 19,100 projected annual job openings between 2016 and 2026. Personal care aides follows, with 14,236 projected annual job openings. Three other occupations in the top 20 are linked to healthcare and social assistance: registered nurses, nursing assistants and home health aides. These occupations, like the healthcare and social assistance sector as a whole, continue to expand rapidly in Massachusetts.

The following table displays the top 20 existing demand occupations (based on 2016-2026 projected annual job openings) for Massachusetts statewide (Figure 9).

An educational attainment measure is also presented to show the level of education achieved by workers who are employed in the occupations. Each occupation is assigned to one of three education categories-BA+ (four year degree or higher), Sub-BA (some college or credential), or HS or Below (high school education or less) - based on the typical education level most workers need to enter an occupation, as identified by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). (Detailed definitions for the categories are available as Attachment B).

Figure 9: Top 20 Existing Demand Occupations

Code	Occupation	Employment		Change		Annual Openings	2018 Mean Wage	Typical Education
		2016	2026	Level	Percent			
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	129,913	133,216	3,303	2.5%	19,100	\$30,290	HS or Below
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	76,801	97,330	20,529	26.7%	14,236	\$29,080	HS or Below
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, including Fast Food	62,509	73,668	11,159	17.9%	13,451	\$26,840	HS or Below
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	64,032	69,024	4,992	7.8%	12,968	\$31,920	HS or Below
41-2011	Cashiers	67,690	66,624	-1,066	-1.6%	12,352	\$26,310	HS or Below
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping	55,371	60,721	5,350	9.7%	7,966	\$35,560	HS or Below
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	60,906	61,926	1,020	1.7%	7,849	\$43,620	HS or Below
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	80,012	86,359	6,347	7.9%	7,321	\$135,820	BA+
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	60,283	58,743	-1,540	-2.6%	6,741	\$40,190	HS or Below
29-1141	Registered Nurses	82,951	93,586	10,635	12.8%	5,510	\$92,140	BA+
43-5081	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	41,197	43,145	1,948	4.7%	5,501	\$31,560	HS or Below
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	36,326	38,063	1,737	4.8%	5,197	\$34,020	HS or Below
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	46,343	48,275	1,932	4.2%	5,122	\$47,710	HS or Below
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	39,254	43,196	3,942	10.0%	4,982	\$33,630	HS or Below
35-3022	Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession	21,777	22,870	1,093	5.0%	4,899	\$26,780	HS or Below
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	46,074	44,879	-1,195	-2.6%	4,881	\$47,020	HS or Below
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	28,322	31,804	3,482	12.3%	4,514	\$32,430	HS or Below
31-1011	Home Health Aides	26,041	35,851	9,810	37.7%	4,425	\$30,830	HS or Below
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal and Medical	43,356	40,215	-3,141	-7.2%	4,127	\$46,940	HS or Below
25-9041	Teacher Assistants	34,764	38,300	3,536	10.2%	4,026	\$35,680	HS or Below

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

Another useful indicator of existing occupational demand is job-posting volume. During the last year, four major occupational groups accounted for nearly half of all job postings: management occupations (143,996 job postings), computer and mathematical occupations (125,597 job postings), office and administrative support occupations (105,808 job postings) and healthcare practitioners and technical (102,857 job postings). The occupation with the largest share of online job postings was application software developers (39,343 job postings), followed by registered nurses (35,583 job postings). Figure 10 shows the top 20 employer demand occupations in Massachusetts, based on 12-month online job postings.

Figure 10: Top 20 Fastest Growing Occupations in Massachusetts



Source: Burning Glass Labor Insight Job Postings. December 2018 - November 2019

Projected Changes in Job Demand

The top occupations in the state's labor market, as measured by projected growth in demand, can be represented in different ways. Below are two tables (Figures 11 and 12), the first showing percent change over the timeframe of the latest occupational projections (2016-2026) and the second showing the level of change.

Five of the top 20 occupations ranked by percent change are in the healthcare or personal care major occupational groups. The fastest growing occupation is home health aides (26,041 jobs in 2016, +37.7 percent growth), followed by personal care aides (76,801 jobs in 2016, +26.7 percent growth). Application software developers (29,064 jobs in 2016, +26.0 percent growth) is the fastest-growing occupation in the computer and mathematical occupation group and the third fastest-growing occupation overall. The largest occupation in the top 20 is registered nurses, with 82,951 jobs in 2016.

The occupations gaining the most new jobs represent a mix of healthcare and business and professional occupations, and occupations found in tourism-related industries. The occupation adding the most new jobs is personal care aides (20,529 new jobs). Other healthcare-related occupations in the top 20 include registered nurses (10,635 new jobs), home health aides (9,810 new jobs) and nursing assistants (3,942). Tourism-related occupations include combined food workers (11,159 new jobs), waiters and waitresses (4,992 new jobs) and restaurant cooks (3,482 new jobs).

Figure 11: Top 20 Fastest Growing Occupations in Massachusetts

Code	Occupation	Employment		Change		Annual Openings	2018 Mean Wage	Typical Education
		2016	2026	Level	Percent			
31-1011	Home Health Aides	26,041	35,851	9,810	37.7%	4,425	\$30,830	HS or Below
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	76,801	97,330	20,529	26.7%	14,236	\$29,080	HS or Below
15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	29,064	36,629	7,565	26.0%	2,818	\$109,130	BA+
39-2021	Nonfarm Animal Caretakers	6,477	8,071	1,594	24.6%	1,242	\$30,930	HS or Below
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	21,764	26,142	4,378	20.1%	2,718	\$74,510	BA+
25-3021	Self-Enrichment Education Teachers	11,417	13,678	2,261	19.8%	1,578	\$56,330	HS or Below
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers	62,509	73,668	11,159	17.9%	13,451	\$26,840	HS or Below
11-3031	Financial Managers	27,121	31,798	4,677	17.2%	2,603	\$148,300	BA+
31-9092	Medical Assistants	12,991	15,221	2,230	17.2%	1,708	\$40,270	HS or Below
53-3022	Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	13,210	15,392	2,182	16.5%	1,924	\$40,130	HS or Below
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	13,625	15,805	2,180	16.0%	1,736	\$70,320	HS or Below
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	14,041	16,250	2,209	15.7%	1,371	\$133,900	BA+
13-1111	Management Analysts	27,927	32,208	4,281	15.3%	2,948	\$110,150	BA+
27-2022	Coaches and Scouts	8,304	9,544	1,240	14.9%	1,295	\$50,200	BA+
51-9198	Helpers--Production Workers	7,029	7,984	955	13.6%	1,213	\$31,800	HS or Below
25-3098	Substitute Teachers	8,271	9,390	1,119	13.5%	1,063	\$38,310	HS or Below
19-1042	Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	11,444	12,971	1,527	13.3%	1,155	\$92,980	BA+
25-3097	Teachers and Instructors, All Other, Except Substitute	8,787	9,936	1,149	13.1%	1,124	\$54,700	HS or Below
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	24,623	27,813	3,190	13.0%	3,105	\$43,450	HS or Below
29-1141	Registered Nurses	82,951	93,586	10,635	12.8%	5,510	\$92,140	BA+

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

Figure 12: Top 20 Occupations Adding the Most Jobs in Massachusetts

Code	Occupation	Employment		Change		Annual Openings	2018 Mean Wage	Typical Education
		2016	2026	Level	Percent			
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	76,801	97,330	20,529	26.7%	14,236	\$29,080	HS or Below
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers	62,509	73,668	11,159	17.9%	13,451	\$26,840	HS or Below
29-1141	Registered Nurses	82,951	93,586	10,635	12.8%	5,510	\$92,140	BA+
31-1011	Home Health Aides	26,041	35,851	9,810	37.7%	4,425	\$30,830	HS or Below
15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	29,064	36,629	7,565	26.0%	2,818	\$109,130	BA+
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	80,012	86,359	6,347	7.9%	7,321	\$135,820	BA+
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping	55,371	60,721	5,350	9.7%	7,966	\$35,560	HS or Below
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	64,032	69,024	4,992	7.8%	12,968	\$31,920	HS or Below
11-3031	Financial Managers	27,121	31,798	4,677	17.2%	2,603	\$148,300	BA+
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	21,764	26,142	4,378	20.1%	2,718	\$74,510	BA+
13-1111	Management Analysts	27,927	32,208	4,281	15.3%	2,948	\$110,150	BA+
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	39,254	43,196	3,942	10.0%	4,982	\$33,630	HS or Below
25-9041	Teacher Assistants	34,764	38,300	3,536	10.2%	4,026	\$35,680	HS or Below
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	28,322	31,804	3,482	12.3%	4,514	\$32,430	HS or Below
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	129,913	133,216	3,303	2.5%	19,100	\$30,290	HS or Below
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	24,623	27,813	3,190	13.0%	3,105	\$43,450	HS or Below
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	37,166	40,334	3,168	8.5%	3,691	\$81,460	BA+
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	27,326	30,348	3,022	11.1%	2,322	\$82,600	BA+
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career	25,058	27,871	2,813	11.2%	2,079	\$80,020	BA+
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	27,066	29,773	2,707	10.0%	3,628	\$38,090	HS or Below

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

While employment is expected to grow over the next years, it is noted that many of these occupations pay a median wage that is below living wage affordability and median wage in Massachusetts.

Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Emerging industries

The list of emerging industries is made up of the (three-digit NAICS) industries which had less than the average employment level in 2016 and are characterized by rapid projected growth. Notably, two of the three top emerging industries are part of the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sector. In total, 8 out of the top 15 emerging industries are goods producing industries (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Top Emerging Industries

Code	Industry	Employment		Change	
		2016	2026	Numeric	Percent
11-2000	Animal Production	1,930	2,268	338	17.5%
56-2000	Waste Management and Remediation Service	11,529	13,250	1,721	14.9%
11-1000	Crop Production	4,005	4,515	510	12.7%
51-8000	Data Processing, Hosting and Related Services	8,738	9,789	1,051	12.0%
31-2000	Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing	3,974	4,446	472	11.9%
23-6000	Construction of Buildings	31,284	34,906	3,622	11.6%
48-7000	Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation	1,501	1,663	162	10.8%
49-3000	Warehousing and Storage	11,199	12,330	1,131	10.1%
71-1000	Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries	12,384	13,604	1,220	9.9%
23-7000	Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	14,785	16,233	1,448	9.8%
45-4000	Nonstore Retailers	15,017	16,385	1,368	9.1%
48-5000	Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	23,520	25,451	1,931	8.2%
31-1000	Food Manufacturing	24,519	26,366	1,847	7.5%
51-9000	Other Information Services	9,760	10,485	725	7.4%
71-2000	Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institution	5,918	6,326	408	6.9%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

Emerging Occupations

Emerging occupations include both new occupations and existing occupations that are evolving in response to shifting market conditions, the development of new technologies, or other similar factors. In Massachusetts, the fastest growing emerging occupations are statisticians, solar photovoltaic installers, health specialties teachers, physician assistants and nursing instructors and teachers.

As depicted in Figure 14, among the top 20 emerging occupations, the most strongly represented industry sectors are healthcare (linked to 8 of the top 20 occupations), education services (five of the top 20 occupations) and professional services (four of the top 20 occupations). The number of rapidly emerging healthcare occupations reflects the increasing demand for medical services due to population aging, expanding medical insurance coverage and technological innovation.

Figure 14 shows the top 20 emerging occupations in Massachusetts. Rankings are determined by 2016-2026 projected growth rates for occupations with less than the average employment level.

Code	Occupation	Employment		Change		Annual Openings	2018 Mean Wage	Typical Education
		2016	2026	Level	Percent			
15-2041	Statisticians	3,092	4,213	1,121	36.3%	378	\$108,670	BA+
47-2231	Solar Photovoltaic Installers	295	389	94	31.9%	45	\$53,310	HS or Below
25-1071	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	3,753	4,872	1,119	29.8%	434	\$111,230	BA+
29-1071	Physician Assistants	3,031	3,862	831	27.4%	265	\$108,700	BA+
25-1072	Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary	1,586	2,018	432	27.2%	178	\$87,970	BA+
15-1122	Information Security Analysts	3,325	4,172	847	25.5%	334	\$108,400	BA+
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	4,034	5,006	972	24.1%	360	\$88,190	BA+
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	2,427	3,013	586	24.1%	185	\$73,660	Sub-BA
15-1111	Computer and Information Research Scientists	1,010	1,236	226	22.4%	97	\$116,920	BA+
29-9091	Athletic Trainers	654	800	146	22.3%	51	\$56,850	BA+
25-1011	Business Teachers, Postsecondary	3,862	4,719	857	22.2%	407	\$126,040	BA+
29-9092	Genetic Counselors	185	226	41	22.2%	15	\$83,540	BA+
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	2,719	3,313	594	21.8%	413	\$64,180	Sub-BA
39-2011	Animal Trainers	854	1,040	186	21.8%	124	\$38,280	HS or Below
25-1042	Biological Science Teachers, Postsecondary	2,298	2,736	438	19.1%	232	\$112,390	BA+
25-1066	Psychology Teachers, Postsecondary	1,446	1,721	275	19.0%	146	\$97,690	BA+
31-2022	Physical Therapist Aides	1,029	1,222	193	18.8%	151	\$33,740	HS or Below
47-3015	Helpers--Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters	400	475	75	18.8%	68	\$35,510	HS or Below
29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	3,133	3,716	583	18.6%	321	\$40,990	Sub-BA
31-9011	Massage Therapists	3,650	4,328	678	18.6%	472	\$53,750	HS or Below

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

Skill Demand

The needs of employers with respect to knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) are provided for each occupation in the labor market by the O*Net system (see <https://www.onetonline.org/>). (See Attachment C for further explanation of the knowledge, skills, and abilities taxonomy found in the O*Net system.)

To assess the knowledge, skills and abilities associated with the top existing and emerging demand occupations, O*Net level and importance scores for the various KSAs were determined for each occupation of interest. The level and importance score were then added together and standardized to a 100-point scale. The following six graphs show the knowledge, skills and abilities that were scored highest for (1) the top 20 existing demand occupations and (2) the top 20 occupations adding the most jobs.

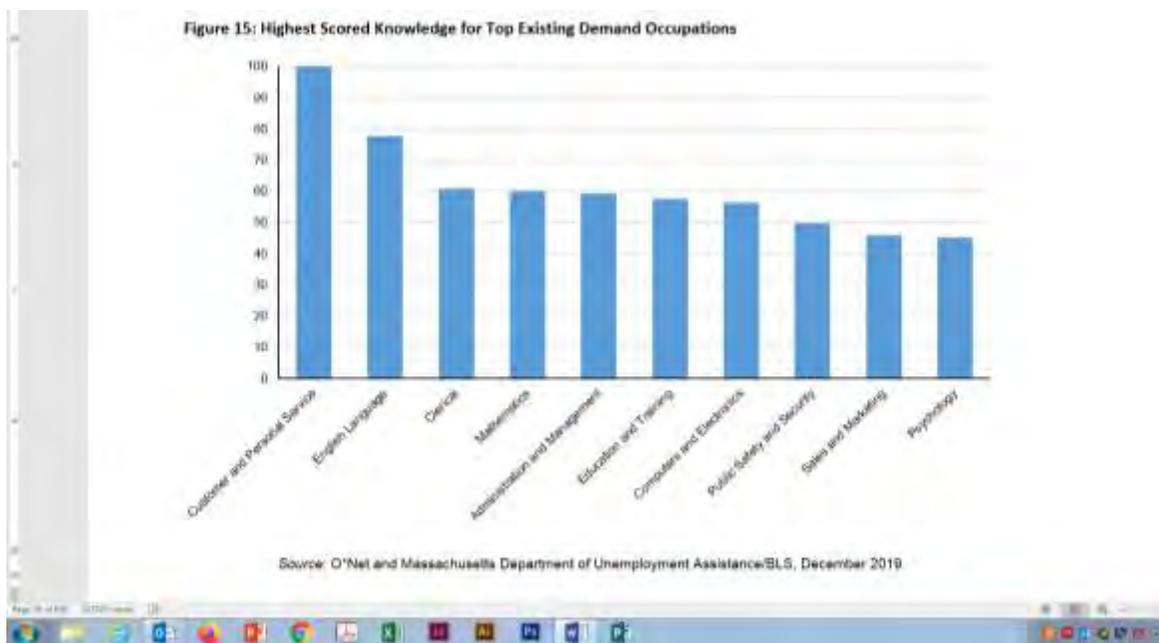
Existing Demand Occupations

The highest-scored KSAs for the top existing demand occupations are Customer & Personal Service, English Language, Active Listening, Speaking, Oral Comprehension, and Oral Expression.

Figure 15 displays the knowledge elements that were identified as most important for Existing Occupations. Knowledge of Customer & Personal Service and English Language were ranked most important for the Existing Occupations. Customer & Personal Service 100, English Language 78, Clerical 61, Mathematics 60, Administration & Management 59, Education & Training 58, Computers & Electronics 56, Public Safety & Security 50, Sales & Marketing 46, Psychology 45.

Figure 16 displays the skill elements that were identified as most important for Existing Occupations. Skills in Active Listening and Speaking were ranked most important for the Existing Occupations. Active Listening 100, Speaking 95, Service Orientation 93, Social Perceptiveness 90, Critical Thinking 90, Reading Comprehension 89, Coordination 88, Monitoring 87, Time Management 81, Active Learning 78.

Figure 17 displays the ability elements that were identified as most important for Existing Occupations. Abilities in Oral Comprehension and Oral Expression were ranked most important for the Existing Occupations. Oral Comprehension 100, Oral Expression 98, Near Vision 89, Speech Recognition 88, Problem Sensitivity 86, Speech Clarity 85, Written Comprehension 84, Information Ordering 81, Deductive Reasoning 79, Inductive Reasoning 77.



Occupations Adding the Most Jobs

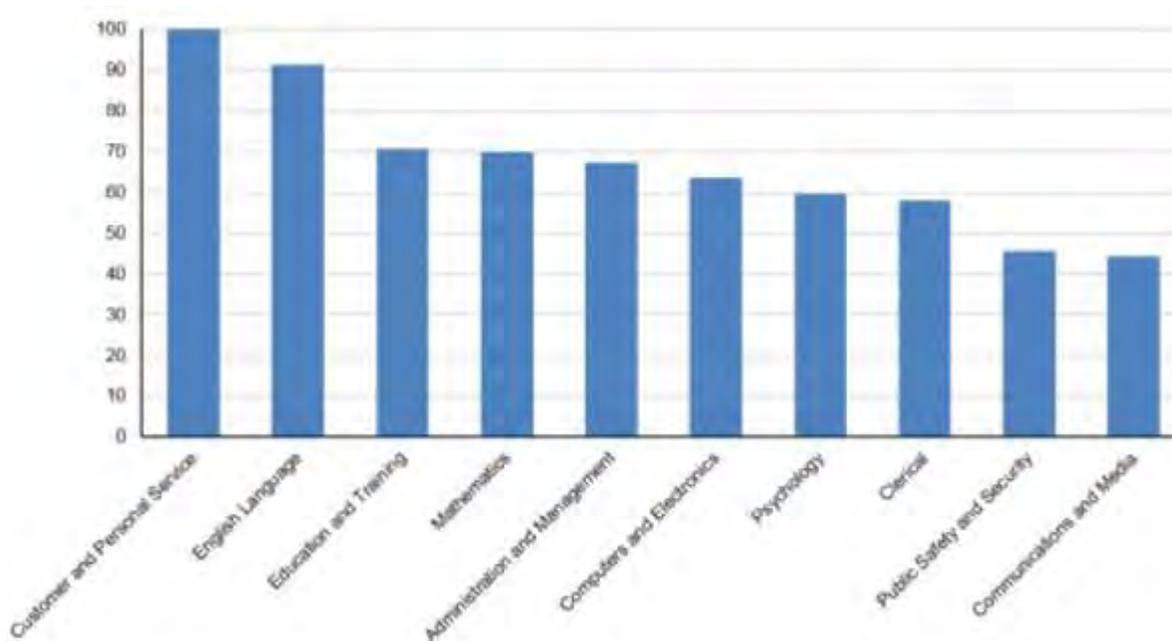
The highest-scored KSAs for the occupations adding the most new jobs are Customer & Personal Service, English Language, Active Listening, Speaking, Oral Comprehension and Oral Expression.

Figure 18 displays the knowledge elements that were identified as most important for Occupations Adding the Most Jobs. Knowledge of Customer & Personal Service and English Language were ranked most important for the Occupations Adding the Most Jobs. Customer & Personal Service 100, English Language 91, Education & Training 71, Mathematics 70, Administration & Management 67, Computers & Electronics 64, Psychology 59, Clerical 58, Public Safety & Security 46, Communications & Media 44.

Figure 19 displays the skill elements that were identified as most important for Occupations Adding the Most Jobs. Skills in Active Listening and Speaking were ranked most important for the Occupations Adding the Most Jobs. Active Listening 100, Speaking 97, Critical Thinking 94, Reading Comprehension 92, Social Perceptiveness 92, Monitoring 91, Service Orientation 89, Coordination 88, Judgment & Decision Making 86, Writing 83.

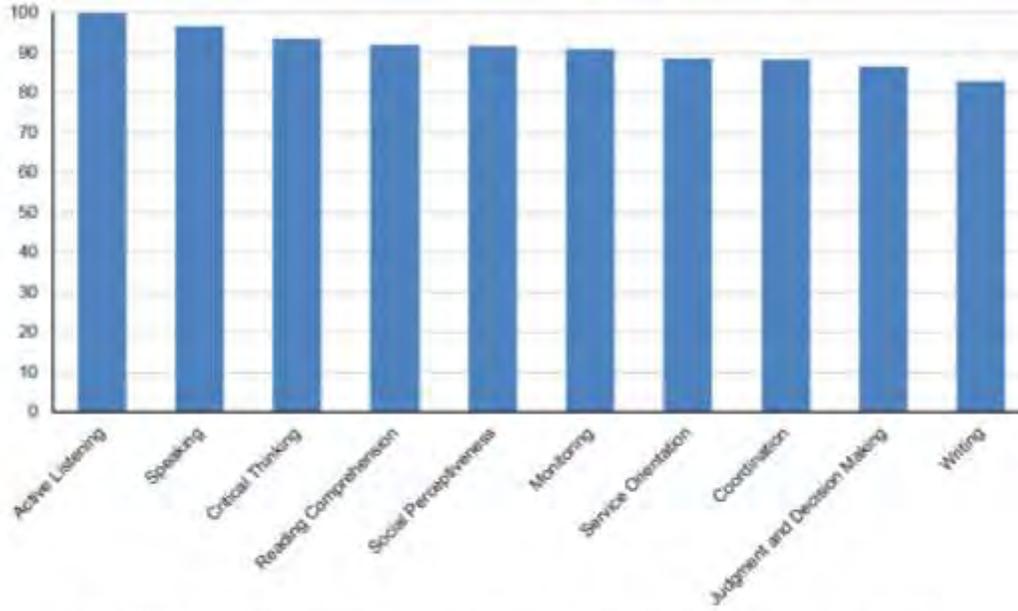
Figure 20 displays the ability elements that were identified as most important for Occupations Adding the Most Jobs. Abilities in Oral Comprehension and Oral Expression were ranked most important for the Occupations Adding the Most Jobs. Oral Comprehension 100, Oral Expression 100, Problem Sensitivity 91, Near Vision 89, Deductive Reasoning 87, Written Comprehension 87, Speech Recognition 87, Speech Clarity 86, Inductive Reasoning 84, Information Ordering 84.

Figure 18: Highest Scored Knowledge for Occupations Adding the Most Jobs



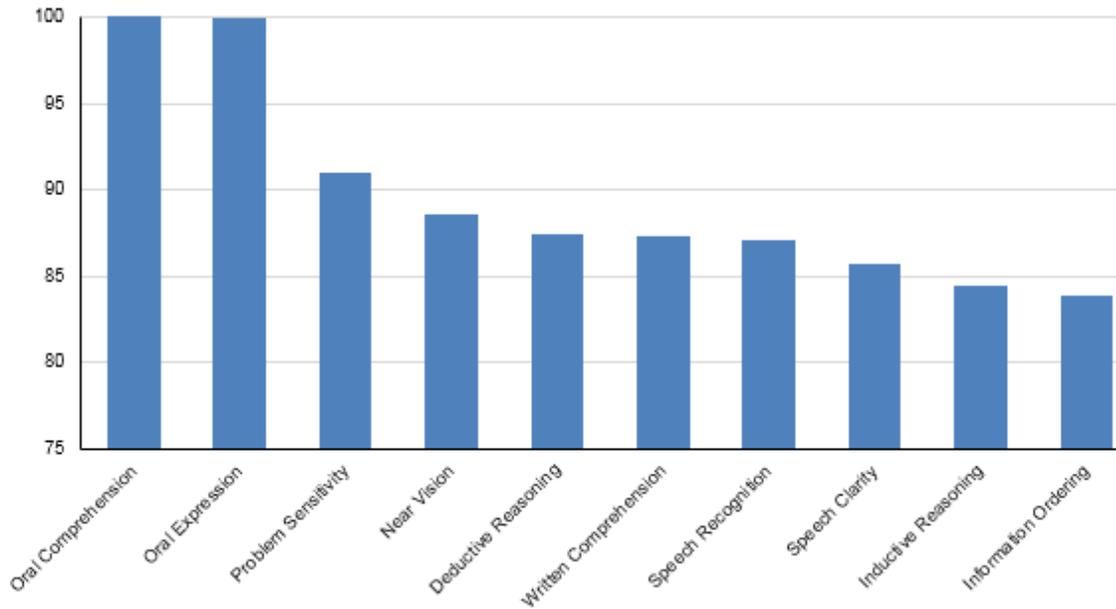
Source: O*Net and Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

Figure 19: Highest Scored Skills for Occupations Adding the Most Jobs



Source: O*Net and Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BL5, December 2019

Figure 20: Highest Scored Abilities for Occupations Adding the Most Jobs



Together, these graphs demonstrate the need to ensure the Commonwealth’s workforce possess both the technical and employability skills to fulfill current and future job demand.

Population, Employment and Unemployment

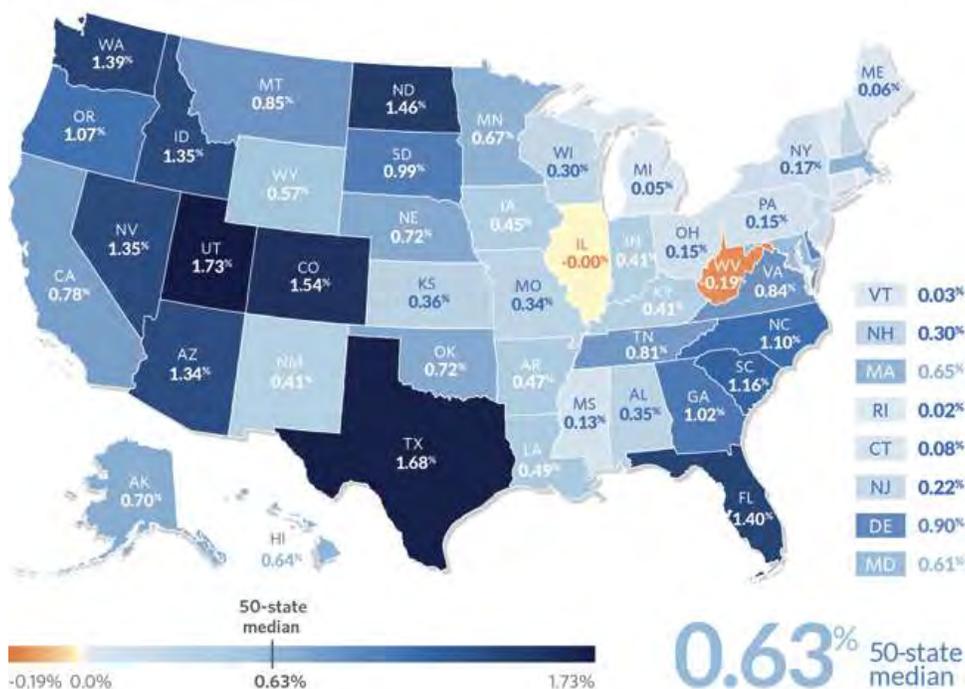
Population

Population trends can have significant implications for both state government finances and economic growth. In general, states with fast-growing populations have strong labor force growth, which fuels economic activity and helps generate tax revenue to fund spending on infrastructure, education and other government services. State populations grow or shrink depending on the net effect of births, deaths, and migration to and from other states and abroad, including documented and undocumented people.

Following the long-term trend, the United States in 2018 grew at its weakest pace in more than 80 years, with nine states losing residents. Over the past decade, the median rate of growth among states was 0.63 percent a year.

The fastest-growing states in the 10 years ending July 2018 were predominantly in the West and South. The Northeast and Midwest were home to all but two of the 15 states with the slowest population growth. For at least half a century, people have gravitated away from these regions and toward Sun Belt states, motivated by employment opportunities, lower costs of living and warmer climates. Despite this trend, Massachusetts' population grew by the equivalent of 0.65 percent between 2008 and 2018, with growth occurring gradually each year.

Figure 21: State Population Growth Rate, 2008 - 2018
State Population Growth Varied Widely Over Past Decade
 Population growth rate, 2008-18



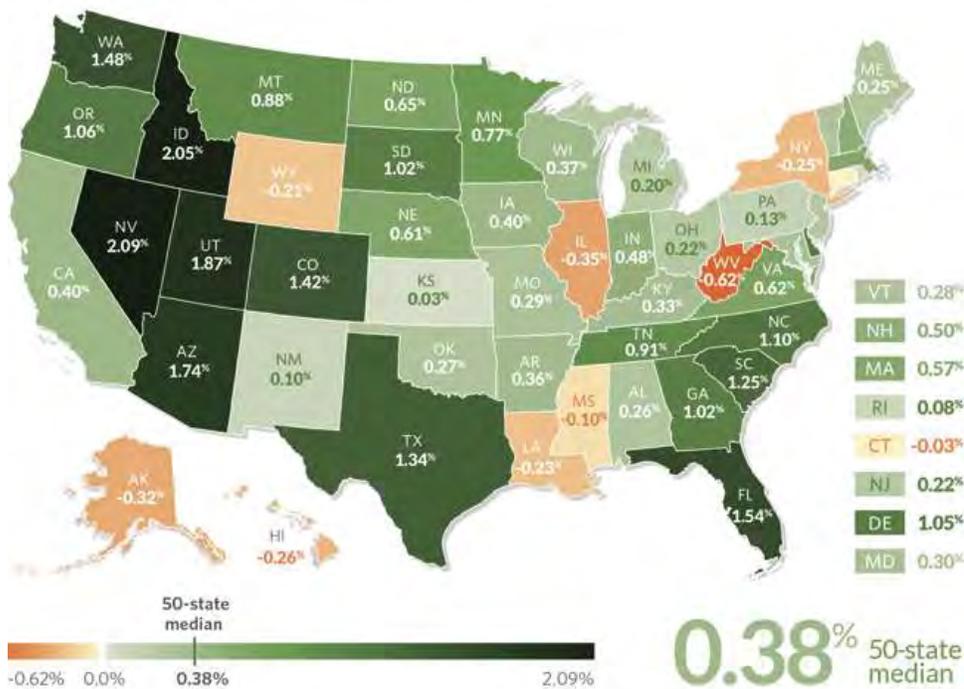
Source: Pew analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data
 © 2019 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Between July 2017 and July 2018, the median growth rate among the 50 states was just 0.38 percent (Figure 21). Nationally, the rate of population change each year has been trending downward, with annual growth in 2018 the slowest since 1937, according to the U.S. Census

Bureau. Populations in 27 states, including Massachusetts, grew more slowly over the period from 2017 to 2018 than over the preceding decade. Massachusetts (+0.57 percent) nevertheless remains an exception in the slow-growing Northeast (Figure 22).

Figure 22: Percent Population Change in State Population, 2017-2018
9 States Lost Population Over Past Year

Percentage change in state population, 2017-18



Source: Pew analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data
 © 2019 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Future demographic changes increasingly are on state policymakers' radar, as the U.S. Census Bureau forecasts that population growth overall and in many states will remain tepid. In general, growth is expected to slow because of declines in fertility rates alongside higher death rates, the aging of the Baby Boomer generation and falling rates of international migration.

Growth of Young Population

Young people drive the economy forward, creating a symbiotic relationship between a state's economic growth and innovativeness and its ability to attract and retain members of younger generations. This metric assesses the three-year compound annual growth rate of the total population age 25 to 29 between 2014 and 2017, using estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The rate of growth for Massachusetts' young population (+1.0 percent, 32nd among all states) is consistent with rates across the Northeast; the fastest rates of expansion were predominantly observed in the West and South.

Net Migration

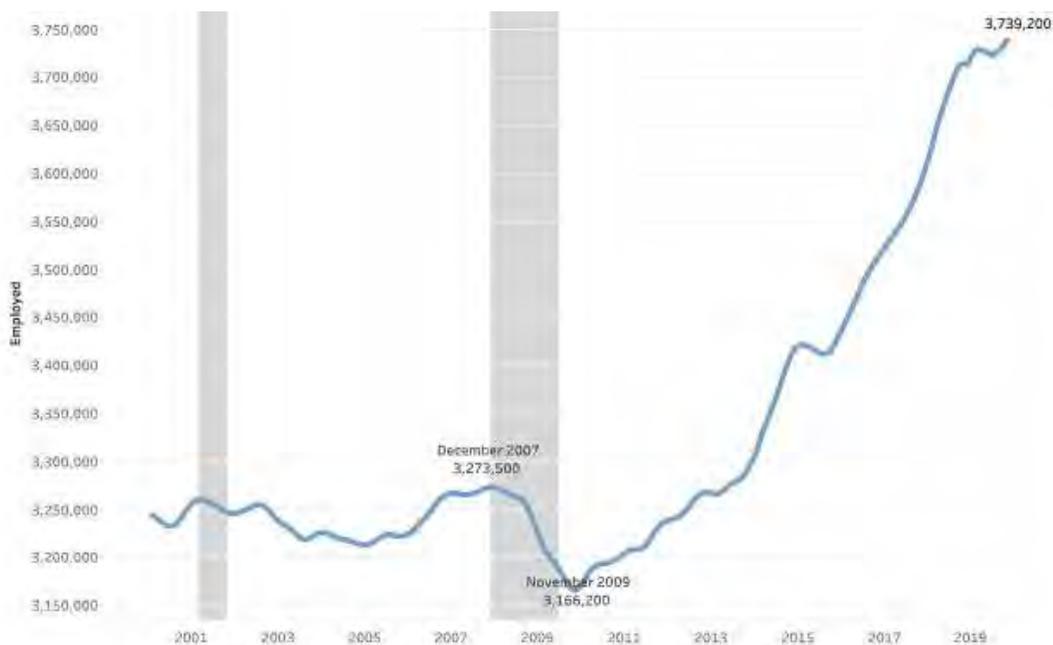
This measure evaluates the three-year average of net migration to and from a state – both international and domestic – as a percentage of the state population, using data from the U.S.

Census Bureau. A positive figure indicates that more people entered the state than left, while a negative figure signals that more people left the state than entered between 2014 and 2017. Thirteen states experienced more emigration than immigration; at the top of the list, Florida's population grew 1.5 percent. Massachusetts' population, meanwhile, grew by a healthy 0.3 percent between 2014 and 2017.

Jobs

Massachusetts has steadily added more jobs since the Great Recession, and estimates suggest this trend will continue. Eleven months of preliminary job estimates indicate that 2019 will be another strong year for the Massachusetts economy, as illustrated in Figure 23. From November 2018 to November 2019, BLS estimates Massachusetts added 48,600 jobs. The largest private sector percentage job gains over the year were in education and health services, other services, information, and financial activities. Education and health services maintains the distinction of having added the most jobs and the largest growth rate in the Commonwealth, accounting for nearly half of all the private-sector jobs added since December 2018.

Figure 23: Massachusetts Employed, Seasonally Adjusted



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Labor Force and Unemployment Rate Estimates, December 2019

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Labor Force and Unemployment Rate Estimates, December 2019

Labor Force

According to BLS estimates, the Massachusetts labor force reached 3,849,600 in November 2019 (Figure 24). The labor force increased by 15,700 from the 3,833,900 November 2018 estimate, with 24,700 more residents employed and 8,900 fewer residents unemployed. The state's labor force participation rate remained at 67.7 percent, down two-tenths of a percentage point compared to November 2018. Over the last five years, the labor force participation rate increased by 2 percentage points, from 65.7 percent in November 2014 (Figure 25).

Figure 24: Massachusetts Labor Force, Seasonally Adjusted



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Seasonally Adjusted Monthly Labor Force and Unemployment Rate Estimates, December 2019

for this group is equal to the rate for all races at 67.8 percent in July 2019. While the employment-population ratio is lower than the statewide total, it has increased 11 percentage points since January 2014, from 54.1 percent to 65.1 percent. During this time period, the unemployment rate for Hispanic/Latino residents has also decreased by more than 10 percentage points, from 14.0 percent in January 2014 to 3.9 percent in July 2019.

Education, employment and income Gaps by Race

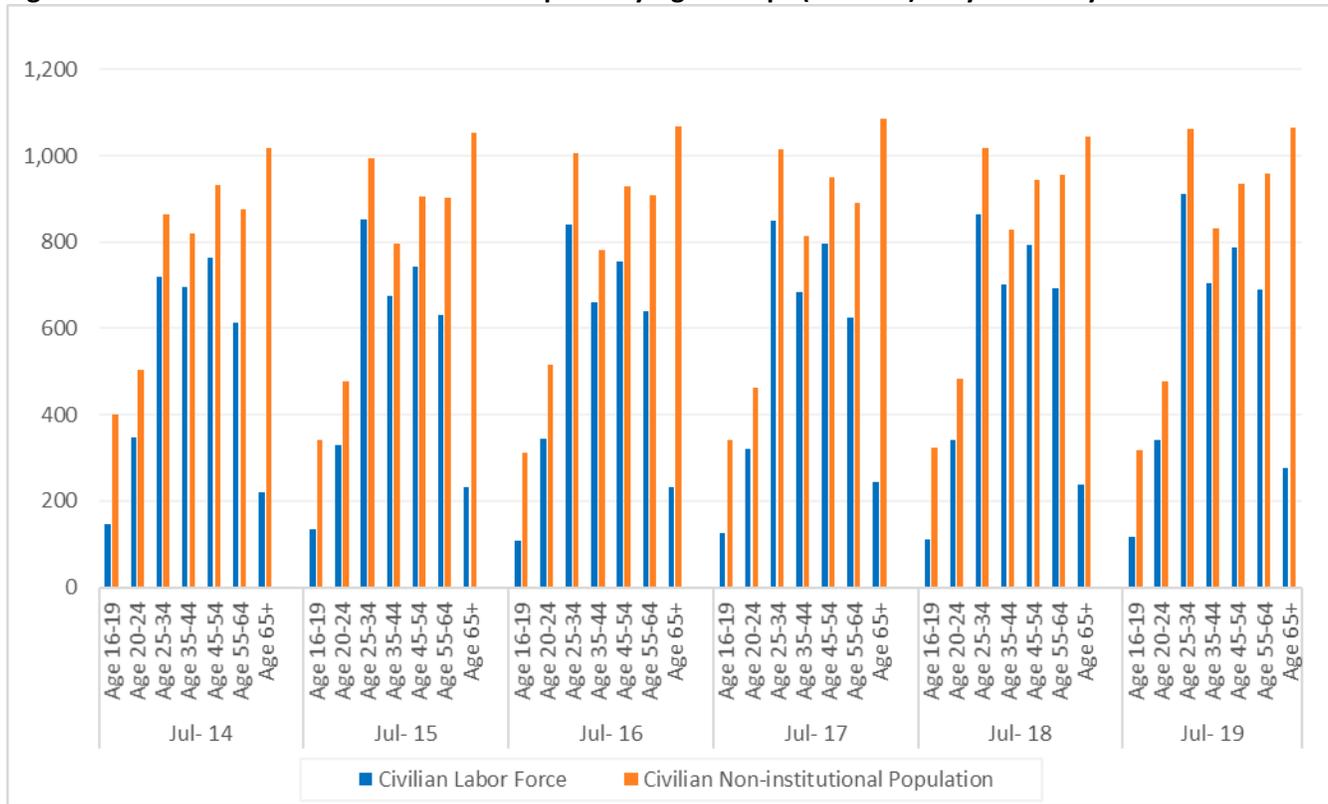
In measuring the ratio of non-Hispanic whites who have bachelor's degrees or higher compared to the rates for all other racial groups, Census Bureau data reveal larger racial gaps in some states than in others. According to estimates from the 2017 American Community Survey, Massachusetts (71.2 percent) ranked 23rd in the nation based on the education gap by race. The Census Bureau's reports on employment equality by race reveal disparities between non-Hispanic white and other racial and ethnic groups. While the unemployment rate overall is fairly low in the U.S., the country has large racial disparities. According to estimates from the 2017 American Community Survey, groups other than non-Hispanic white were 1.6 times more likely to be unemployed. Massachusetts, where groups other than non-Hispanic white were 1.66 times more likely to be unemployed, ranked 22nd in the nation based on the employment gap by race.

Income gaps by race measures racial disparities in income by comparing the income per capita for non-Hispanic whites against all other groups. Estimates from the 2017 U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey were used in the calculations. Nationally, per capita income for all other groups is about 60 percent of what it is for non-Hispanic whites. In Massachusetts, ranked 29th in the nation based on the racial income gap, per capita income for all other groups is about 57.1 percent of what it is for non-Hispanic whites.

Age of the Labor Force

The Current Population Survey (CPS) 12-month moving average data were used to identify trends within the Massachusetts working age population over the past five years. The CPS identifies seven unique age groups: ages 16 to 19, ages 20 to 24, ages 25 to 34, ages 35 to 44, ages 45 to 54, ages 55 to 64 and ages 65 and over. While the Commonwealth has fewer residents in the two youngest working age groups – ages 16 to 19 and ages 20 to 24 – these two age cohorts had the largest decrease in unemployment rates over this time period.

Figure 30: Massachusetts Labor Force Participants by Age Groups (12MMA): July 2014-July 2019



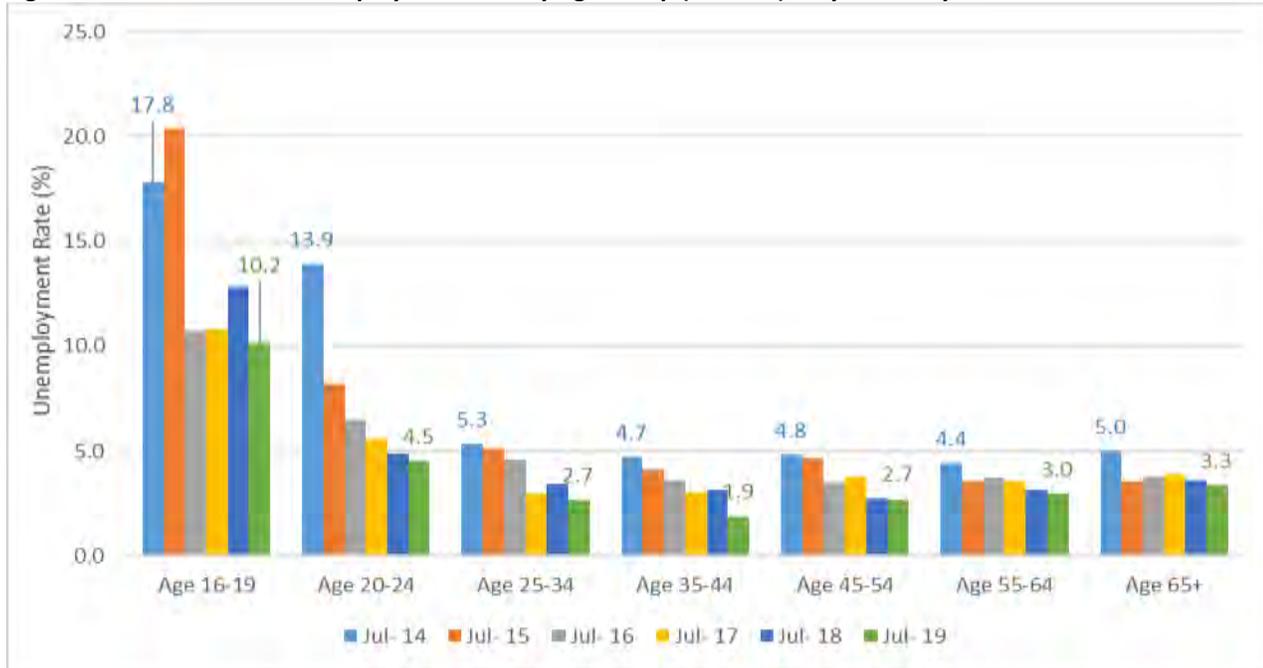
Source: Unpublished BLS CPS 12-month moving average. Compiled by Massachusetts DUA.

The Massachusetts population ages 16 to 19 years old has declined from 400,600 in July 2014 to 318,300 in July 2019, with this age group now accounting for only 5.6 percent of the population. During this time, this age cohort saw a slight increase in labor force participation, up 0.1 percent. An estimated 104,200 of the 116,000 individuals in the labor force were employed in July 2019, while the number of unemployed residents in this age group dropped sharply from 25,900 to 11,800. This resulted in a drop in the unemployment rate from 17.6 percent to 10.2 percent.

The age 20 to 24 cohort also saw a population decrease over the five-year period, from 505,000 in July 2014 to 478,400 in July 2019. The labor force saw a modest decline of 5,600 individuals to a new total of 342,400. During this time, the number of employed residents in this age cohort increased by 27,200 and the number of unemployed residents decreased by 32,900. The growth in the 25 to 34 age group accounts for the majority of growth in the Commonwealth’s working-age population, labor force and employed residents. In July 2014, they were the fourth largest age cohort, with 863,200 residents, the second largest cohort in the labor force and had the highest number of employed residents at 681,900. As of July 2019, they remain the largest share of employed residents, with 912,900 of the 1,063,200 residents employed. The cohort population is the second largest, behind those ages 65 or older. From July 2014 to July 2019, the number of employed residents increased by 206,500; this is more than both population growth and labor force participation growth of 200,000 and 192,800, respectively. In July 2019, they had the highest labor force participation rate of any age cohort,

85.9 percent. Of the labor force participants, only 24,500 were unemployed and the unemployment rate was 2.7 percent.

Figure 31: Massachusetts Unemployment Rate by Age Group (12MMA): July 2014-July 2019



Source: Unpublished BLS CPS 12-month moving average. Compiled by Massachusetts DUA.

In July 2019, residents ages 35 to 44 years are the fifth largest population group with 832,500 residents. Of these residents, 705,000 are in the labor force, generating the second highest labor force participation rate at 84.7 percent. This cohort also had the lowest unemployment rate at 1.9 percent.

With a population of 934,700 in July 2019, residents ages 45 to 54 are the third largest cohort. Of these residents, 786,500 are in the labor force and 765,200 are employed, accounting for the second highest share of employed residents. The labor force participation rate of 84.1 percent is the second highest and the unemployment rate of 2.7 percent, which is the same as the 25 to 34 cohort, is the second lowest.

Residents ages 55 to 64 saw the second largest growth in both population and employment from July 2014 through July 2019, adding 82,600 residents and 85,200 employed to reach totals of 959,500 residents and 670,300 employed. Most persons age 55 and older who reside in Massachusetts are not in the labor force (1,044,446 not in labor force; 954,030 in labor force). The labor force participation rate of 72.0 percent was a slight decrease from July 2018 but was up 2.2 percent compared with July 2014.

Finally, the cohort of those ages 65 and over are currently the largest working age population group in Massachusetts, with 1,064,800 residents in July 2019. If trends continue, the 25- to 34-year-old cohort will soon surpass those 65 and older as the largest group. The 268,500 employed residents, an increase of 58,500 from July 2014, added to the 9,300 unemployed

residents, results in a 277,800-person labor force of those ages 65 and over. The labor force for this group has grown by more than 56,700 participants since July 2014. The 26.1 percent labor force participation rate is 4.4 percentage points higher than in 2014, accounting for the largest gain of all age groups.

Educational Attainment of the Labor Force

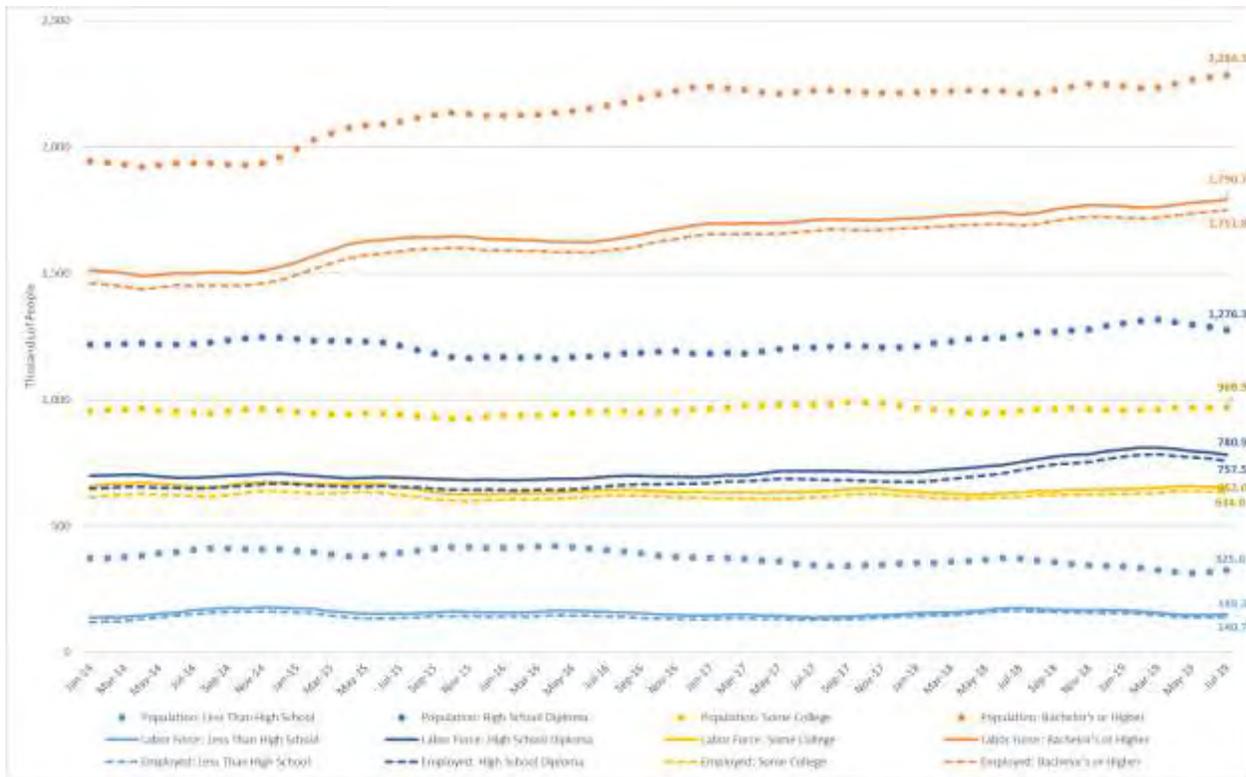
Massachusetts residents are highly educated, with two-thirds of residents having at least Some College education and 47.1 percent holding a Bachelor’s Degree or Higher as of July 2019. These shares are even higher for the labor force, where 72.4 percent have at least Some College education and 53.1 percent holding a Bachelor’s Degree or Higher. Only 7.2 percent of workforce participants had attained less than a high school diploma.

Figure 32: Educational Attainment for the Massachusetts Civilian Labor Force, Age 25-64

Less Than High School	High School Diploma (Includes Equivalency)	Some College or Associate’s Degree	Bachelor’s Degree or Higher
9,414,137	33,300,561	34,921,280	52,811,093
7.2%	25.5%	26.8%	40.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2018.

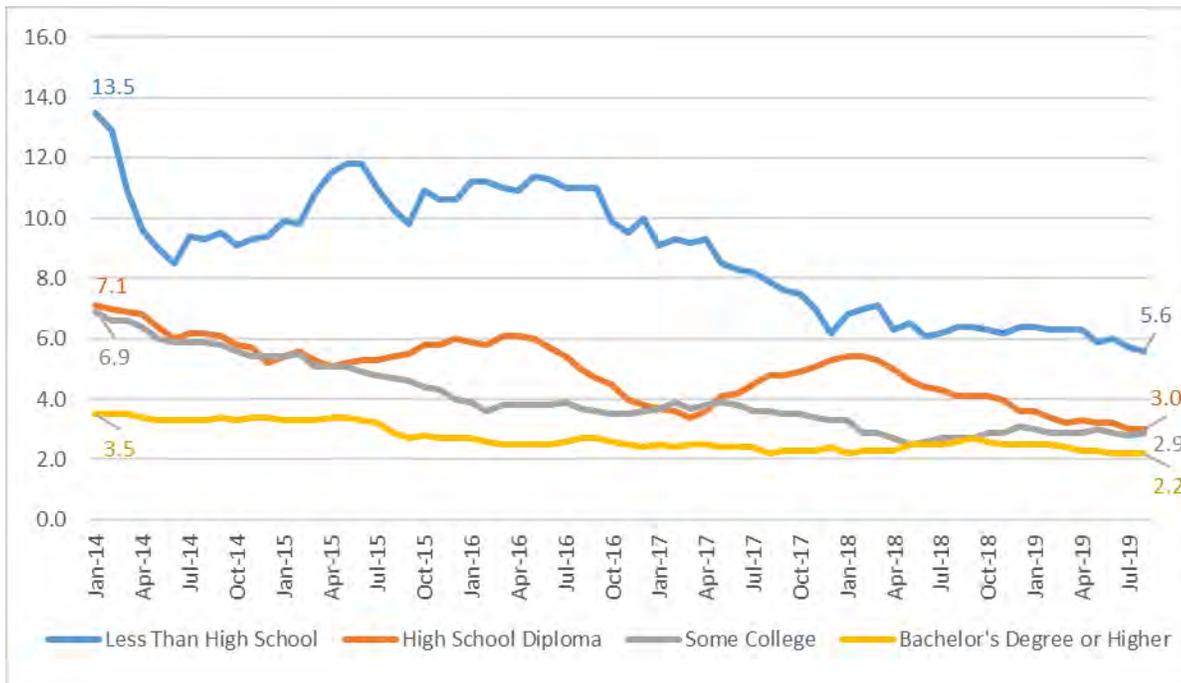
Figure 33: Massachusetts Population, Labor Force Participation and Employment by Educational Attainment (12MMA): January 2014-July 2019



Source: Unpublished BLS CPS 12-month moving average. Compiled by Massachusetts DUA.

Trends show that from January 2014 through July 2019, there are 26,500 fewer residents with Less Than a High School Diploma, denoted with light blue lines in Figure 15. The relative share of these residents has also declined over time, now accounting for less than seven percent of the population and only 4.5 percent of the labor force. Though the total number of residents in this cohort has decreased, their labor force participation rate has increased from 36.9 percent to 43.3 percent, 22,200 more are employed and the employment-population ratio is 43.3 percent in July 2019. This employment-population ratio is up 11.4 points from January 2014. The number of unemployed residents with Less Than a High School Diploma in July 2019 was 8,000, down from 18,500 in 2014; the 5.7 percent unemployment rate is 7.8 percentage points lower than in January 2014. While this unemployment rate has been trending downwards, it is still more than double the unemployment rate for those with a Bachelor’s Degree or Higher, and it has been consistently at least two percentage points higher than any other group since August 2018.

Figure 34: Massachusetts Unemployment Rate by Education (12MMA): January 2014-July 2019



Source: Unpublished BLS CPS 12-month moving average. Compiled by Massachusetts DUA.

At 1,276,300 residents, the working age population for individuals with a High School Diploma or equivalent and no college is slightly higher than in January 2014 and accounts for the second highest share of working age population. In July 2019, 780,900 individuals in this cohort are attached to the labor force, a participation rate of 61.2 percent. Of this population, 757,500 residents are employed, a 59.4 percent employment-population ratio. This group had 23,400 unemployed residents for an unemployment rate of 3.0 percent.

The working age population of residents with Some College or an Associate’s Degree is 968,900, of which 634,000 were employed in July 2019, generating the second highest employment-population ratio, 65.4 percent. Of the 652,000 labor force participants in this cohort, 18,100 were unemployed in July 2019, a rate of 2.8 percent, the second lowest of all cohorts. The labor force participation rate of 67.3 percent was the second highest of the four groups.

Residents with a Bachelor’s Degree or Higher account for more than 53 percent of the working age population ages 25 years or older as well as of those employed. At 2,284,600 individuals, the number of Massachusetts residents in this cohort in July 2019 was 341,700 greater than in January 2014. Of this population, 1,790,700 residents are in the labor force, a 78.4 percent participation rate. The 1,751,800 residents employed is an employment-population ratio of 75.1 percent, the highest of any educational attainment cohort. This group also had the lowest unemployment rate at 2.2 percent in July 2019.

Individuals with disabilities

Most persons over the age of 16 with a disability who reside in Massachusetts are not in the labor force (125,926 in labor force; 451,241 not in labor force). The Massachusetts unemployment rate for persons with a disability was 5.7 percent in 2018 compared to 4.0 percent for all labor force participants. The unemployment rate in this population decreased

five percentage points from 2017 to 2018 (the most recent year for which data are available) while the overall unemployment rate decreased six-tenths of a percentage point during that period (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2018).

For Massachusetts' adult civilian population age 25 and over with disabilities (534,42), the U.S. Census Bureau provides the following educational attainment estimates in 2018:

- Less than high school graduate – 21.0 percent
- High school graduate (includes equivalency) – 44.3 percent
- Some college or associate's degree – 15.4 percent
- Bachelor's degree or higher – 19.2 percent

Disability Employment Gap

Looking at the rates of unemployment in states, the Census Bureau also counts joblessness among people with disabilities. According to estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey in 2017, people with disabilities were about 2.5 times more likely to be unemployed than people without disabilities. Massachusetts, where persons with disabilities were 2.75 times more likely to be unemployed, ranked 43rd in the nation based on the employment gap by disability.

Labor Force Participation and Income Gaps by Gender

This metric measures the ratio of labor force participation rates for females and males in 2017, using estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Labor force participation rate were measured for the population between the ages of 16 and 64 and does not include those in the armed forces. Nationally, about nine women are in the labor force for every 10 men. Massachusetts (92.8 percent) ranked 8th in the nation based on the labor force participation gap by gender.

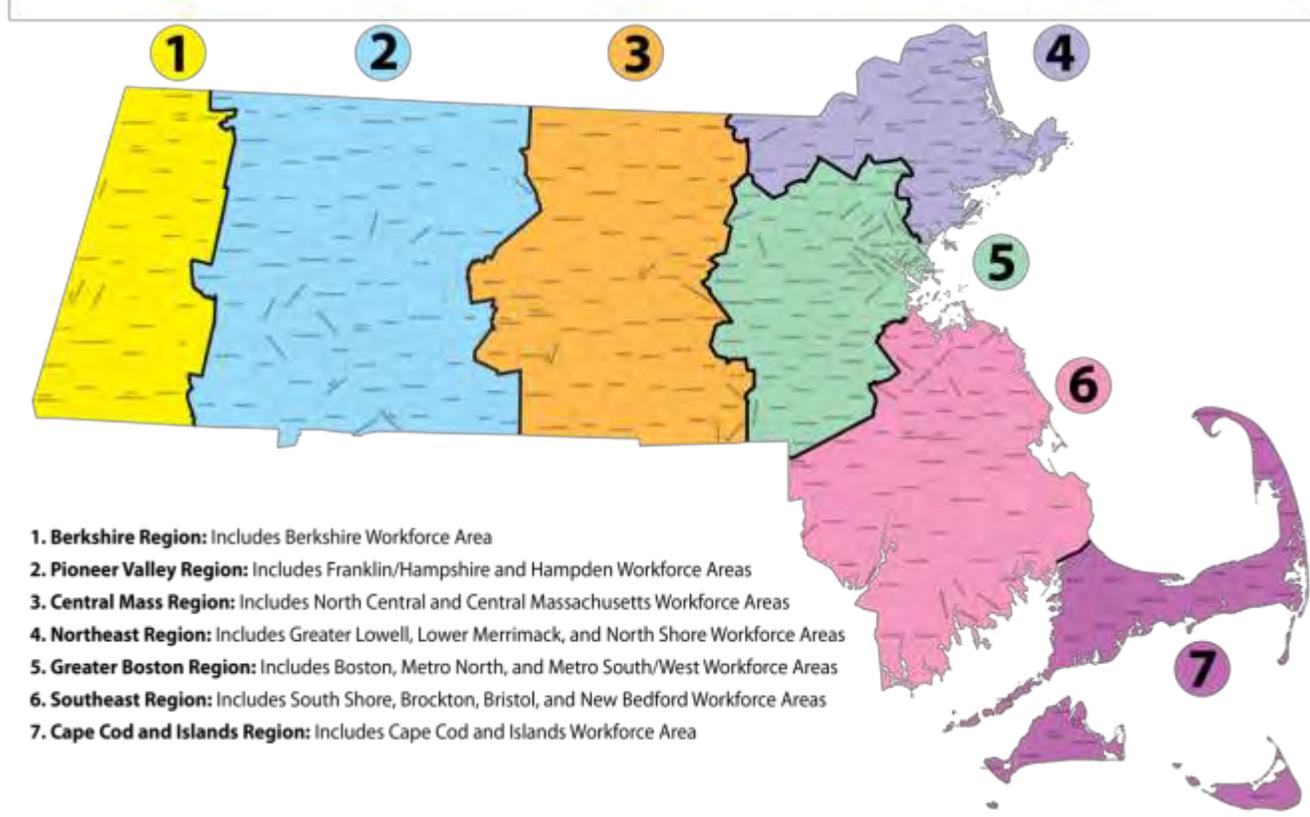
However, in comparing the median earnings of the female population to those of the male population for individuals who were employed full time year-round in 2017, in Massachusetts (ranked 12th in the nation based on the income gap by gender), women took home about 83 cents for every dollar men earned in 2017.

Regional Workforce Skills Planning

In April 2017, The Baker-Polito Administration launched a new regional planning initiative aimed at addressing the skills gap by bringing together regional teams of educators, workforce, and economic development professionals to create a regional blueprints for growth strategies in every region of the Commonwealth

The original Regional Labor Market Blueprints-developed through a comprehensive year-long planning process that involved local, regional and state leadership from workforce development, education and economic development, as well as input from business and community stakeholders-reflected a collective understanding of regional priorities and strategy for investments in seven regions across the Commonwealth: Berkshire, Pioneer Valley, Central, Southeast, Cape, Greater Boston, and Northeast (Figure 35).

Figure 35: Massachusetts Planning Regions



In order to promote a better understanding of the current and projected needs of the workforce system, and identify skill gaps, a series of local labor market data packages and data tools was shared with regional teams of educators, workforce, and economic development professionals. The supply and demand tool, which allows users to estimate the ratio of skilled workers to openings in regional occupational labor markets, offers a way to link statistically reliable estimates of skill gaps, job vacancies and local hiring patterns and the capabilities of job seekers, students and the unemployed.

Supply And Demand

The 2019 supply and demand tool is intended to guide training investments and other workforce activities with indicators of balances or imbalances (i.e., skill shortages or surpluses) in occupational labor markets. The underlying accounting model compares the projected total annual job openings, due to growth and replacement needs, for an occupational labor market with: (1) the recent output of program completers from related, structured training programs (at the sub-baccalaureate level for regions, and at the baccalaureate level and above for the state); and (2) the population of unemployment insurance claimants linked to the occupation at the same geographic unit of analysis.¹

¹ With regard to the geographic units of analysis, the higher geographic mobility of baccalaureate and above graduates limits comparisons of occupational employment projections and training data for BA/BS completers and above to the geographic unit of analysis of the state. Because of the lower rates of geographic mobility of Associate Degree and below structured training program completers, regional

	Office and Admin	Healthcare / Soc. Svcs.	Construc. / Install. Maint & Repair	Manufacturing	Transport.	Education	Info Tech	Other
Greater Boston		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Care Practitioner Technical Occupations Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems analysts, Programmers, Software developers, Web developers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitality
Southeast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Service Reps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Radiologic Tech Dental Hygienists Health Info Techs CNAs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Machinists, Welders, Production Licensed Trades 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer User Support Specialist 	
Northeast		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct care workers Practitioners HC admin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HVAC mechanics Drafters Laborers and Other Trades 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisors CNC operators Machinists Inspectors/Testers/QC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific occupations cited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer-related & IT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Sciences Engineering Engineering Tech
Central MA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CNAs, LPNs Pharmacy technicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HVAC mechanics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CNC machinists QC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial drivers Dieseltech 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Software developers Cybersecurity 	
Pioneer Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back office admin support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct care workers Tech/Clinical workers Social & Human Svc. Asst. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisors CNC operators Machinists Inspectors/Testers/QC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators (all levels & STEM) Teacher Assts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IT-related 	
Cape & Islands		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple occupations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HVAC Carpenters Landscaping 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific occupation cited 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hospitality – no specific occupations cited
Berkshire		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RNs Personal/home health aides Nursing assts Medical assts 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Machinists Engineers Management 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers, pre-school, assts, special education, & residential teachers Administrators 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maid, housekeeping, cleaners Janitors Other hospitality

Figure 38: Region Profile: Cape & Islands

Priority	
Hospitality Healthcare Construction	
Priority (Skilled Worker Shortage)	
Chefs & Head Cooks Healthcare Practitioners & Technical Occupations Healthcare Support Occupations Licensed Practical & Vocational Nurses Nursing Assistants Preschool Teachers and Assistants Construction Laborers, Electricians & Plumbers Construction Supervisors Building Inspectors	

Figure 39: Region Profile: Southeast

Industries

Priority	
Healthcare & Social Assistance Financial Services Professional & Technical Services	
Priority (Skilled Worker Shortage)	
Dental Hygienists/Assistants Radiologic Technologists Nursing Assistants Physical Therapy Assistants LPNs Medical Records/Health Information Technicians Web Developers Computer User Support Specialists Customer Service Representatives Auto Services Technicians & Mechanics Commercial Truck Drivers	

Figure 40: Region Profile: Greater Boston

Industries	
Priority	Critical
Healthcare & Social Assistance Professional & Technical Services	Hospitality Life Sciences Construction Advanced Manufacturing Finance Retail Creative Economy
Occupations	
Priority (Skilled Worker Shortage)	Critical
Computer & Information Analysts Health Technologists & Technicians Software Developers & Programmers Nursing, Psychiatric & Home Health Aides Database Administrators & Network Architects Other Healthcare Support Occupations Computer Support Specialists	None listed

Figure 41: Region Profile: Central

Industries	
Priority	Critical
Healthcare & Social Assistance Transportation, Warehousing Manufacturing	Professional and Technical Services Construction Retail/Hospitality Education Services
Occupations	
Priority (Skilled Worker Shortage)	Critical

RNs, PNs & CNAs Pharmacy Technicians Direct Care Workers CNC Machinists Quality Control Techs Production Workers Commercial Drivers Diesel Technicians	
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Figure 42: Region Profile: Northeast

Priority	
Advanced Manufacturing Healthcare & Social Assistance Professional & Technical Services	
Priority (Skilled Worker Shortage)	
Registered Nurses Heavy & Tractor Trailer Truck Drivers Software Developers, Applications Industrial Engineers Social & Human Service Assistants Accountants & Auditors	

Figure 43: Region Profile: Pioneer Valley

Industries	
Priority	Critical
Advanced Manufacturing Healthcare & Social Assistance Educational Services	Finance & Insurance Professional, Scientific & Technical Agriculture & Sustainable Food Systems Accommodation & Food Services
Occupations	
Priority (Skilled Worker Shortage)	Critical

RNs, LPNs, LVNs, CNAs, Medical Assistants Personal Care Aides Dental Hygienists Pharmacy Technicians Medical Records/Health Techs Physician Assistants Occupational & Physical Therapists Educators, All Levels & Fields Advanced Manufacturing Supervisors CNC Operators, Machinists Inspectors, Testers, Quality Control Workers IT Occupations Professional Logistic & Administrative Support	None listed
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Figure 44: Region Profile: Berkshire

Industries	
Priority	Critical
Health Care & Social Assistance Hospitality & Management Advanced Manufacturing	Education Business & Finance Creative Economy
Occupations	
Priority (Skilled Worker Shortage)	Critical
Nurses & Nurses' Aides Chefs & Hospitality Management Machinists Engineering Occupations Manufacturing Management	Teachers Managers & Assistant Managers (All) Phlebotomy, Surgical Technicians Other Healthcare Technicians Cybersecurity Occupations

The Commonwealth is in the midst of an economic expansion with growth in productivity and employment. As more and more Massachusetts residents are finding work, the labor force participation rate climbs, and the unemployment rate remains at an historic low. Indeed, Massachusetts is experiencing a tight labor market, but closer examination of the growth in job demand, and those who are finding work reveals gaps in the economic and labor force landscape that the workforce system can seek to address. Much of the current and projected growth in jobs are in low paying occupations that do not meet cost of living thresholds, or in traditionally high-skilled, high pay occupations. Meanwhile, populations with challenges to employment, such as people of color and people with disabilities, remain at higher rates of unemployment, lower educational attainment, and experience income disparities compared to the general population.

These circumstances underscore the need for the Commonwealth’s workforce system to expand workforce interventions that fully maximizes the labor force to ensure all Massachusetts residents can experience economic prosperity. Regionally focused, expanded career pathway-building to bridge low-pay, low skilled jobs to high-pay, high demand careers is an opportunity to ensure the Commonwealth’s economic and workforce growth is equitable and accessible to all.

The State's Workforce Development Activities

(2) The Workplace, Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of –

(A) Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and mandatory and required and optional One-Stop delivery system partners.²

The Commonwealth will continue to build on existing partnerships with required Core partners to provide education and training services to meet workforce needs. Additional partnerships will be developed to expand the capacity of the workforce system and to develop a more comprehensive approach to integrated services that address the needs of job seekers and business.

The Baker Administration has launched several initiatives to better align the broadly defined workforce system with the needs of business as well as focus on expanding the impact on job outcomes for individuals with barriers to employment. One example is the branding initiative that served to unify and re-brand the workforce system.

MassHire

The Commonwealth determined that our Businesses and Jobseeker customers lacked awareness of the depth, breadth, and interconnectedness of public workforce resources available in the Commonwealth.

To that end, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) engaged to reposition and rebrand the Massachusetts Workforce Development System in order to increase access and visibility of the system to employers and jobseekers. The project included three phases: I) Discovery/Research, II) Brand Development and III) Implementation.

On March 6, 2018 the MA Workforce Development Board voted unanimously to adopt a unifying brand for the Workforce System - MassHire. During the rebranding process, all local Workforce Boards and One-Stop Career Centers changed their names to include MassHire and geo-locators using a consistent naming structure. Additionally, both the State Workforce Development Board and the State Workforce Agency adopted the new brand (MassHire State Workforce Board, and MassHire Department of Career Services, respectively.) Branded materials also continue to use the "A proud partner of the American Job Center Network" tagline.

The MassHire brand will promote the values of collaboration, respect, reliability and ingenuity across the Commonwealth.

Workforce Skills Cabinet

Another Baker administration initiative is the Workforce Skills Cabinet, which was created to align the resources of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the Executive Office of Education and the Executive Office of Housing and Development. In the Commonwealth, the major federal and state programs for job seekers and employers are administered by multiple state agencies and field organizations.

This section will provide an overview of the resources and services for different customers:

- All business and jobseekers (Workforce Boards and Career Centers)
- Individuals receiving TAFDC (Department of Transitional Assistance)
- Individuals receiving SNAP (Department of Transitional Assistance)
- Adult Education and Basic Skills (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)
- Multi-Agency Career-Readiness Initiative
- Individuals with Disabilities (Vocational Rehabilitation through Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind) and Community Based Organizations (CBO) funded by the Department of Mental Health and Department of Developmental Disabilities
- Youth (WIOA Youth and YouthWorks)
- Talent Pipeline Initiatives for Business (Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund and Workforce Training Fund)

RESOURCES AND SERVICES FOR ALL JOB SEEKERS AND BUSINESSES

MassHire Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Centers

A large portion of the workforce activities occurs through the MassHire Career Centers (formerly One-Stop Career Centers). As of 2020, there are 25 comprehensive and 4 affiliated centers located throughout the Commonwealth (see Attachment J for a listing of MassHire Career Centers and locations.) In addition, there are 4 centers dedicated to serving the Youth population. These centers comprise the backbone of the state's delivery system for employment and training services for job seekers, businesses, and workers.

Figure 45: MassHire Career Center Map



The MassHire Career Center (MCC) system categorizes its services to job seekers and workers across a continuum of basic, individualized, and follow up services. Self-service activities and group services such as workshops are also available. Training may be provided through the Individual Training Account (ITA) system, on-the-job training, apprenticeship, and under specific circumstances, customized or class-sized training may be appropriate. MCCs serve as the point of access to a system of training providers with programs and services tailored to individual needs and career objectives. Services are provided in accordance with individual career plans, which are collaboratively developed by employment counselors and jobseekers, in accordance with local planning and implementation decisions.

Each comprehensive MassHire Career Center (MCC) offers an extensive array of jobseeker services that include:

- Determination of eligibility to receive assistance under WIOA;
- Outreach and intake, including career center seminars that provide orientation to the information and other services available through the MassHire service delivery system;
- Initial assessment of skills, aptitudes, interests and abilities, and supportive service needs;
- Career counseling, job search and placement assistance;
- Provision of employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, such as job vacancy listings in such labor market areas, information on job skills necessary to obtain

the jobs available, and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for those occupations;

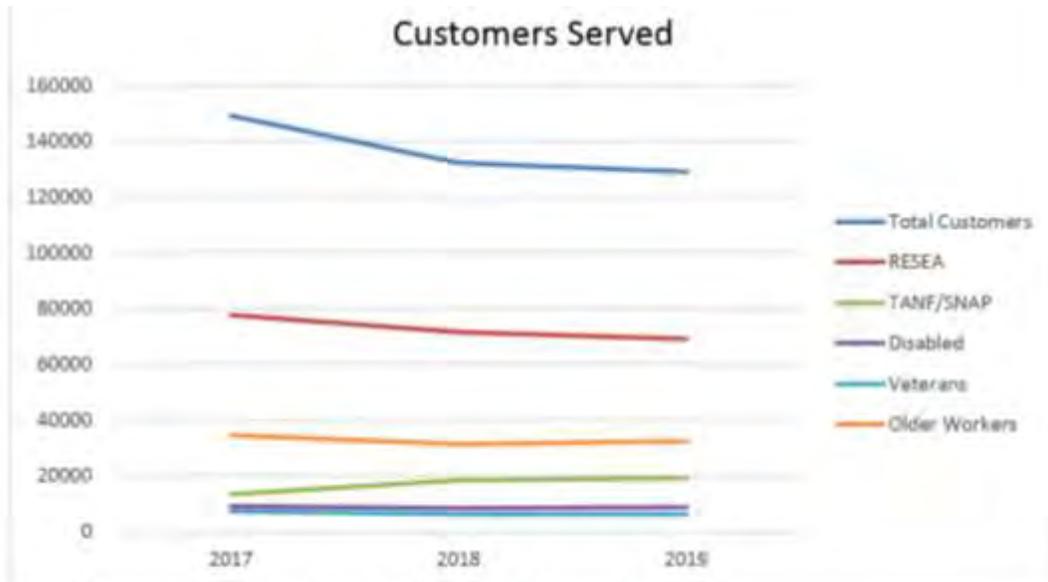
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services;
- Provision of information regarding local area performance as relates to local performance measures and any additional performance information, as available;
- Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services, including but not limited to childcare and transportation.

MassHire Career Centers offer a full menu of comprehensive services for businesses that include:

- Active employer outreach and solicitation of job openings;
- Timely screening and referral of competitive applicants;
- Provision of information regarding the full array of MCC services
- Customer assistance with online listing of job orders and access to the state's talent bank;
- Basic labor market information and listings of education and training programs and resources;
- Referral services for employers to sources of funding for worker training;
- Community service organizations and tax credit programs;
- Assistance with significant employer downsizing or layoffs, including layoff aversion strategies;
- Job fairs and recruitment events are held either on site at the MassHire Career Centers or at other venues that will attract an increased number of jobseekers;
- Coordination with economic development as well as various programs that can assist business;
- Information sessions for businesses on tax incentive programs and the Workforce Training Fund programs—training for incumbent workers and layoff aversion programs and services;

In fiscal year 2019, the Massachusetts workforce system served 129,105 jobseekers, 23% of whom were determined to have or self-reported a significant barrier to reemployment. Individuals connect to the system through the Unemployment Insurance System's Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA), referrals from partners (TANF, SNAP, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.) and on a walk-in basis.

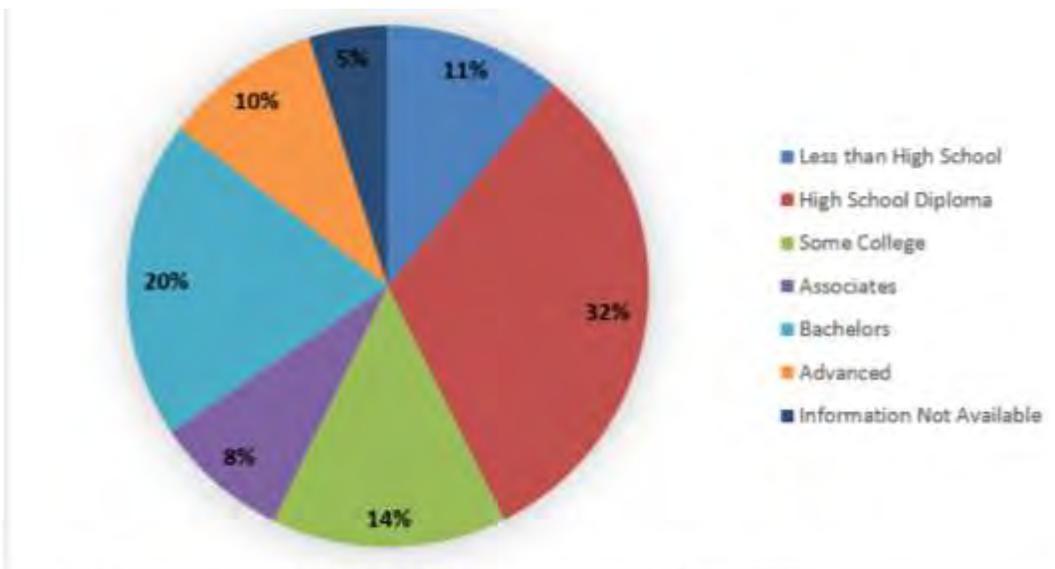
Figure 46: MassHire Career Center



Source: Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System data

Overall, MassHire Career Center customers reflect the data trend that individuals with less education experienced higher levels of unemployment and were more likely to be in need of services. In FY19, the following breakdown by education demonstrates that 43% of the customer base only had a high school diploma or less.

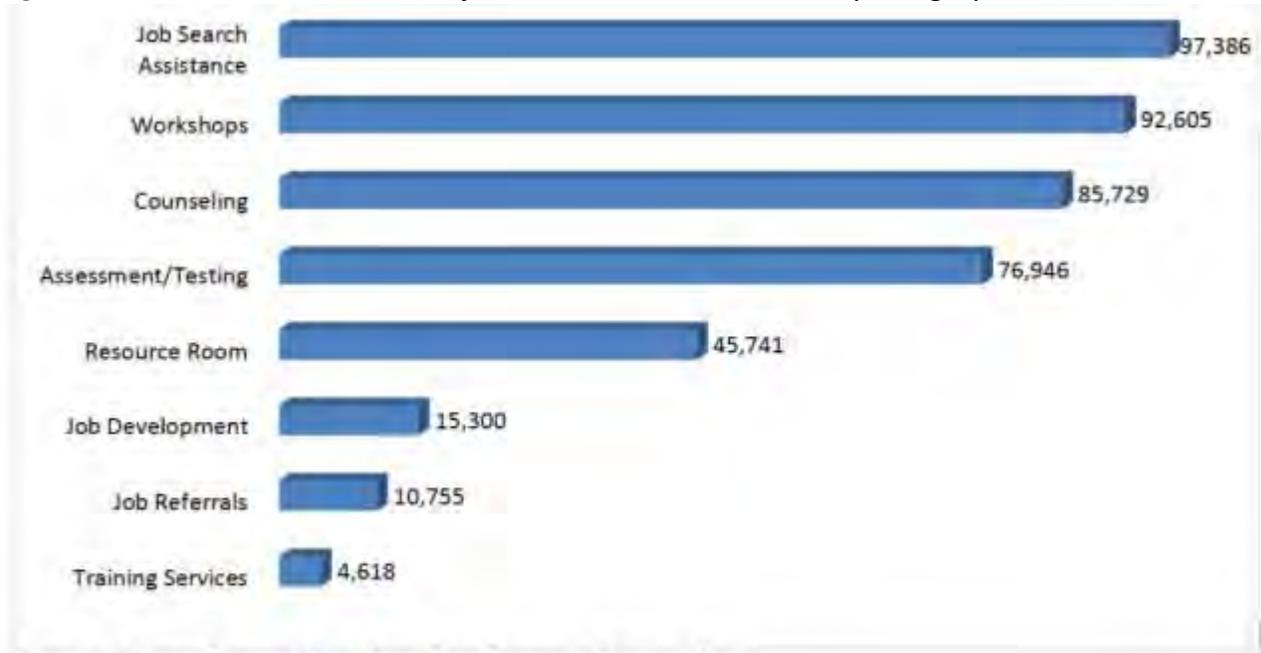
Figure 47: Education Levels of MassHire Career Center Customers



Source: Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System data

A summary of the activity conducted at MassHire Career Centers can be seen in the chart below.

Figure 48: PY 2018 Massachusetts's jobseeker services delivered by category



Source: Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System data

MassHire Career Center Training Resources

In FY19, the top ten WIOA funded training was in the following top ten occupational categories (Chart 25).

Figure 49: 2018 WIOA Enrollments by Occupational Categories



Source: Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System data

With close to half of MCC customers having a high school diploma or less, there is a prime need to focus on workforce services that will enable individuals in this category to enter the labor force. However, in PY 2018 of the top ten training program categories, less than 10% of training enrollments were in computer/mathematical-related programs. As noted previously, with the high demand for IT-related occupations, workforce services, training in particular, need to align with this talent pipeline.

Figure 50:

Customers Served at MassHire Career Centers			
	FY 2019	FY 2018	FY 2017
MassHire Career Centers	129,105	132,108	149,047
Customers Shared With Partner Agencies			
• Adult Education	88	18	7
• DTA (TANF/SNAP)	1,809	2,027	585
• MCB	6	1	3
• MRC	160	8	21
• RESEA (DUA)	65,051	69,119	71,302
• SCSEP	63	34	0
• Total	66,931	70,991	71,786

Beyond the MassHire Career Centers, our system continues to be engaged in various programs and partnerships that incorporate additional workforce activities and supportive services. Leveraging programs that multiple agencies and workforce partners share in utilizing is key to this effort under WIOA.

Services to Business

MassHire BizWorks helps to improve a variety of services for businesses using both state and federal resources. Over the years, thousands of companies have used MassHire BizWorks services for their benefit. The goal of MassHire BizWorks is to enhance and align the resources and services offered to Massachusetts businesses through state workforce development, economic development, and education entities in order to help Massachusetts businesses grow and thrive. To achieve this goal, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts strives to build strong relationships across agencies and with businesses; develop standard staff business service knowledge and competencies across relevant state agencies; and coordinate and link resources and information.

As a result of these efforts more Massachusetts businesses are aware of, and utilize, relevant state resources and incentives; there is “no wrong door” for businesses to connect with

business support; and services and outcomes continue to be captured to demonstrate the impact of these efforts.

All companies, including those that are expanding, downsizing, or looking to maintain can benefit from services offered by MassHire BizWorks.

Benefits and services to address the workforce development and expansion needs of businesses and employers in Massachusetts are organized into five main categories:

1. Recruiting and hiring;
2. Training, consultation and workplace safety;
3. Layoff aversion and management;
4. Business development and partnerships; and
5. Business compliance

The MassHire BizWorks Guide includes a list of external resources (non-state affiliated), important websites, and resource contacts (names, phone numbers, email, etc.) for a number of programs listed in the guide for easy referencing. This guide is available as a hardcopy handbook produced by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), as well as a downloadable document on the MassHire BizWorks website at www.mass.gov/masshire-bizworks.

Company resources for business downsizing include:

[Rapid Response Program](#)

The Rapid Response team can offer alternatives to closing a facility and laying off employees. If layoffs are inevitable, measures can be taken to lessen the impact on the company and workforce.

[WorkShare Program](#)

WorkShare is a business model that can help businesses that are experiencing a temporary slowdown by reducing payroll costs and maintaining their valued workforce.

[Unemployment Insurance For Workers](#)

Unemployment Insurance provides Massachusetts workers with a temporary income, opportunities for occupational training, and support during periods of unemployment.

[Safety Grant](#)

Grants up to \$25,000 are available to help companies fund workplace safety training. Additionally, free on-site consultation is available to help companies.

RESOURCES AND SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING TAFDC

Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) activities: The Employment Services Program (ESP) is an integral part of the Department of Transitional Assistance's efforts to move TAFDC clients to long term economic mobility. Each year the state legislature allocates funding for employment services for TAFDC clients through the ESP line item. The primary goal of ESP is to assist TAFDC clients in obtaining and maintaining employment, resolving barriers to employment and providing a means to economic mobility and security. DTA case managers assist TAFDC clients to meet their work program requirements by referring them to appropriate training and work-related activities. DTA's Employment Services Program includes the following

- Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES);
- Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI);
- DTA Works Program;
- Young Parents Program (YPP);
- Secure Jobs; and
- Work Participant Program (WPP).

Competitive Integrated Employment Services Program

DTA takes a whole family approach to providing individualized, human-centered services that places clients on career pathways to jobs in high-growth industries through Competitive Integrated Employment Services.

Through the CIES program, DTA hopes to affect change for families by:

- Empowering participants to pursue a path to economic mobility through education, training and job readiness
- Actively engaging participants to develop the skills necessary to achieve economic stability in a fulfilling career path
- Providing participants with hope and aspiration to break the cycle of poverty and achieve personal and economic growth as they pursue their goals

The CIES program provides a comprehensive array of job search, training and education services focused on successful employment placement, career growth and retention. Clients may also participate in industry-validated occupational/vocational training. The CIES model broadens the scope of job readiness beyond education and work history to include other issues such as health, housing stability, and family life that can have a substantial impact on an individual's ability to maintain employment. The CIES model provides workforce development, contextual learning, and empower participants to build family stability. CIES providers actively engage with participants to set family goals and develop individualized employment plans. These service plans include four components: Assessment and Goal setting, Job-targeted Education and Skills Training, and Job Retention at 30, 90 and 180 days. Job Retention Services include goal setting, continued skill development and coordinated case management.

Employment outcomes are targeted to match high-demand labor markets with growth potential. To obtain these outcomes, service providers support families as they pass through recognized milestones. These milestones are organized based on each client's goals and needs. Providers also provide post-employment supports to clients for up to one year. To ensure providers have the resources to provide post-employment supports, outcome payments are made to service providers when clients retain employment and/or experience wage growth.

Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI)

The Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) offers bilingual/bicultural employment services aimed to assist employment-authorized noncitizens who are also TAFDC clients in achieving economic mobility as newcomers to the United States. Services are provided in the client's primary language as they work to build their English language skills. ORI serves refugees, asylees, and other immigrants for whom English is not their primary language. Puerto Rican evacuees are also served through ORI. Youth participants can enroll in this program after completing a HiSET or DTA's Young Parents Program (YPP). Through ORI services, families are able to overcome cultural and linguistic barriers which may hinder them from obtaining and retaining employment. ORI's employment services include comprehensive assessment of family's needs, employment readiness, access to vocational skills trainings, job placement and retention. Currently, ORI serves the Boston, Brockton, Lawrence, Lynn, Lowell, Worcester and West Springfield areas.

DTA Works

The DTA Works Internship Program is a work-ready program funded for TAFDC recipients. DTA Works provides TAFDC recipients with the opportunity to acquire or develop skills necessary to re-enter the workforce. Interns are placed at a variety of locations including DTA offices, state agencies and non-profit community-based organizations where they receive on-the-job training and mentor support. Interns also work with their mentor and program coordinators to identify barriers that may be interfering with their economic mobility. Once identified, the intern and coordinator create specific goals to overcome those barriers and support the intern on their path to economic mobility.

Interns may participate in the program for up to 24 weeks. They receive a monthly education and training stipend to support their participation. The monthly stipend is in addition to their TAFDC benefits and does not reduce those benefits.

DTA Works has two program coordinators that provide statewide support and provide capacity for DTA to expand internship opportunities. DTA is currently developing partnerships with private employers to provide meaningful internship tracks that will lead to employment in high demand labor markets such as healthcare.

Young Parents Program

The Young Parents Program is a year-round, full-time program that focuses on education outcomes for young parents ages 14 through 24. The theory of change for YPP is that a two-

generation approach helps both generations make progress together and provides interventions that can break the cycle of multi-generation poverty.³ YPP supports positive outcomes across three domains; Education and Career; Life and Personal; Parenting and Family.

DTA is taking a two-generation (2Gen) approach to increasing economic security for families by focusing on creating opportunities for and addressing the needs of both parents and children together. The 2Gen approach recognizes that outcomes for parents and children are intertwined and cannot develop independently of one another. Research has documented the impact of a parent's education, economic stability and overall health on a child's trajectory. Similarly, children's education and healthy development are powerful catalysts for parents. By promoting education and supports for children along with tools to improve parents' economic situation outcomes for both the parent and child will improve. The theory of change for the YPP is that a two-generation approach helps both generations make progress together and provides interventions that can break the cycle of multi-generation poverty.

Through the Young Parents Program DTA seeks to:

- Empower parents to pursue a path to economic mobility through education pathways and job readiness, while establishing support networks that allow parents to successfully access and maintain active benefits.
- Actively engage participants to develop the skills necessary to advocate and care for their children so that ultimately the children in this program are safe, healthy, and thriving.
- Provide a sense of hope and aspiration to empower families to break the cycle of multi-generational poverty through sustained school and community involvement and engagement with the program.

Secure Jobs

DTA administers the Secure Jobs Program in collaboration with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The program was created through a partnership between the Fireman Foundation and Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness to address both homelessness and joblessness by bringing together employment and housing agencies from across the state to help homeless families increase their level of economic mobility. Through Secure Jobs, DTA and DHCD have also aligned policies to reduce barriers for our shared families that support the best outcomes. The program provides support for families to find employment while they are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. By focusing on employment, families in shelter can shorten their length of stay and secure permanent housing faster. Housing and employment services are integrated to create personalized economic mobility plans tailored to the needs of families. The program focuses on three key domains: Education and Career; Stable Housing and Economic Stability; and Family Stability and Well-Being. Participants also have access to flexible funds, which are used to support participants with specific challenges preventing employment. Participants are eligible for ESP supports such as child-care referrals and transportation stipends.

³ "Two-Generation Playbook" Ascend, The Aspen Institute (ascend.aspendinstitute.org)

Eligibility for Secure Jobs is based on Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) eligibility. The DHCD eligibility criteria includes residing in an Emergency Assistance shelter or receiving Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) or HomeBase funds. Receipt of TAFDC benefits is not a requirement for eligibility, however participation in the program does satisfy the TAFDC work requirement.

Work Participant Program

Since the passage of WIOA, DTA has worked closely with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) to implement a new, more integrated system of workforce development for DTA clients and other priority populations with significant barriers to work. The aim of this collaboration is to:

- Develop meaningful pathways to work and economic mobility for low-income, disabled and chronically un/underemployed individuals/families, and
- Ensure that DTA clients and families with significant barriers can access the workforce system with the support needed to attain and sustain employment.

This partnership has allowed DTA to provide additional employment supports to TAFDC and SNAP clients through the network of MassHire Career Centers in the Work Participant Program (WPP). Through WPP, clients receive access to individualized career counseling and guidance, workshops, job fairs, employer recruitment, and access to free resources to assist with their job search and applications.

DTA continues to increase investment in career services for clients in receipt of public benefits through WPP. Since the execution of the preliminary ISA in FY17, this partnership has resulted in significant progress. The percent of the MassHire customer base who are also TANF and SNAP clients has doubled from 6% in FY17 to more than 12% in FY20.

Additional employment and training supports offered to TAFDC clients include: High School Equivalency Testing (HiSET) or General Equivalency Diplomas (GED). ESP provides HiSET Vouchers for TAFDC clients to take the HiSET exams through Educational Testing Service (ETS) or GED vouchers to obtain their High School Equivalency certificate. ETS contracts with testing centers certified by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Transportation Reimbursement The Department provides transportation reimbursement, subject to funding, for TAFDC clients participating in qualified ESP activities of up to \$80 per month. Child Care Services TAFDC clients and certain former TAFDC clients are eligible for referrals to their local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agency. The CCR&R will explain the types of available child care and provide a list of child care providers with openings, or arrange for child care at home or with a relative. After the child care provider has been contacted and arrangements are finalized, the CCR&R will provide a voucher for the child care.

The **Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)** - provides employment-related services to eligible participants of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program beginning at the age of 14. Vocational Rehabilitation Services offered include:

- Evaluation and counseling to identify job goals
- Assessment of work sites and the need for assistive technology
- Assistive technology, orientation and mobility instruction, and rehabilitation teaching to enable blind persons to be independent at work
- Providing funds for college or vocational training
- Job counseling
- Pre-employment transition services
- Supported Employment Services
- Short and long-term internships
- Mentorship

RESOURCES AND SERVICES FOR YOUTH

WIOA Youth: Workforce Boards in each of the 16 workforce areas ensure the provision of services designed to help in school and out-of-school youth between the ages of 14 - 24 complete their secondary education, enter into post-secondary education/training, or enter into employment. Out of school youth and in-school youth receive comprehensive assessments, career planning, support services, alternative education, work-based learning experiences, and occupational skills training. These programs and services are available to youth and young adults throughout the Commonwealth and are accessed through MassHire Career Centers or WIOA Youth Service Providers.

Youth and young adults eligible for WIOA programs face a variety of barriers to completing education and entering employment, including but not limited to; juvenile justice involved, foster care, pregnant or parenting, homeless, or disability. Youth and young adults participating in the WIOA youth program also receive access to required program service elements that support financial literacy, leadership and development, and entrepreneurial skills.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)/Perkins

Building on input from industry, community organizations, educators, and economic development in WIOA regional planning in the summer of 2017, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts embarked on a new chapter in Career Technical Education (CTE) for its students, launching a “High Quality College and Career Pathways” (HQCCP) initiative. This initiative is the outgrowth of a number of recent, complementary bodies of work that began several years ago in Massachusetts, overseen by the Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC) and aligned to the state’s WIOA plan. The WSC was [created by an Executive Order](#) of Governor Charlie Baker in early 2015. The Cabinet aligns the Executive Offices of Education, Labor and Workforce Development, and Housing and Economic Development toward a comprehensive economic growth agenda. The Cabinet is charged with creating and implementing a strategy to ensure that individuals can develop and continuously improve their skills and knowledge to meet the varying needs of employers in the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth has developed a set of guiding principles that provide a powerful context for all HQCCPs, as well as a more specific set of characteristics that define these pathways. In addition to the

state's nationally recognized Vocational Occupational Programs the state has launched two types of HQCCPs, referred to as "Innovation Pathways" (IP) and "Early College" (EC) in alignment with the Strengthening Career Technical Education in the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) requirements.

These pathways provide participating students in the Commonwealth with supportive, rigorous academic experiences and career development education relevant to their next steps after high school. All three pathway programs require

- Equitable Access
- Academic Pathways aligned to labor market information and workforce development priorities identified by regional WIOA blueprints
- Enhanced Student Support
- Connection to Career inclusive of work readiness and work-based learning activities
- Documented effective Partnerships with local Workforce Boards, Career Centers, industry and post-secondary partners

Additionally to support student awareness of CTE opportunities and to support student success, the Commonwealth launched My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) a state wide program for student-centered, multi-year planning tool designed to provide students with ongoing opportunities to plan for their academic, personal/social and career success.

Aligned to the WIOA Plan over the last for years MA CTE collaborations has supported approval of **75** new voc-tech programs, and approval of **75** Early College and Innovation Pathway programs, based on partnerships with **16** colleges and **19** workforce partners, and twenty five percent of high school districts have participated in MyCap planning.

Connecting Activities: A Department of Elementary and Secondary Education initiative designed to support college and career readiness for students. MassHire Workforce Boards use Connecting Activities (CA) to establish partnerships between schools and businesses to provide structured work-based learning experiences for students that support both their academic and employment skill attainment. Students participate in a range of career-related activities including onsite placements for work based-learning opportunities. Students in CA utilize the [Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan](#) (MWBLP) to assess skills developed through worksite learning experiences. The MWBLP includes a job description, a description of the Employability Skills and Career and Workplace Specific Skills used in the student's placement and a performance review section. The MWBLP is a tool used to measure gains made in employability and career readiness skills competencies.

YouthWorks: YouthWorks is a state-funded subsidized employment program for teens and young adults aged 14 to 21 living in low-income communities across Massachusetts, administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. YouthWorks uses a model that is age, stage and path appropriate, aiming to increase the employability of teens and young adults through experiences that prepare, coach, and support them in job readiness, career pathways and job success. YouthWorks programs serve a wide range of participants in terms of ages, levels of career awareness, and goals. In order to better provide all participants with effective and relevant youth workforce development services, YouthWorks defines its offering into three specific tiers, which include service and project-based learning, early and career trajectory employment experiences, and career

pathway training and support. YouthWorks increases the employment of teens through partnerships that prepare, coach, and support teens in job search and job success.

In order to support continued and strategic service to a subset of participants, increased capacity to engage and maintain private sector partnerships, stronger alignment with Connecting Activities (the state's initiative that supports adults who broker unsubsidized work placements for teens), and an avenue for tracking participant outcomes, YouthWorks is transitioning to a full-year funding model and no longer will operate a summer program and subsequent smaller year-round program separately. As part of the program model, all participants are engaged in Signal Success, Commonwealth Corporation's innovative work readiness and career exploration initiative which is also used in WIOA youth programming. During the summer, participants work up to 25 hours per week at public, private, and nonprofit worksites. Participants also take part in job-readiness workshops to help them acclimate to their jobs. In many cases, a YouthWorks placement serves as a young person's first job.

YouthWorks grants support programs in more than 31 cities and towns and are operated by a mix of MassHire Boards, MassHire Career Centers and community-based organizations. 15.5 million in Youthworks funding will serve 4,552 low-income teens and young adults across the Commonwealth during the summer if FY20 and year-round during FY20 – FY21.

Adult Education: Title II and Adult Education state funded programs serve a significant number of eligible youths. In FY19 3,013 out of school youth were served by the Adult Education system.

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC): MRC makes Pre-Employment Transition Services available to all students with disabilities statewide who are eligible or potentially eligible for MRC services. Pre-ETS services consist of five service components:

- Job exploration counseling;
- Work-based learning experiences;
- Workplace readiness training;
- Counseling in Post-Secondary Education;
- Self-Advocacy

YouthBuild: YouthBuild provides services to youth and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 that have a positive impact on life choices. YouthBuild programs offer a unique curriculum, that combines academic instruction with workforce development training. Participants engage in contextualized learning in the classroom and on the job site building and renovating affordable housing in their communities.

The Massachusetts YouthBuild Coalition (MYBC) consisting of the eleven operating YouthBuild programs in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. All the Massachusetts programs are in the major urban areas across the Commonwealth in Gateway Cities. There are YouthBuild programs in Boston, Brockton, Cambridge/Chelsea, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford, Quincy, Salem/Lynn, Springfield, and Worcester. The coalition was formed in 1996 when there were six programs in the state and over the years has grown to its present level of 11 sites.

The MYBC has evolved over the years to its present state where one of the major missions is to provide technical assistance to all the programs, highlight best practices, and provide the best experience possible

for the young people served. To that end we are particularly proud of some innovative practices that are unique in the YouthBuild world. We have instituted a system of peer evaluation to make certain that all our programs are providing quality services. Each program is evaluated by the Executive Director and the team of peer directors from other programs who look at every aspect of the program, including each program component, organizational quality, and best practices which can then be disseminated to other programs. In addition, MYBC has developed a Learning Academy. These Academies which are held every year provide training opportunities for all the staff at all the programs. We highlight topics that are especially pertinent at a given time and make sure that we engage the staff in the development of future training.

The Board of the MYBC is collection of devoted members who believe in the mission of the Coalition. By working together to develop strategies for improvement as well as answers to concerns, we have developed a coalition that has served as a model nationally among the 250 programs in the United States as well as those around the world served by YouthBuild International.

Job Corps: Job Corps offers hands-on career technical training in high-growth industries that help youth and young adults 16-24 years of age get a GED or high school diploma. Job Corps also offers career planning, on-the-job training, job placement, residential housing, food service, driver's education, health and dental care, a bi-weekly basic living allowance, and a clothing allowance.

RESOURCES AND SERVICES FOR OLDER WORKERS

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP):

Administered by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, the Senior Community Service Employment Program, funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act through the United States Department of Labor, enables us to help employ low-income individuals, age 55 and older, throughout the Commonwealth. SCSEP remains the only federal, person-centered, workforce development program targeted to serve older workers. The Government Accountability Office has identified SCSEP as one of only three federal workforce programs with no overlap or duplication.

Enrollees are placed in temporary training assignments where they gain valuable on-the-job work experience and training needed to gain employment in the private sector. The dual goal of the Senior Community Services Employment Program is to:

- Enable older low-income job seekers to develop the skills and self-confidence to obtain unsubsidized jobs and become financially self-sufficient; and
- Provide valuable community service at on-the-job training sites, to improve participant's self-sufficiency, perform meaningful civic service, and to strengthen communities.

These goals are achieved through multiple strategies, which includes the use of on-the-job-experience (OJE) with efforts to engage employers through outreach and recruitment to local employers whereby participants are placed at eligible training sites for which they are paid minimum wage for 20 hours per week. Another strategy is to provide Job Club training, an intensive job search training program. EOE will continue to provide these workshops in all service areas.

Implementing Skill Training is another primary focus as well, as EOEAs assesses and evaluates MA-SCSEP participants' skills and job interests, while focusing on specific occupations and skill training pathways through WIOA vendors, community colleges and other low-cost training providers.

TALENT PIPELINE INITIATIVES FOR BUSINESS

Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund: An initiative created in 2006 and administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the Trust Fund supports industry sector partnerships to develop training pipelines to meet the skill needs of businesses in high demand occupations. Each partnership includes businesses with common skill needs, educational institutions, workforce board/s, and other related partners. The partnerships provide training and education services for a two- to three-year period for industries including health care, manufacturing, clean energy, life science, trades, financial services, and hospitality.

\$38.5M has been appropriated for the Fund since 2007 and builds a program infrastructure that allows workforce boards to add capacity through WIOA, TAA and other programs.

Eighty-six partnerships have been supported through the WCTF since 2007; many of the partnerships continued beyond the grant period creating a platform for working strategically with critical industries to address their ongoing and changing workforce needs.

Workforce Training Fund: The Workforce Training Fund Program helps address business productivity and competitiveness by providing resources to Massachusetts businesses to fund training for current and newly hired employees through competitive grants. Companies must pay into the WTF in order to be eligible to apply for grant funds.

The workforce development boards, and career centers, work closely with local employers to access the Workforce Training Fund for their incumbent worker training needs. Grant programs include:

- General Programs Grants up to \$250,000 that are awarded competitively to employers, employer organizations, labor organizations, training providers, and consortia of such entities to train current and newly hired workers. Applicants may use a training provider of their choice.
- Express Program Grants assists companies with 100 or fewer employees to address their employee training needs through a list of pre-registered courses. Eligible employers complete a short, online application to request grant funds for pre-registered training courses.
-

The Workforce Training Fund is supported through business contributions, raising approximately \$21 million each year. In FY 2019 the Workforce Training Fund, through its General Program, awarded \$17.4 million through 152 grants to support 189 businesses in training 12,4118 incumbent workers.

The Strengths and Opportunities for Workforce Development Activities

(B) Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above. (C) Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

Leveraging resources and aligning Partner agency program services are critical to workforce development activities that are comprehensive, and customer centered. The Commonwealth will continue to build on existing partnerships and develop new ones in order to expand capacity to deliver workforce development activities that meet a variety of needs for job seekers and business. The table below outlines the key areas of focus in this State Plan, addressing areas of strength, capacity and progress for the system since the 2016 State Plan, and areas of opportunity to enhance capacity and maximize impact on the system’s customers.

Figure 51: SWOT Analysis

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
<p>All Job Seekers and Businesses</p> <p>MassHire Career Centers (MCCs) and MassHire Workforce Boards</p>	<p>Unified MassHire brand across all career centers in the Commonwealth to help customers identify where public workforce development services can be accessed; unifies MassHire staff across workforce system to enhance and streamline the customer experience.</p> <p>USDOL resources integrated under one roof for “one-stop” for customers in all MCCs.</p> <p>Local “Umbrella” MOUs developed and signed by all required WIOA partners ensures locally driven, integrated workforce system.</p> <p>“Shared Customer” definition and policy developed by the state, and further articulated in local areas to ensure all partner services are provided and integrated at the MCC.</p> <p>Local “customer flow” agreements building on strong partnerships with social service entities, local service providers and non-profit organizations, particularly for serving those with barriers to employment (low-skilled, limited English proficient, etc.).</p> <p>“Customer Centered Design” elements integrated into the MCC to enhance the customer experience.</p> <p>One common data system (Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) - coordinate, schedule, monitor and report on virtually all service activities.</p> <p>JobQuest - allows job seekers and business to conduct activities such as create/modify their customer profiles, develop job postings, or search for eligible training providers. Enables customers to access self-service activities that augment the spectrum of staff supported services at MCCs.</p>	<p>Improve and integrate MassHire and partner data systems to create operational efficiencies, as well as bolster the system’s analytical capacity.</p> <p>More demand for subsidized training vouchers for customers compared to need.</p> <p>Limited MCC access during evenings and weekends creates challenges for customers who cannot visit the career center during traditional business hours (e.g., incumbent workers, those engaged in programming with partners, etc.).</p> <p>Expanding access points for career center services, including online, through co-located staff, and through community partners.</p> <p>Integrated education and training models for partner customers (e.g. ABE students).</p> <p>To provide career pathway opportunities to those with challenges to employment through registered apprenticeship expansion.</p> <p>To better track and match job candidates to available jobs through enhanced applicant tracking capabilities.</p> <p>For streamlined business experience to position the workforce system as an attractive resource to meeting a business’ workforce needs.</p>

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
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Workforce Connect (*in development*) – to allow job seekers to see their data across multiple partner organizations’ systems.

Strong Veterans Services - Local DVOPs have direct contact and coordination with homeless Veteran shelters, the VA and local area community organizations that provide direct services and training program opportunities leading to gainful employment and self-sufficiency.

Regional Planning Initiative defines priority industries and occupations for the region; programs in these “in-demand” careers are being designed and run by local partners to serve target populations such as veterans, youth, and returning citizens.

Regional planning also aligns strategic initiatives and funding to locally driven regional blueprints for create career pathway opportunities for customers of the workforce system.

Availability of multiple labor market tools to help inform job seekers decisions related to careers or business needs.

These include:
 The Massachusetts Career Information System (MassCIS), portfolio tool that enables users to explore career outlooks, as well as knowledge, skills and abilities, and educational requirements.

Transferrable Occupational Relationship Quotient (TORQ): An easy to navigate, easy to understand career exploration tool based on O*NET occupational competency profiles.

MassHire BizWorks helps to ensure businesses are accessing the right resources to fit their needs; transcends across multiple partners and agencies to ensure there is no “wrong door” for businesses.

Burning Glass Labor Insight: a tool that uses real-time data to identify emerging industry and occupational trends, find people jobs, and local employers in a specific industry, or to identify the industry category for a specific employer to find out more about what they do and what kind of workers they employ.

WorkKeys Curriculum in all the MCCs offer an opportunity for job seekers to enhance foundational workplace competencies (reading, math, and graphic literacy) as well as soft skills and financial literacy. Tool is also shared with many Adult Education programs.

Registered Apprenticeship Expansion creates more career pathway opportunities for shared customers in the workforce system.

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
Resources and Services for Individuals Receiving TAFDC	<p>Work Program Participant Program (WPP) leverages the resources and expertise of DTA and MassHire services to boost employment outcomes for people on public benefits.</p>	<p>Resources for occupational skills training or career pathways is limited. Resources do not match demand.</p>
Department Transitional Assistance Employment Services Programs	<p>Legislative reforms assist in smoothing transition period from receiving public benefits to economically self-sufficient families.</p>	<p>Limited number of providers in rural areas creates barriers to those with transportation issues a limited number of entry points for TAFDC customers.</p>
	<p>Improved performance regarding labor participation rates.</p>	<p>Clients experience “Cliff Effects” challenges as they seek employment while on public benefits.</p>
	<p>There is a strong relationship with TAFDC and local providers. Provider maintain a regular presence at Transitional Assistance Offices (TAO) to keep TAFDC clients engaged and to more effectively coordinate services with DTA case managers.</p>	<p>To leverage partnerships and collective workforce system resources to serve clients of various needs.</p>
Adult Education	<p>The Adult Education system (federal and state funds) serves thousands of adults who are low skilled, basic skills deficient, lack English proficiency, lack a high school diploma or its equivalent and it helps them close the educational gap and qualify for further opportunities.</p>	<p>Because of significant barriers and low educational levels many Adult Education and ESOL students require years of ABE/ESOL before they can benefit from the opportunities of the workforce system.</p>
	<p>The Adult Education system engages a wide range of program providers (including employer partnerships for workplace education) to meet the needs of various communities with specific barriers.</p>	<p>To deepen relationship with workforce system partners to ensure productive student multi-year engagement (e.g. career pathway development, etc.)</p>
	<p>Adult Education supports postsecondary success through the Transition to College programs.</p>	<p>To support the out-stationing model with a system to track referrals and cross agency collaborations.</p>
	<p>Adult Career Pathways programs provide an opportunity for MassHire (Boards and Career Centers) to collaborate regionally on creating career pathways for Adult Education students.</p>	<p>To partner with the Adult Education and workforce systems connect Adult Career Pathways participants to relevant training, apprenticeships, and jobs.</p>
	<p>Out-stationing (an Adult Education staff person onsite at a MCC has been institutionalized over the years and connects MCC with the Adult Education system.</p>	<p>To scale up successful regional integrated education and training (adult career pathways) models that leverage training resources for Adult Education students.</p>
	<p>Adult learners are exposed to level appropriate workforce preparation activities that help them plan for next steps after Adult Education services.</p>	<p>For the workforce system to provide Adult Education staff with a better understanding of regional labor market needs through shared use of labor market tools and regional planning.</p>
	<p>Local Adult Education representatives were involved in the MCC operator selection process and the local MOU development, ensuring system partners were adequately meeting the needs of adult learners.</p>	<p>To continue connecting Adult Education out-of-school youth population with YouthWorks programs.</p>
	<p>Regional Planning is influencing Adult Education’s alignment with priority industries and occupations, and thus the broader workforce</p>	

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
Re-Entry Services	<p>system. Locals are developing regional integrated education and training (adult career pathways) models that leverage training resources for Adult Education students.</p> <p>Many MCCs have been mapping out service pathways for adult learners across adult education and MassHire, establishing referral protocols and cross agency collaborations. Excellent coordination at local level with sheriff's departments to provide career center services for incarcerated job seekers.</p> <p>Some career centers support long term relationships with businesses owners willing to hire individuals with criminal records, initiated through proactive business outreach.</p> <p>MCCs are increasingly viewing the reentry population as including not only returning citizens, but also individuals serving time currently. In response to the need behind the wall, MCCs are exploring methods to bring staff and career development resources into prisons and jails.</p>	<p>The Federal Bonding Program and Work Opportunity Tax Credit could be packaged together as part of an incentive package to support companies hiring individuals with criminal records, which could inform a strategy to market returning citizens to businesses.</p> <p>Anti-carceral youth organizations (e.g. UTEC in Lowell) are interested in developing relationships with the workforce system to support their constituents. Through a central reentry unit, MassHire could pursue relationships in that network of organizations which, although they work with the reentry population, are not themselves correctional facilities.</p> <p>Increasingly, private and public universities are pledging to support secondary education access in prisons and jails (e.g., the MA Prison Education Consortium). The public workforce system can coordinate with these entities to support career pathways and work-based learning models which are fully accessible to individuals in prisons and jails.</p>
Services for Individuals with Disabilities	<p>The Vocational Rehabilitation agencies' (Mass Rehabilitation Commission, Mass Commission for the Blind) engagement as committed partners of the workforce system facilitate consumers with disabilities' to access to broader support and workforce services.</p> <p>MRC and MCB conduct accessibility audits of MCCs to ensure tools and resources are accessible for people with disabilities.</p> <p>MRC piloted a project with MassHire to create opportunities for MRC customers to engage in occupational skills training.</p> <p>MRC has partnered with MassHire BizWorks to streamline employer engagement and engage in joint professional development for staff.</p>	<p>To leverage workforce system resources, particularly as a way to serve those who do not meet the Priority of Service requirements can access workforce services.</p> <p>To engage vocational rehabilitation services to align with state and regional priority industries and occupations.</p> <p>To create avenues of engagement for people with disabilities in career pathway workforce services, such as apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.</p>
Services for Youth WIOA Title I Youth Program	<p>The program operates at a large scale and impacts thousands of young people each year. In-school youth age 14-21 and out-of-school youth 16-24 receive access to a range of program services including comprehensive assessments,</p>	<p>For better alignment with other publicly funded workforce development programs.</p>

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
<p>High Quality College and Career Pathways/Perkins</p> <p>Connecting Activities</p> <p>Youth Works</p>	<p>career planning, support services, alternative education, work-based learning experiences, and occupational skills training.</p> <p>WIOA Title I is designed to serve youth with barriers to entering employment as well as completing education.</p> <p>Through WIOA Title I, youth are provided with opportunities and resources that prepare them for successful participation in the labor force.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Connectivity with target industries and occupations as identified through Regional Planning ● Identification of standards for high quality career-connected youth programming ● Direct engagement and coordination between MassHire Workforce Boards and local high schools ● Use of shared workforce preparation tools, such as Signal Success, across youth workforce programs <p>The program provides work readiness training through a formal curriculum.</p> <p>Transitioning from a summer employment program to a year-round program.</p> <p>Creates an early “entry point” into a talent pipeline for a young person with experiences such as occupational skills training and/or sector specific work-based learning.</p> <p>Turning into a tiered program that meets the needs of participants at any age, stage and path, including service and project-based learning and career pathway training and support.</p> <p>There is alignment with Connecting Activities and other strategic partnerships with key workforce and education programs.</p> <p>A renewed focus on private sector employer engagement strategy to strengthen existing local partnerships and open doors to new opportunities especially in priority sectors.</p> <p>Staff will receive professional development to support leadership and career development for young adults and engage existing and potential employers.</p>	<p>For better alignment of occupational skills training to priority industries and occupations.</p> <p>To build capacity for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.</p> <p>To engage more private-sector employers could be engaged and provide subsidized, partially subsidized or unsubsidized employment opportunities for teens.</p> <p>To focus on job quality of the job placement and career growth for young people.</p> <p>To align programmatic standards for in-school youth with out-of-school youth.</p> <p>To streamline workforce services across the in-school and out-of-school youth program spectrum.</p> <p>To make connections to out-of-school youth population transitioning out of secondary school, enrolled in the Adult Education system, or are connected with other youth workforce programs.</p>
<p>Services for Older Workers</p> <p>Senior Community Service Employment Program</p>	<p>Program participants provide invaluable community service in public and private non-profit agencies (host agencies) by increasing the capacity of host agencies to address community needs.</p>	<p>Most SCSEP projects rely heavily on participant staff members and the maximum duration is 48 months, thus there is a lot of staff turn-over in the program.</p>

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
<p>Talent Pipeline Initiatives for Business</p> <p>Workforce Competitive-ness Trust Fund</p>	<p>Provides career pathways and skill upgrading through the community service assignment for otherwise chronically unemployed individuals with multiple barriers to employment.</p> <p>Fosters individual economic self-sufficiency, and social and emotional well-being.</p> <p>Cross-training and professional development with partner agencies (e.g. MassHire, MRC) have improved staff skill set.</p> <p>Directly supports training for jobs that are in demand.</p> <p>WCTF funding has focused on populations with challenges to employment, including those experiencing “cliff effects” (Learn to Earn.)</p> <p>Leverages private sector investments (there is a 30% required match.)</p> <p>Creates critical infrastructure in regions to engage with businesses to understand their needs as the industry goes through changes and can adjust strategy real-time.</p> <p>Now has a recurring revenue stream through the Workforce Training Fund leads to stability of this funding.</p>	<p>To leverage workforce partners to provide access to wider services and opportunities.</p> <p>To leverage registered apprenticeship, WIOA, youth funding, and other federal funding streams to provide training for jobs in demand.</p> <p>To streamline industry sector partnerships to priority industries and occupations as identified through Regional Planning.</p>
<p>Talent Pipeline Initiatives for Business</p> <p>Workforce Training Fund</p>	<p>Dedicated funding for Incumbent Worker training tied to a business need that is related to competitive position and growth.</p> <p>Business-friendly and allows for the strengthening of employer relationships.</p> <p>Supports small businesses through the General Program, Express program, and Small Business Direct Access program.</p> <p>Express Program Course Directory provides a compendium of approved courses and makes it easier for businesses to identify relevant training for employees.</p>	<p>Application process can be slow for businesses without human resources capacity.</p> <p>To align the Express Program Course Directory with Eligible Training Provider List as well as a Credential of Value list (in development).</p>

State Strategic Vision and Goals

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State’s strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

- (1) **Vision.** Describe the State’s strategic vision for its workforce development system.
- (2) **Goals.** Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State’s economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

- (A) Include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment⁴ and other populations.⁵
 - (B) Include goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.
- (3) **Assessment.** Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce investment system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

The 2020 vision for the public workforce system was jointly developed by all of the WIOA partners beginning in 2016 and refined in 2020.

All Massachusetts residents will benefit from a seamless system of workforce and education services that supports career pathways for individuals and leads to a more informed, educated, diverse and skilled workforce that meets the Commonwealth’s businesses’ demands and sustains a diverse labor force and thriving economy.

To achieve this vision, WIOA partners will work to:

- Design inclusive and effective career and service pathways across partners that are aligned with business demand
- Improve foundation skills and transitions to education, training, and credentialing for individuals with challenges to employment
- Assist individuals with challenges to employment to achieve economic self-sufficiency through support services, labor-market driven credentialing, and employment
- Meet the workforce needs of job seekers and businesses who engage in the public workforce system

State Strategies and Goals

- (a) The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State’s strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State’s economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided Section (a).
- (1) Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). “Career pathway” is defined at WIOA section 3(7). “In-demand industry sector or occupation” is defined at WIOA section 3(23).
 - (2) Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, mandatory and optional One-Stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent

⁴ Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English- language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

⁵ Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2)

The state strategies in the Combined Plan flow from the four key goals identified for the Commonwealth. The four goals identified below are analogous to the goals in the 2016 Combined State Plan and provide strategies and tactics for optimal impact to job seekers and business. State partners will work with regional partners to implement the following goals and strategies in pursuit of achieving the established vision for the workforce system. Many of the specific details on partnerships with business, integrated service delivery, and evaluation of results are included in Section III. The State Plan Advisory Committee refined the current statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Attachment C-1) to reaffirm the core and other partners' commitment to implementing the goals and strategies below.

GOAL I: ADULT JOB SEEKERS

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially those with challenges to employment (priority populations).

The Commonwealth recognizes that all its residents benefit from education, skill development, and training that lead to sustainable careers and competitive wages. While Massachusetts enjoys a healthy economy and a low unemployment rate, it is necessary to ensure that job seekers who struggle to enter, and retain employment due to a variety of personal, educational, societal, and economic challenges receive access to education, high quality training programs and necessary supports that will prepare them for success and accelerate employment. As such, job seekers, especially those with challenges to employment also known as priority populations must be prepared with training and skills necessary to be included in the pipeline to meet business demand for talent. Priority populations include individuals that are: low income, low skilled, persons with Limited English Proficiency, people with disabilities, older workers, returning citizens, racial/ethnic minorities, Veterans, unemployment claimants, and others as locally defined.

Over the next four years, Massachusetts will employ the following strategies and tactics to pursue this goal:

Strategy: Increase the number of job seekers and incumbent workers from priority populations earning high-value credentials for priority industries and occupations.

Tactic 1: Expand Work-Based Learning and career pathway programs, including increasing Registered Apprenticeship in non-traditional in non-traditional fields and diversifying the apprenticeship pipeline.

The Commonwealth continues to place an emphasis on offering programs models such as work-based learning as a method essential for developing strong employability skills and developing a work history for individuals entering the workforce or for those seeking opportunities for reskilling. There have been increased intentionality on aligning career pathways programming designed with education, training, and support services to prepare individuals to enter new career fields or to grow within existing careers to priority industries and occupations.

To support expansion of work-based learning and career pathway programming efforts, the Commonwealth will identify State-level programs that offer work-based learning and career pathway programs in priority industries and occupations that have successful employment placement outcomes. The

work-based learning and career pathway programs will serve as models to scale across the 16 workforce areas.

Registered Apprenticeship is a viable program model that leads to careers with sustainable wages and salaries. Massachusetts currently offers over 500 apprenticeships and there are over 9,500 registered apprentices. Over the last four years Massachusetts has been involved in efforts to expand non-traditional industries and diversifying the apprenticeship pipeline. In June 2018, the MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and broad stakeholder representation developed a [Strategic Plan for Apprenticeship Expansion in Massachusetts](#).

The apprenticeship strategic plan outlines a systematic approach to talent development, retention, and diversification of the apprenticeship pipeline. Massachusetts will continue the work of implementing the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan for Apprenticeship Expansion in Massachusetts.

Additionally, through the Career Technical Initiative (CTI), Massachusetts seeks to expand access to training for adult learners in high-demand/high-impact Trade and technical fields. With CTI, adults will have the opportunity to earn industry recognized credentials by attending evening training held at vocational technical schools around the Commonwealth. It is anticipated that with CTI an additional 9,000 to 13,000 adults will enter into the talent pipeline for critical occupations such as HVAC Technician, Bio Lab Technician and Robotics Technicians.

Tactic 2: Leverage WIOA funding streams (Title I, Title II (adult ed/ESOL), Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.) and increase collaboration in Perkins Post-Secondary programs to pay for training enrollments

Through the local MOUs, MassHire and partner agencies will consider and describe how funding streams can be leveraged to provide services to individuals that require a continuum of resources in order to attain their career goals. An example of leveraging funding streams could come in the form of an individual with a disability receiving training funding by WIOA Title I and the accommodations for the individual to attend the training are paid for through WIOA Title IV. Another example of leveraged funding includes the blending and braiding and blending state and federal funding to support adults engaged in the Career Technical Institute (CTI).

Tactic 3: Adopt Signal Success (career readiness) or other soft skills curricula across adult training provider network

Career readiness and/or employability skills are characteristics that employers find desirable in job seekers of all ages. The Massachusetts workforce system will move toward a more systematic approach of ensuring that all job seekers receive access to career readiness and employability skills curriculum.

MassHire will explore the available career readiness and employability skills curricula and in order to make a recommendation to MassHire State Workforce Board for adoption of a statewide curricula that will be that will be used to compliment training received through the adult training provider network.

Tactic 4: Develop a validated list of high-value, industry-recognized credentials

Efforts to assist job seekers in earning industry recognized credentials of high value that lead to economic success will continue. To support this effort the Commonwealth will work toward the development of a comprehensive listing of industry recognized credentials of high value that are aligned to priority industries and occupations identified in the [Massachusetts Regional Labor Market Blueprints](#).

In October of 2019 Massachusetts was selected to participate in the Department of Labor’s Workforce Innovation Cohort - Credential Attainment. Members of the Massachusetts team consist of leadership from the following WIOA partner agencies: MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development/MassHire Department of Career Services— representing Titles I and III; MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Adult Community Learning Services - representing Title II; MA Commission for the Blind and MA Rehabilitation Commission - representing Title IV. Team memberships also includes leadership from the MassHire State Workforce Board, MassHire Boston Workforce Board, and the MassHire Northshore Career Center.

Deliverables of the Credential Attainment cohort are to:

- Provide guidance to the workforce system on credentials, certificates, and licenses that meet the WIOA definition of industry recognized credentials.
- Include criteria in the Massachusetts’s Eligibility Training Provider List Initial and Subsequent Eligibility policy—[100 DCS 14.100.3](#) that requires training providers to provide information to MassHire on attainment of industry recognized credentials for individuals enrolled in their training programs.
- ***Develop a validated list of high-value, industry-recognized credentials*** in collaboration with WIOA partners and other state agencies that is aligned to priority industries and occupations identified in the Regional Planning Blueprints.
- Establish an action plan that outlines a process and set of criteria that can be applied to determine industry recognized credentials.

Massachusetts has also been selected to participate in the Education Strategy Group Credential of Value Institute (COVI) cohort project. The Project objective is to develop a systematic approach for the Workforce Skills Cabinet (Labor/Education/Economic Development) to identify and prioritize Credentials of Value to enhance current and future strategies, policies and practices that reduce the Commonwealth’s workforce skill gaps. Both the Credential Attainment Cohort and the COVI group will collectively work toward the development of a list of high-value, industry-recognized credentials specific to Massachusetts that is validated and available to program staff to assist job seekers in making informed choices about viable career opportunities.

Strategy: Streamline access and customer navigation across the network of workforce system partners.

The reauthorization of WIOA has led to renewed efforts for partner agencies to work collaboratively in order to streamline access and customer navigation across the network of workforce system partner programs. MassHire would build on existing partnerships and develop new partnerships in order to expand the capacity of the workforce system.

During the next four years, MassHire and will work towards developing strategic partnerships to mitigate barriers to employment. The following strategic partnerships that offer key support will include and not be limited to the following:

- Massachusetts Service Alliance to provide AmeriCorps or Commonwealth Corporation members to support individuals seeking services through MassHire.
- MassMobility to increase mobility for seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, low-income commuters, and others who lack transportation access in Massachusetts.
- MassMatch to serve as a resource to career centers to assist individuals in need of assistive technology.

To that end, the need for cross-training of partner program services, and eligibility criteria has been realized. MassHire, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Senior Service Community Development Program have developed a series of training sessions with each partner agency designed for staff to become familiar with partner program services, and program criteria. The training sessions are also designed to foster cooperation amongst staff in order to provide quality services to shared customers.

Tactic 1: Imbed Universal Design principles in system-wide adoption of customer flow

In May of 2018, Massachusetts was selected to participate in a Department of Labor - WIOA Innovation Cohort: Increase Programmatic Access in the Career Centers. Members of the Massachusetts team consist of leadership from the following WIOA partner agencies: MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development/MassHire Department of Career Services - representing Titles I and III; MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Adult Community Learning Services - representing Title II; MA Commission for the Blind and MA Rehabilitation Commission - representing Title IV. Team membership also included leadership from the Institute of Community Inclusion at UMASS Boston and the MassHire Greater Lowell Career Center. A key deliverable of this effort was to develop a plan for the Commonwealth to implement Universal Design principles that were conceived and developed by the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University, as standard practice throughout the MassHire system, including practical application in the MassHire Career Centers. (See Attachment F for the Universal Design Principles to be embedded within the MassHire system.) In order to do this, the Commonwealth will move towards creating system change by requiring Local MassHire Workforce Boards to ensure Career Centers are implementing Universal Design Principles as part of the Career Center certification process.

Tactic 2: Support intentional training program design and statewide adoption of standard curricula

The 2014 implementation of WIOA garnered renewed enthusiasm for collaboration and efforts to increase system capacity to provide streamlined services without duplication. One of the first steps toward increasing system capacity at the state and local level is to understand the programs, services, resources provided by partner agencies. It is important that staff understand the terminology used by partner agencies to describe certain program activities and how an individual's receiving services are referred to, e.g., client, student, customer, consumer, etc. In many instances partner agencies are speaking in different terms that have the same meaning. It is also important that staff are not only aware of other partner program services and resources but that they also understand respective partner agency eligibility criteria. To address this, MassHire has conducted cross-training with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission,

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, and the Massachusetts Senior Service Community Service Program to raise understanding and awareness of the partner agencies' services. MassHire and the Adult Community Learning Services (Title II) are currently in the process of understanding how best to work together and will develop cross-training to support these efforts. The curriculum developed from these trainings will be standardized and will be recommended as part of the onboarding and professional development process for staff.

Tactic 3: Increase proximity of services through customer-centered design

Ensuring that workforce system customers access needed services is a critical part of achieving systemic effectiveness. Yet, many of the workforce system customers are hindered from maximizing the resources available because they are not designed with the needs of the customer in mind, placing the burden on customers to mitigate access challenges. The workforce system intends to address this issue by offering services that more convenient and accessible to the customer.

In an effort to build career center capacity and serve more jobseekers through a customer-centered design approach, we will explore opportunities for Career Centers to utilize online platforms to offer workforce services online to job seekers that are limited by mobility or transportation options. This would include services such as skill development training, workshops, and career exploration tools. As a step in this direction, the Massachusetts Workforce Association in partnership with MassHire developed a learning community designed to better understand what it takes to deliver high quality, engaging content via webinars for job seekers. The pilot is modeled on the MassHire Lowell Career Centers work on job seeker development.

Motivational Interviewing (MI) training sponsored by the Executive Office of Elders Affairs was delivered to workforce development staff working directly with job seekers, consumers, and clients to support the provision of services within a customer-centered design approach. Through MI training, staff learned key principles, techniques and tools of motivational interviewing. MI is a strategy that staff can use to have more effective and satisfying conversation with job seekers so that they see themselves as central to the changes made in their life circumstances. The workforce system intends to explore how to scale MI across the state to better serve all workforce system customers.

Co-location of WIOA partner program staff in the MassHire Career Centers will continue to be encouraged in order to make a variety of services available to job seekers in one location. As a result of encouraging co-location in the 2016 WIOA State Plan, over 90 plus staff are co-located onsite at the MassHire Centers. The workforce system hopes to increase that number through further service integration efforts.

Strategy: Enhance state and local partnerships to expand the workforce system's capacity to mitigate barriers to employment.

Tactic 1: Develop strategic partnerships with key support agencies (e.g. ESOL/Adult Ed, Learn to Earn partnerships, transportation, EOPSS/Department of Corrections, Perkins Programs, etc.

Job seekers seeking career center services often have other needs that must be met in order to be positioned to enter and participate in career and training services that will lead to successful outcomes.

Serving individuals through a person-centered approach requires putting the individual's needs at the center of program services. This approach often requires alignment of multiple programs and services. Career center staff must rely on their network of partner programs in order to provide a continuum of services to job seekers. MassHire and its partners will develop strategic partnerships both at the state and local level with partner agencies that are positioned to meet the needs of jobseekers and where the roles and responsibilities of each partner are defined.

Tactic 2: Convene business community to address opportunities and partnerships to increase employment for individuals with barriers to employment, including workplace ESOL

Employment outcomes require engagement with business, therefore the Commonwealth will work with businesses to identify skill needs, build program curricula to match business demand, and engage in state and local partnerships that create avenues of opportunity for priority populations to access and progress along career pathways. (See Goal III focused on the Business Customer)

Tactic 3: Develop resource guide for workforce system customers and staff with Learn to Earn communication materials

MassHire and partner agencies will work toward the development of a resource guide that will provide information to staff and customers on the available programs and services available throughout the Commonwealth that are designed to meet a variety of needs including but not limited to: transportation, housing, benefits planning, education and training programs, public assistance, vocational rehabilitation, services available for older populations, re-entry and recovery services.

The resource guide will be an important tool for staff to assist jobseekers services with the support needed in order to enter, retain, and progress in employment. Partner agencies will work jointly to design and maintain an online-based resource guide.

Strategy: Pioneer cutting-edge supports for public assistance recipients to incentivize work and address labor gaps

Tactic 1: Scale and enhance Work Participant Program (WPP) model for public assistance recipients

The Work Participant Program (WPP) model requires each DTA Transitional Assistance Office (TAO) and each MassHire Career Center to have designated lead staff members that work together on behalf of DTA clients. These staff work collaboratively to ensure that Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) clients receive tailored and appropriate job readiness, job matching, coaching and employment supports.

The DTA designates staff (Full Engagement Workers/FEWs) from DTA local offices are also co-located at Career Centers and provide support, information and resources to Career Center staff and DTA clients on a locally established schedule and frequency.

The local MOU and regular, ongoing local partner meetings should drive the model for local partner staff to work together to provide a full array of services to shared customers, the range of which encompasses

initial assessment, career planning, workshops, event coverage and more. The successful completion of WPP services is expected to result in full-time, unsubsidized employment for consumers that is aligned with labor market needs and participant goals toward a career pathway.

The Commonwealth intends to enhance the WPP program to ensure all DTA and MassHire shared customers benefit from the program, including use of shared workforce tools such as the WorkKeys Curriculum and other career readiness systems.

Tactic 2: Build MassHire/DHCD partnership to launch Moving to Work pilots for public housing recipients

Department Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will partner with MassHire Career Centers across the state to provide career navigation support to DHCD's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) holders. The career navigator will meet one-on-one with individuals to help them identify a career path that fits with available jobs in their region with good wages, benefits and opportunity for advancement. The Career Navigator will work with the person to identify any training or education they need, assist with accessing those education and training resources, and then through the employer relationships of the MassHire Career Center support the individual through the process of finding a job and post-employment transition.

The goal is to assist participants with developing a pathway to high wage jobs, looking beyond initial employment to 2nd, 3rd, and 4th jobs. Career Center staff will work toward mapping regional employment opportunities leading to career opportunities for participants along the workforce continuum, from little to no work history to stable mid-career participants. The partnership between MassHire/DHCD will be supported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Moving to Work ("MTW") funding. Outcomes of the MassHire/DHCD will be reviewed throughout the five-year commitment.

Tactic 3: Use "Learn to Earn" resources to develop new innovations and approaches

The Learn to Earn Initiative (LTE), proposed by Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karen Polito and adopted by the Legislature in the FY18 General Appropriations Act, is a comprehensive approach to providing unemployed and underemployed individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs with the supports, skills, and credentials they need to gain and retain employment in occupations for which employers have persistent demand.

In 2017, the Commonwealth Interagency Workgroup consisting of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Executive Office of Education, Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development issued a Request for Qualifications for the Learn to Earn Initiative. Qualified partnerships were selected to work with Commonwealth Corporation for a duration of three (3) months to design or redesign an occupationally specific training and placement program that will:

- increase participants' earned income (net of any resulting decrease in public benefits),
- improve participants' and their families' economic stability, and
- meet employers' demand for talent.

Following the three-month program design period each partnership will, upon review and approval of their implementation plan, will be awarded funding to implement their program for up to two years.

LTE Partnerships will develop and test models to serve participants *in the context of their family/household*. LTE Programs will help participants set and achieve goals necessary for employment and sustained economic stability, such as maintaining and growing family net resources and minimizing the real or perceived potential impact of increased earned income on benefit receipt, including improving coordination across benefit programs and reducing benefit cliff effects.

Best practices and lessons learned from “Learn to Earn” will be used as resources for developing new and innovative approaches for servicing unemployment and underemployed individuals who receive public assistance and public benefits.

Strategy: Develop new data sharing agreements to track customer progress along a career/wage pathway for priority populations

Sharing data across partner programs is a critical component to ensuring the Commonwealth can track progress toward achieving workforce system goals, and measuring success in impacting the lives of job seekers and their families, and businesses. The Commonwealth intends to build on progress from the 2016 WIOA State Plan, which laid the groundwork for establishing effective workforce system partnerships and conceptual framework for sharing data, by actualizing data sharing agreements and building systems that enhance the workforce system’s capacity to track and measure progress. Specifically, the Administration will work with WIOA partners on the following initiatives:

- **Implement the MassHire Workforce Connect** tool to connect a “shared customer” across separate systems to *provide the customer with a single dashboard of services and provide the capacity for case managers to view selected information (e.g., test scores, employment plans) on a customer with partner agency case managers who also serve the customer for more comprehensive service provision.*
- **Implement existing data sharing agreement and dashboarding tool to through the Learn to Earn initiative** to understand the patterns of “bundling” public benefit supports (childcare; TANF; SNAP; MassHealth; housing etc.) and needs of job seekers supported by public assistance. This data sharing agreement and analysis advances the Job Seeker goal in the state plan to focus on employment and outcomes for job seekers receiving public assistance.
- **Implement the P20 Initiative to connect and share outcome data on students** spanning early education, K-12, post-secondary, and workforce to understand and evaluate the impact of education and workforce programming.

GOAL II: YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

Improve career mobility and unsubsidized employment for youth, ages 16-24.

Over the course of implementing the 2016 WIOA State Plan, Massachusetts has made great strides in enhancing collaboration among WIOA-funded youth-serving organizations and other partners across the Commonwealth, including the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (DESE) Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs (Chapter 74 and Perkins-funded), Job Corps and Youth Build. A key strategy in the 2016 state plan was to implement integrated pathways for youth across WIOA Core Program Partners using the local MOU as a vehicle to drive this integration. With all 16 workforce areas operating under a unified MOU across all Core WIOA Program Partners, Massachusetts seeks to enhance

collaboration and integration in this 2020 WIOA State Plan to better streamline programs, services and outcomes for young people who may traverse across several different programs and interventions. Further, Massachusetts seeks to ensure young people have the skills and work-based learning opportunities to develop successful and thriving careers. Within these aims, two key strategies emerge:

Strategy: Build service pathways for youth to develop employability and career navigation skills

Tactic 1: streamline services among workforce programs to ensure continuity and connectivity across the broader workforce system network.

The last couple of years has brought greater attention to the amount of workforce services available for young people in local areas and regions and the lack of intentional coordination and integration among the service providers. Much of this is driven by programs and organizations responding to the mandates of their federal or state funding sources that do not require or incentivize integration. Yet, discussion among the broader workforce system network recognizes that young people, particularly those with challenges to employment, need several different programs and interventions to support them along their personal and career development pathways. Indeed, many youth are traversing across various programs, whether it be a summer employment experience (YouthWorks), an in-school work-based learning program (Connecting Activities, or Innovation Pathway program), or a community based organization providing workforce services (WIOA Title I Youth), but the programs are not in communication or collaboration with each other. Indeed, the Workforce Skills Cabinet has focused on connectivity between YouthWorks (administered by Commonwealth Corporation) and Connecting Activities (funded by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) to ensure these programs are complementary.

Over the next four years, the Commonwealth will work to streamline services among workforce programs to ensure continuity and connectivity across the broader workforce system network. This work will be driven by building youth workforce program networks in local areas and regions with the vision of ensuring that there is a program for every age and every stage of a young person's career development. This work will start by teams of youth providing organizations creating and distributing asset maps of locally based programs and services to ensure there is awareness of the programs and services available. Engaged in this effort will be local representation from Innovation Pathway Programs, Connecting Activities, Youth Works, WIOA Title I Youth, schools and school districts, Youth Build, Job Corps, and other community-based organizations the local-based teams would like to include. Asset mapping will also include creating customer-centered referral protocols and use of shared tools and resources to streamline young people's experience as they experience multiple programs. For example, if a young person has developed a career plan in one program, that plan could follow her and continued to be followed in the next program she engages in without the young person having to recreate the work. It is the hope that much of the referral and services coordination could be automated as Massachusetts makes progress towards developing an integrated data system.

Following the asset mapping will be identification of programmatic gaps and development of strategies to leverage existing resources or raise additional resources to address any shortfalls. Many regions have already engaged in this analysis through the MOU teams and regional planning, so much of the work will be capitalizing on existing efforts. Massachusetts will also explore using Youth Councils of the Local MassHire Workforce Board or similarly structured Committee to enact and implement some of this work as well.

Included in this streamlining effort is the Career Technical Initiative (CTI). The CTI will expand capacity of the workforce system to prepare youth and adults for skilled trade jobs by offering training at the Commonwealth's regional vocational schools (voc-tech) schools for high school students that are not enrolled in voc-tech schools (2nd shift/after school hours) and for adults (3rd shift/evening hours). The CTI will require collaboration with MassHire Workforce Boards and Career Centers as a key referral and recruitment partner of both learners and businesses. These regionally-based CTI partnerships will help to support programmatic alignment as the Commonwealth seeks to build a continuum of services and resources for youth and young adults.

Tactic 2: Adopt Signal Success (career readiness) or other soft skills curricula across broader youth provider network

In Commonwealth Corporation's 2018 study [Promoting Success: What it takes to move beyond and entry-level job](#) [SC(1)] 232 Massachusetts businesses were surveyed about the skills and credentials an employee would need to possess to move beyond an entry-level job. Overwhelmingly businesses cited soft skills as essential for career mobility. This study validated what practitioners and policy makers have been hearing anecdotally from businesses and underscores the need for the Commonwealth to ensure that young people engaged in the workforce system have the opportunity to build on their soft-skills as part of the work and career readiness efforts. Fortunately, Commonwealth Corporation developed [Signal Success](#) [SC(2)], a soft skills curriculum specifically for youth and young adults. Over the course of the next four years, the Commonwealth aims to scale use of Signal Success, or equally effective soft skills and career readiness curriculum across the youth service network to ensure that young people engage in rigorous preparation for the employability skills that are needed for success.

Strategy: Expand Work Based Learning and career pathway opportunities for youth

As the Commonwealth galvanizes the youth provider network to streamline the youth customer experience, and enhance employability skills (2020 WIOA State Plan Goal II, Strategy 1), it is equally important to ensure that the programs serving youth implement the most effective programmatic models serving older and out-of-school youth, as well as build toward young people acquiring a strong foundation of career awareness, skills, and experience that will yield lifelong career mobility.

Tactic 1: Adopt high-quality youth program standards to align with in-school High Quality College and Career Pathways, and include Work-Based Learning requirement.

Tactic 2: Work with broader workforce system network to implement high-quality youth program standards to ensure youth have the opportunity to be engaged in career-based skill development programs.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) implemented a High-Quality College and Career Pathway (HQCCP) initiative to expand student access to high-quality career pathways. Within HQCCP school-based programs are awarded a designation that are based on the five guiding principles defined in the [Massachusetts Early College Designation – Preliminary Outline of Key Elements](#) [SC(3)] to help ensure students achieve academic and career success. While the HQCCP pathways and accompanying elements are applicable to in-school youth, the Commonwealth will develop an analogous and complementary set of elements for programming for out of school youth. These elements would be based on distilling best practices of effective programming for out-of-school youth. Preliminary development of this list was

generated by the Youth Committee of the State Workforce Board in 2018, and the high-quality youth program standards will build on this work (attachment G).

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) has also developed a high-quality program for students ages 14 to 22 through the development of a model of services for potentially eligible youth consumers. Through this model, MRC provides the following five Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) services required under WIOA to all vocational rehabilitation consumers, including those potentially eligible students:

- Job exploration counseling;
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school, after-school, or community-based opportunities such as internships. Work-based learning experiences must be provided in an integrated setting in the community to the maximum extent possible;
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs;
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living;
- Instruction in self-advocacy, including peer mentoring.

A key component of the HQCCP and Pre-ETS models that will be incorporated into the High-Quality Youth Program standards is ensure youth and young adults have access to Work-Based Learning opportunities to deliver foundational learning, and career pathway building opportunities. This would include career exploration experiences, and direct work experience through internships, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships. The expectation is that these high-quality youth program standards will drive program development and resource allocation for WIOA Title I Youth-funded programs, state-funded youth programs, Career and Technical Education programs that engage out-of-school youth, such as the Career Technical Initiative (CTI), and similar programs within the youth provider network.

Tactic 2: Establish target rate for youth inclusion in apprenticeship expansion

A signature initiative of the Commonwealth is the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship, with a focus on diversifying the apprentice pipeline to include more women, people of color, and people with disabilities. The apprenticeship expansion effort also aims to build apprenticeships in non-traditional industries and occupations, especially in the Commonwealth's priority industries of advanced manufacturing, healthcare and tech occupations. While apprenticeship expansion takes root across the state, there will be an effort to ensure that youth and young adults will be engaged in these apprenticeship opportunities. The state, therefore, will establish a rate for youth participation in apprenticeship. For example, if the inclusion rate is 20%, the Commonwealth will ensure that at least 20% of apprentices are youth or young adults. The MassHire State Workforce Board, in close collaboration with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's apprenticeship expansion staff will establish an apprenticeship inclusionary rate in the first two years of the 2020 WIOA State Plan.

Tactic 3: Require all partner agencies to collaborate with the Executive Office Education (EOE) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to scale Innovation Pathway programs

Innovation Pathways are of the pathways of DESE's High Quality College and Career Pathway initiative and provide students with academic study and experience in a high-demand industry, such as information technology, engineering, healthcare, life sciences and advanced manufacturing. In an effort to expand

Work-Based Learning and career pathway building for young people, the Commonwealth seeks to scale up the Innovation Pathway model across schools and school districts in the Commonwealth, across out-of-school youth programming (following the high-quality youth program standards) and bridge the programmatic divide between in-school and out-of-school youth programming geared toward career pathways in target industries and occupational groups.

Innovation Pathways are of the pathways of DESE's High Quality College and Career Pathway initiative and provide students with academic study and experience in a high-demand industry, such as information technology, engineering, healthcare, life sciences, and advanced manufacturing. In an effort to expand Work-Based Learning and career pathway building for young people, the Commonwealth seeks to scale up the Innovation Pathway model across schools and school districts in the Commonwealth, across out-of-school youth programming (following the high quality youth program standards) and CTI Collaboratives to bridge the programmatic divide between in-school and out-of-school youth programming geared toward career pathways in target industries and occupational groups.

GOAL III: BUSINESS CUSTOMER

Accelerate business growth and sustainability by elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for business).

Massachusetts faced a challenge in 2016 to maximize the existing labor force by accurately matching talent, training dollars, and new education and training options aligned with business demands. Workforce strategies needed to adapt to trends in STEM related fields and align with demand to bolster talent pipelines and career lattices within companies. The workforce system's revised business engagement strategy launched in 2016 was a turning point for the workforce system and its approach to business service delivery. The quality of a job-match takes precedence over the quantity of candidates submitted to a company. A renewed focus on business demand has promoted stronger job-matching and candidate-vetting and transformed the previous business customer flow from a siloed process to a parallel, collaborative approach with multiple stakeholders and the employer's business needs centered. Through this 2020 WIOA State Plan, constructed with strong consideration towards fluctuating economic circumstances, Massachusetts recognizes that changes to the social, political, and economic environments will occur over the next four years. This plan was developed with an eye towards resiliency during rapid and unpredictable change. Regardless of cyclical fluctuations in the economy and job market, the workforce system will consistently pursue our mission to be a catalyst for economic prosperity across the Commonwealth.

Recent [reports](#) have highlighted the importance of predictive business services from public workforce systems. Through implementation of the 2016 WIOA State Plan, MassHire and its partners have, over the past four years, built large scale recruitment models, enhanced rapid response lay-off aversion programming by harnessing labor market information, developed training for business services representatives to standardize services across the MassHire Career Centers, created a position to reinvigorate apprenticeship strategies and publicize the new Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit available to businesses, and build local partnerships with industry councils which have yielded positive hiring outcomes for small and medium size employers.

The system provides a wide and comprehensive range of resources which help companies understand how legislation impacts their business practices and operations and brings business intelligence back to the

system on new products and structures which affect how companies operate and connect businesses to appropriate resources.

Accessible, equitable hiring practices are taking on a new importance, and businesses are increasingly pursuing diversifying their workforce while supporting employee access to career pathways toward personally and financially rewarding careers. The workforce system is addressing the unique needs of employers by upskilling young people, re-careering adult workers, and developing clear career pathways into priority industries and occupations. Now more than ever, candidates with strong technical skills and good employability skills that align with workplace expectations and enhance product workflow and employee productivity are prized by companies.

The 2020 WIOA State Plan advances and capitalizes on the existing efforts of the workforce system to address the current and ongoing needs of the Commonwealth's businesses through the following strategies and tactics.

STRATEGY: Expand business engagement in workforce services by enhancing access to and navigation among the broader array of workforce system.

Tactic 1: Adopt common business customer flow across system

Installing a universal referral, tracking, and follow-up process will further support the customer experience for businesses engaging with the workforce system. EOLWD's Recruitment Solutions Initiative, for example, is a communications model which integrates local and statewide efforts to execute large-scale recruitments initiated by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and/or the Governor's Office. For the 2020 WIOA State Plan, the Commonwealth seeks to implement a common business customer flow whereby different elements of business services are activated according to where employers are in their respective business cycles. Portions of the system are magnified for the company according to a common set of diagnostic tools and needs assessments administered by MassHire and its partners.

Tactic 2: Build business-friendly access points with workforce system

Through MassHire BizWorks, the workforce system has a common resource guide for businesses and staff that details workforce-related services and programs for businesses. While a useful tool, in the absence of staff support, it relies on businesses to understand and navigate a complex array of services, and it is not an interactive that guides businesses to the services and programs that fit their current or future needs. To build upon the MassHire BizWorks resource guide, the Commonwealth intends to develop a self-directed and mobile-friendly internet-based system to increase the ease with which an employer navigates workforce services. The intent is to revise the webpages directed to the business customer and networking these pages with employer outreach information on partner websites to promote a smoother experience for employers.

Tactic 3: Establish common communication channels between and among business.

The workforce system currently does not have a method to communicate with state or local businesses partners at scale, relying instead on locally or programmatically driven efforts to share recent developments or information about workforce services. The result is missed opportunities to expand

awareness and engagement with the workforce system. The Commonwealth intends to enhance statewide and local communication channels to share information about strategic workforce initiatives and opportunities for business, labor market data, and workforce development issues of interest to business. This may be in the form of a social media, email blasts newsletters, or in-person convenings.

In addition to a website, the Commonwealth intends to develop common collateral for business services, coupled with a streamlined media strategy to market the system's services and keep employers updated about workforce services. Currently, the workforce system is not fully integrated into the business community, thus streamlining communication to businesses can foster a sense of community for businesses as a critical partner in the workforce system, as well as support the integration of workforce services professionals in the business community.

A common communication method for business has the potential to be an effective avenue to facilitate a more diverse and inclusive workplace. For example, part of workforce agencies' services to businesses includes support to instill equitable hiring practices. The first step is developing accessible job application processes online and in-person. Communication to businesses can be focused on educating businesses about screen readers and other adaptive technology to ensure hiring methods are not screening out viable candidates who are blind or visually impaired.

Meanwhile, internally, the workforce partners will also focus on enhancing communication system among staff to better facilitate joint efforts to serve businesses. For example, partner staff would share real time business intelligence about industry trends (expansions or contractions), labor market information, and new programs and services.

Tactic 4: Enhance cross-training among partners who directly serve business.

Cross-training across partner staff is a critical component to successful implementation of the strategic initiatives in this plan. The Commonwealth will build on MDCS's recent priority on cross-training staff to build a common understanding of the workforce system and services and instill the most effective techniques. Through MassHire BizWorks and MDCS, business-facing staff across partner agencies are trained on what is necessary to support a company at every part of the business cycle. Meanwhile, partners are exploring benefits of cross-training between MassHire and Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) to facilitate greater understanding of the array of services and incentives offered to businesses through both Economic Development and MassHire.

STRATEGY II: Improve talent recruitment systems and processes to enhance job matching.

Tactic I: Invest in technology and skill development to streamline talent sourcing (including from training providers) and matching for businesses.

Currently, the workforce system does not have an effective nor comprehensive applicant tracking program to track job candidates and job opportunities across the many stages of development, from job posting, to candidate referral, to the associated outcomes (hired/not hired.) Therefore, the Commonwealth intends to adopt technology tools to streamline the talent sourcing and matching process. "Technology tools" could refer to web applications, software, and/or hardware such as tablets, smart phones, webinar equipment, etc. These tools should have the capacity to analyze resumes to predict job match based on skills,

competencies, and background; track referrals of candidates, and share quantitative and qualitative data through secure inter-/intra-agency channels.

STRATEGY III: Engage businesses in building career pathways and enhancing the worker experience.

Just as a key focus in Goals I and II of this plan was to engage adults and youth in career pathways and work-based learning opportunities, businesses need to be a key partner in this endeavor to ensure there is sustainable traction of these workforce interventions for industry. Through the efforts in the tactics below, the Commonwealth seeks to ensure that both businesses and workers thrive and experience economic prosperity.

Tactic 1: Increase registered apprenticeships and other Work-Based Learning opportunities in priority industries and occupational groupings.

The Commonwealth will engage business in apprenticeship expansion efforts, with a focus on developing and scaling up apprenticeship in priority and critical industries and occupations, as identified through Regional Planning. (See Goal I, Strategies 1 and 3, and Goal II, strategy 2 for further explanation on the apprenticeship and work-based learning expansion efforts.)

Within the priority industries and occupational groupings, the Commonwealth will connect directly with businesses to: identify skill, proficiency, and programmatic demand; determine high value credentials to create statewide list; and build career pathways: stackable, interconnected, and progressive skills and experiences that lead to high-demand, high-opportunity jobs/careers.

In addition, the Commonwealth seeks to streamline business engagement in apprenticeship and work-based learning by leveraging business customer flow implementation, communication and cross-training efforts detailed in the strategies and tactics within this Goal III. Effort will be paid to ensuring there is cross-partner collaboration as they interface with business for apprenticeships, internships, career exploration, and other work-based learning opportunities.

Tactic 2: Enhance job quality to improve worker recruitment and retention

The tight labor market that emerged after the Great Recession presents challenges to employers as they struggle to hire and retain employees. This is especially true for entry-level jobs in the lower wage band, particularly in service-related occupations. While demand for these occupations is projected to grow, so will the need for workers. Meanwhile, a key component of building career pathways is ensuring that jobs, education and training, and experience build on each other to increase an individual's skill, earnings, and career mobility towards economic prosperity. Yet, it is difficult to build career pathways with consistent turnover and job churn. As such, the Commonwealth seeks to engage business to focus on job quality to ensure workers can remain employed *and* thrive while they progress from entry-level to advanced employment.

To begin the job quality journey with businesses, the Commonwealth launched the Reinventing Work Initiative (RWI). The RWI, in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and Commonwealth Corporation, is a research and business engagement initiative aimed at pinpointing the challenges and barriers to offering high-quality entry-level jobs that businesses face, and then working directly with

business to address those challenges and barriers in an effort to improve job quality in a manner that benefits both business and worker. The learning and findings from these efforts will be shared with the wider business and workforce practitioner community to shift business practice and encourage job quality through policy development. While this effort began due to unprecedented challenges businesses face in recruiting and retaining workers due to the tight labor market, the expectation is that the practices will be applicable in any economic cycle.

Goal IV: Ensure Massachusetts has a world-class workforce system by integrating use of modern tools and techniques.

There has been an explosion of technological invention since the advent of the public workforce system, yet the system is slow to integrate the use of these technological advancements in their service delivery. In this goal area, the Commonwealth seeks to make strategic improvements in the system's technological infrastructure to ensure efficient, effective and safe service delivery.

Tactic 1: Safeguard the integrity of the system by enhancing security and reliability

Any new or current technological tool brings risks in security in safety. The Commonwealth, therefore, is committed to ensuring any technological investment will enhance the Commonwealth's ability to safeguard data integrity, privacy and security.

Tactic 2: Adopt a technological system across workforce partners that can track activity, services and outcomes of shared

Tactic 2: Develop a new, integrated data system between unemployment insurance (UI Online) and MassHire (MOSES/Workforce Connect) that accelerates progression from job loss to job gain.

Since the 2016 WIOA State Plan, the Commonwealth's broader workforce system partners have made progress in coordinating and aligning services to serve their shared customers. The last frontier of this evolution is integration among data systems. Each partner has their own data system that tracks customer information, activity, and outcomes and most data systems do not interact with each other. Compiling critical information, such as the service journey a customer takes across multiple programs, cannot be done in an automated way, staff must perform this task through a manual process which can be time consuming and inefficient. Indeed, one of the top requests from practitioners across all systems—workforce, education, vocational rehabilitation, economic development, and more—was for an integrated data system that traversed across all services, operations, programs, and agencies. For example, one of the plans written in Massachusetts 2016 WIOA State Plan was to track activity and outcomes by target customer cohorts, not funding stream, so it could be known how the system *collectively* impacted the lives of older workers, people on public assistance, people with disabilities, etc.

The Commonwealth seeks to make progress on developing and deploying an integrated data system that can track activity, services and outcomes of shared customers. A few promising models in this realm are being studied as guidance to how the Commonwealth will embark on addressing this issue.

MassHire Workforce Connect: The goal of this project is to provide two applications (1) a mobile dashboard for customers with timely information from the partner agencies providing them services, and (2) a

dashboard for case managers so they can view selected information (e.g., test scores, employment plans) on a customer with partner agency case managers who also serve the customers.

Learn to Earn DULA: The Learn to Earn (LTE) Initiative is a cross-Secretariat effort focused on improving long-term outcomes for individuals and families who are unemployed or underemployed and receiving public benefits. Each secretariat signed a master Data Use Licensing Agreement (DULA) to establish a longitudinal data system to understand participation in multiple benefit programs; the relationship between participation, education, employment, and income and utilization trends over time; and how best to use data at a cross-agency level to inform policy and program changes and improve outcomes for individuals and families.

In an effort to lay the foundation for a workforce system-wide integrated data system, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development will focus on developing a data system that integrates the Unemployment Insurance data system, and the MassHire data system (MOSES and Workforce Connect) to technologically link the provision of UI benefits and the job search effort. The expectation is that an unemployed person can immediately connect with and receive services from a MassHire Center upon their first contact with the UI system, thereby accelerating their process of finding a new job and minimize the duration of collecting UI benefits. EOLWD is in the early stages of planning for this development, and the expectation is that the system will be prepared to make a technological investment over the four years covered by this plan.

Tactic 4: Increase availability and delivery of virtual workforce services (e.g. career exploration, virtual job fairs, skill development, etc.)

To build a robust system of career pathways and Work-Based Learning opportunities, the Commonwealth seeks to utilize technological tools that assist customers' exposure and interaction with career paths. A set of options the Commonwealth is considering is using virtual workforce services such as online career exploration gateways to increase understanding of the types of jobs available, virtual job fairs to create a way to connect job seekers and employers without the need for travel, or using online platforms for development of employability or technical skills. Many MassHire Career Centers, and service centers of partner agencies have piloted virtual tools. Further, the Career Readiness Initiative which entailed the use of ACT's WorkKeys Curriculum, WorkKeys Exam, and National Career Readiness Certificate is one example of a statewide effort to deploy internet-based tools across multiple systems, in this case, across MassHire and Adult Education. A statewide effort to utilize and deploy any virtual tools would capitalize on these localized and state efforts for tool vetting and decision making on purchase. The availability of resources and a preponderance of system-wide demand will determine which of these tools the Commonwealth can acquire and deploy system-wide, but robust exploration of these tools will take place over the next four years.

Tactic 4: Implement a job referral applicant tracking system that will enhance matching and connectivity between job seekers and job openings.

As referenced in Goal III, the Commonwealth will seek to acquire an applicant tracking system to track services and outcomes related to the shared business customer across workforce systems.

Strategic Goals - Statewide Metrics

Along with developing specific goals, strategies, and tactics the collective workforce system will pursue in this State Plan, the Commonwealth identified statewide metrics to track progress and success of achieving the goals. The tables below outlines these statewide metrics for each goal. Early State Plan implementation efforts will focus on identifying the methodology for capturing these system-wide metrics, as well as benchmarks and targets toward achieving the goal. (See Attachment H for a definition of these state-driven metrics.)

- I. **Adult Job Seekers:** Expand the capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment especially for those with challenges to employment (priority populations)

Priority Populations include: low income, low skilled, persons with Limited English Proficiency, people with disabilities, older workers, returning citizens, racial/ethnic minorities, Veterans, unemployment claimants.

Figure 52: Statewide Metrics:

All Job Seekers	Priority Populations
Shared Customers Across Partners	Entered Employment
Entered Employment	Credential Attainment
Employment Retention	Educational Advancement
Credential Attainment	Career/wage “pathway”
Educational Advancement	
Customer diversity	

Figure 53: Youth Metrics

- II. **Youth and Young Adults:** Improve career mobility and unsubsidized employment outcomes for youth (aged 16 - 24).

Statewide Metrics:

Youth and Young Adults
Educational Advancement
Youth diversity
Credential Attainment
Entered Employment
Career/wage “pathway”
Shared Youth Customers Across Target Programs and Partners
Percent of Youth Cohort in Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Programs

Figure 54: Business Metrics

- III. **Business:** Support business growth and sustainability by elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for business.

Statewide Metrics:

Business
Number of Businesses Served
Number of Repeat Businesses
Number of Businesses by Industry/Region
Number of Referred Applicants Hired
Number of Businesses Sponsoring Apprenticeship or Work-Based Learning Programs
Business Customer Satisfaction

Figure 55:

- IV. **Modernizing the System:** Ensure Massachusetts has a world-class workforce system by integrating the use of modern tools and techniques.

Statewide Metrics:

Modernizing the system
Shared customers served
Shared customers' employment outcomes
Average time to employment
Number of employers posting jobs
Number of jobs posted
Average time from job post to position filled
Median earnings

Assessment and Performance

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to WIOA Core programs.)

Refer to Appendix I for expected levels of performance based on primary indicators of performance. The federal indicators of performance focus on employment outcomes in the second and fourth quarter after

exit, median earnings in the second quarter after exit, credential attainment, measurable skill gains for job seekers and adult education participants, and effectiveness in serving employers. All partners federally funded programs are measured in the same way and a penalty could be applied to WIOA discretionary funds for repeated missed performance targets. This creates a shared accountability for shared customers and their outcomes.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

State Strategy Implementation

State Board Functions

- (a) State Board Functions. Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e. provide a description of Board operational structures and decision-making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

The Baker-Polito administration utilized WIOA implementation as an opportunity to reconstruct and reinvigorate the state workforce board. The state legislation establishing the new Board (M.G.L. Ch. 23H, §7) was enacted on December 2, 2015 and imbued the Board with carrying out the responsibilities required of WIOA; providing assessments and recommendations to the governor, the Workforce Skills Cabinet, MassHire Workforce Boards, and other entities as needed regarding the effectiveness of the public workforce development system in the Commonwealth; and promoting innovative and performance-driven models for workforce development. This legislation transformed the previous Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (MWIB) from a 65-member board, to a leaner 33-member Massachusetts Workforce Development Board (MWDB) to serve as the primary vehicle to provide the policy and operational framework for the state public workforce system. In August 2018, as part of the workforce system's adoption of the unifying "MassHire" brand, the state board was renamed to the "MassHire State Workforce Board".

Functionally, the Board sits within the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). The Board is staffed by an Executive Director, in close coordination with staff of EOLWD and MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS). Senior leadership of the Board is comprised of the Governor-Appointed Board Chair (currently Donna Cupelo) Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development (currently Secretary Rosalin Acosta), and the Board's Executive Director (currently Cheryl Scott.) Board senior leadership make high-level decisions such as the Board's scope and deliverables, meeting agendas, Board Committee membership and leadership, and other items related to Board governance.

The Board meets quarterly. During these meetings the Board is updated on and discusses high-level strategic priorities that foster continuous improvement of the workforce system, as well as considers activities and recommendations from one of the Board's committees. There are currently four committees of the Board:

MassHire Performance Committee: captures system-level performance data to drive decision-making and strategy; identifies and pursues opportunities to boost MassHire system performance, and provides general oversight of the MassHire system, including policies, programming, and development of the WIOA State Plan.

Workforce Intelligence Committee: supports the development of labor market information to stakeholders; drives MassHire toward using common and consistent labor market data; distills labor market information to support the MassHire State Workforce Board.

Adult Pathways Committee: supports the integration of statewide workforce-related resources, programs, and initiatives to enhance career and economic outcomes for adult job seeker customers; may be tasked

with providing general oversight to MassHire initiatives that improve programs and resources for adult customers, including Apprenticeship Expansion.

Youth Pathways Committee: develops recommendations to enhance integrating programming and career pathways for youth; provides general oversight on the development and implementation of the WIOA State Plan youth goal.

Additionally, the state board's enabling legislation authorized the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), the designated State Workforce Agency, to promulgate and carryout workforce policies that are operational in nature ensuring there is policy guidance to inform the Massachusetts Workforce Development System's programmatic operations.

Implementation of State Strategy

Implementation of State Strategy. Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in II(c) above. This must include a description of—

(A) Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy. Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies.

The state strategies in the Combined Plan flow from the four key goals identified by the State Plan Advisory Committee (SPAC). State partners will continue to work with local partners to implement the goals and strategies to achieve the established vision for the Commonwealth's workforce system. The Massachusetts Partners maintain a statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Attachment I) that memorializes the partners' commitment to implement the goals and strategies described in this section. Many of the specific details on partnerships with business, integrated service delivery and evaluation of results across the Core Program Activities are included in Section III, Implementing State Strategies and Alignment with Activities outside the Plan, which are combined in a unified response as follows.

Implementation of State Strategies - Core Program Activities and Alignment across WIOA activities: The SPAC worked to develop the vision, goals and strategies included in Section II. Major state strategies will be implemented through the Governor, State Workforce Board and the SPAC using the state's oversight, policy and performance roles embedded in the lead state agencies for Core Program Activities. Our goal is to use the following processes to drive change across systems:

State-level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

16 Local MOUs

Regional Planning

Staff Training and Professional Development

Cross-Training: State Partner Programs and Services

WIOA Cohort Work

Specialized Customer Service Partnerships

MassHire Workforce Board Certification
MassHire Career Center Certification
One-Stop Operator Competitive Selection
Performance Analysis (federal WIOA measures and state—designed measures)

In addition to implementing the state-level MOU and 16 local MOUs as required by WIOA, the Commonwealth completed the certification processes for Workforce Board Certification and Career Center Certification, as well as Regional Planning and the competitive selection process for One-Stop Operators/Service Providers and uses the federal and state-designed performance measures to advance the vision for the system and implement the state strategies described in Section II (c) above. These processes include the participation of the WIOA Core Program Partners in review and design to align WIOA activities across programs and with activities outside of the Plan.

State Level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Massachusetts fully implements the key tenants of WIOA to maintain robust partnerships across programs and services with specific focus on improving outcomes by organizing resources, services, and structures through a “customer” lens rather than the bureaucratic administration of federal or state resources. Partnerships and cross-system operations among MassHire Career Centers, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and TANF/SNAP maintained through the statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are based on the state goals and strategies in the Plan. The State MOU was designed to outline areas of agreement that help the Commonwealth implement WIOA through a shared customer-centered lens, including:

- A coordinated vision for organizing the broadly defined federally funded public workforce system
- Development and expansion of career pathways for business and individuals with barriers to employment and shared customers across WIOA programs
- Shared WIOA infrastructure costs between WIOA programs and MassHire Career Centers
- Guide the maintenance and growth of **16 local area MOUs** that delineate the partnerships and service delivery systems at the local level. The Local Umbrella MOUs are dynamic documents that have been updated twice since WIOA implementation.

As part of the State Combined Plan Process, the State Umbrella MOU will be updated to align with the new plan. The original State Umbrella MOU was signed by 19 Cabinet Secretaries and Agency Heads; the new State MOU will include additional signatories.

The development and FY21 update of the state MOU promotes definition and refinement of the way’s partners work together toward meeting the needs of both business customers and the workforce. Following the completion of the signed FY21 State MOU, local areas will be provided guidance to ensure the local MOU is aligned with new State Plan goals and measures

Regional Planning: The Commonwealth established seven Regional Planning Areas in FY16, with an address to the Regional Planning teams by Governor Baker “kick off” the planning process. The Regional Planning teams consisted of Community College presidents, Economic Development Regional Office staff, and MassHire Workforce Board members. These teams analyzed local labor market supply and demand and evaluated the labor pool for measurable gaps in talent. Each region developed a **vision, mission,** and

measurable goals; determined **priority industries** and **occupations**; created an **asset map** of existing pipeline programs for priority industries/occupations; and identified **regional strategies** to achieve goals, Teams presented the Regional Planning Blueprints for review and comment to the Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC) Secretaries (Labor and Workforce, Education, and Economic Development), which can be viewed here: [Regional Planning Blueprints](#).

Teams updated the Regional Planning Blueprints and reported these updates to the WSC Secretaries in the Spring of 2019 and will continue to work at refining/updating information to inform regional goals, strategies and outcomes.

Figure 56: Massachusetts State Planning Regions



Staff Training and Professional Development Overview

The Commonwealth recognizes the importance of providing quality customer service to both our job seeker and employer customers. The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development/MassHire Department of Career Services (EOLWD/MDCS) continues the process of assessing the current skill level of career center staff and analyzing the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform each job in the career center. A curriculum including a series of training modules has been designed and developed to deploy customized training to career center staff, including all partner staff to meet these training needs.

EOLWD/MDCS has created and implemented regular professional development opportunities for Workforce Board and career center staff to ensure that their knowledge and expertise is current and consistent with the specific opportunities and needs within their regional areas.

Platform Skills: MDCS has reviewed the levels and skills sets that are required to enhance/improve staff abilities to conduct one on one career counseling, workshops and public presentations and giving exceptional customer service to both job seekers and employers. These skills are critical to ensuring that the employer and jobseeker customers understand the depth and breadth of the services available to them and to promote knowledge and utilization of the Massachusetts Workforce Development System.

Labor Market Information (LMI): It is essential to understand that LMI touches every aspect of the job search, as far as locating and understanding the skills level of in-demand jobs, and how to identify transferable skills, or the need to upgrade current skills to meet the needs of employers. It also assists staff and customers to identify appropriate salary demands and many labor trends. Staff and customers will also understand the need for researching companies and building interview skills to prepare for the interview and negotiate salaries. EOLWD/MDCS has invested in tools to help in this effort.

Using Tools Effectively: Staff have and will continue to be provided training on: WorkKeys, Labor Insight; Mass Career Information Systems (Mass CIS), O*Net Online and TORQ. The training will demonstrate how to assist job seekers to search for and access valuable labor market information on industry trends and career projections that will inform their choices in seeking employment and/or training. Breaking down job descriptions and resumes to identify and focus on the skills required for the job utilizing such software, as TORQ will move Massachusetts significantly in a demand driven manner.

The following is an overview of **Training and Technical Assistance Offerings** which are routinely available to Workforce System staff and managers; an overview of **Cross-Training: State Partner Programs and Services** available to Career Center and Workforce Board staff; and a summary of the **National Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance and Training Grant** that was awarded to Massachusetts to assist other states to address WIOA-related issues, concerns and practices.

MDCS Training and Technical Assistance Offerings

The MassHire Department of Career Services provides ongoing training and technical assistance to the Massachusetts Workforce Development System' Workforce Board and Career Center staff as well as partner staff. Subject matter experts conduct formal training and are also available to provide individualized technical assistance, as needed.

Below is a listing with descriptions, of regularly scheduled trainings, webinars and workshops available to all staff of the Massachusetts Workforce System. Scheduling for these sessions can be found at:

<https://www.mass.gov/workforce-system-staff-training>

Apprenticeship 101

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) is a training and employment structure that produces highly skilled workers to meet the demands of employers competing in a global economy. RA ensures authentic, applied learning by combining on-the-job learning with theoretical and practical classroom instruction to prepare exceptional workers.

MDCS is hosting "Apprenticeship 101" for practitioners with limited knowledge or experience with the model. Participants will learn about the core elements of an apprenticeship program and about the strategies in place in the Commonwealth to expand the apprenticeship model, which has been successful in

construction and trade for decades, to non-traditional industries such as healthcare, manufacturing and tech. Link to webinar: _____

Customer Service

A focus on customer service is critical to ensuring the success of MassHire Career Centers and their customers. The Customer Service training is interactive and will cover:

- customer service basics;
- how assumptions, perceptions, and biases affect customer service;
- creating a customer friendly culture;
- how to handle difficult customer interactions;
- tips for de-escalation

Essentials of Career Planning

LMI Tools: Using Labor Insight Training and WorkKeys Curriculum

This webinar will cover only strategic application of WorkKeys Curriculum. In particular,

- Understand how WorkKeys Curriculum can support labor market research, job matching, and skill remediation

Learn about best practices to deploy WorkKeys Curriculum effectively

MassHire BizWorks

EOLWD/MDCS continues the work of MassHire BizWorks providing training on standard staff business service knowledge and competencies across multiple state agencies that are responsible for the provision of a myriad of programs and services to the Commonwealth's employers.

EOLWD/MDCS is invested in ensuring MassHire Career Center management and staffs have the knowledge and understanding of the local, state, national and global economy as the Commonwealth implements a demand-driven system.

Back to Basics

MassHire BizWorks - Business Compliance Programs: An overview of the variety of agencies, programs and services that Massachusetts businesses must be in compliance with regarding Massachusetts workers' rights and protections. These include:

- The Office of the Attorney General- Fair Labor Division; and,
- Civil Rights Division

MassHire Career Information System

The MassHire Career Information System (MassHire CIS) is a comprehensive, internet-based career information delivery system. It is designed to be an invaluable tool for career counselors, job seekers, students and educators, MassHire CIS provides information on career assessment and planning, occupations, the labor market, outlook, and educational options. Tools that are needed to help people make better-informed career and school choices.

This is a staff training for MDCS employees and agency partners. It covers the basic components and how to create a basic user portfolio.

The **Massachusetts One Stop Employment System (MOSES)** is the statewide database for the Massachusetts Workforce Development System. All data regarding services to Career Center customers (job seekers; training seekers; employers, etc.) are recorded in MOSES. Below are descriptions of ongoing training that is available to Workforce Development staff and partners across the State.

MOSES 101 Training (Basic)

A basic course in navigating the MOSES (Massachusetts One Stop Employment System) database. Attendees will learn the Job Seeker Basic tab, Full tab, Education tab, Work History tab, Services tab and Notes area. Job Seeker Workshop registration is covered. The job match process is learned. Students will be able to add and edit the basic job seeker record upon completion.

MOSES 102 – Business Services

A basic course in using the MOSES database for Employer Services. Searching for Employers, adding and editing Employer records, Job Order data entry is covered (all three varieties of Job Orders will be included), and Employer Services is covered. Creating Job Fair/Recruitment events is included in the training. Job Development referrals is reviewed.

MOSES 103 – Career Planning

A basic course in using the MOSES Career Planning (formerly MOSES Case Management) tab in the Job Seeker record. Covers the simplified basics of the *Goals and Tasks* tab, *Assessment* tab, *Training Justification* tab and the *Barriers* tab. Notes are discussed and suggested Best Practices are reviewed. This is a basic course, as specific programs and/or career centers may have varying program requirements. These variations are not covered.

MOSES 104 – Job Seeker Basic Eligibility and Program Enrollment

A basic course in data entry on the basic MOSES program Eligibility fields. This is a basic data entry course, as specific programs and/or Career Centers may have varying eligibility requirements. These variations are not covered.

Overview of Addiction, Recovery, and Available Resources

The MassHire Department of Career Services, Commonwealth Corporation, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health - Bureau of Substance Addiction Services have partnered to offer training sessions for front line career center staff on addiction recovery and resources. These training sessions have been developed to address the impact of addiction to alcohol and other drugs and the influence of the recovery process on the customers utilizing MassHire Career Centers. They provide information that enables career center counselors to efficiently and effectively engage, establish rapport, and support individuals in their recovery, while they pursue their career and educational goals.

The following topics are covered:

- Elements of substance use problems, disorders, and addiction
- Current state of substance use and addiction in Massachusetts
- Overview of recovery and the recovery process
- Overview of signs and symptoms associated with alcohol, cannabis, stimulants, hallucinogens, opioids/opiates
- Impact of substance use on the individual, family and friends
- Resources for individuals and families for the prevention, intervention, and treatment of substance use problems
- Making the Link Between Recovery and Career Counseling: Engaging individuals and establishing rapport; important considerations in building a career/education plan
- Relevant referral options

Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Training

These RESEA sessions are designed to provide career center directors, operations managers, and RESEA supervisors with the following:

- An overview of all required RESEA service delivery components
- Conversation and Information on common concerns in the field relative to RESEA program implementation
- MassHire Career Center best practices to assist managers and supervisors in improving their RESEA service delivery
- RESEA Program monitoring updates for 2020
- Updates on future RESEA program changes

TORQ allows career center customers to explore the transferability of their skills, knowledge, and ability from one occupation to others by analyzing previous work history in light of current labor market conditions. This LMI tool is based on O*NET skill sets and allows real-time matches to several internet job search engines. Massachusetts specific labor market information has been uploaded to TORQ. Emphasis in

this workshop is on helping career center staff evaluate how TORQ can be integrated into career counseling services provided to jobseekers.

UI Online Navigation Training

These training sessions will provide career center staff with fundamental knowledge to assist Career Center customers with navigation of their unemployment claim. The training session will cover navigation assistance topics such as:

- Navigating the UI Online system
- Filing a new claim for unemployment insurance
- Reopening an existing claim
- Requesting weekly benefits
- Communicating with DUA regarding UI claims

Unified Workforce Development System Complaint and Appeals

Goals of this Training:

- To provide guidance specific to alleged violations (by action or omission) related to services funded under Title I of WIOA and the Wagner-Peyser Act, as Amended; and
- To delineate procedures for initiating resolution of appeals, and for complaint related to other federal or state statutory requirements, including Equal Opportunity (EO) complaints.

Transforming Services Through A Trauma-Informed Approach

The MassHire Department of Career Services, Commonwealth Corporation, and the Central Massachusetts Recovery Learning Community (RLC) and Kiva Center have partnered to offer training sessions for MassHire Career Center staff and partner staff on Transforming Services Through A Trauma-Informed Approach.

These three-hour training sessions, conducted by the Central Massachusetts Recovery Learning Community (RLC) and Kiva Center, are designed to increase the ability of career center staff to recognize and navigate the centrality of trauma with their customers.

The aim of this training is to provide staff with a general introduction on this topic and then, allowing time to practice and role-play, to more effectively work with career center customers. There will be ample time for staff to ask questions and participate in group dialogue. Trainers will also provide a list of local resources that career center staff can access for additional support and information on this topic.

WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth

WIOA Title I – Adult/Dislocated Worker Program provides information and technical assistance on eligibility criteria for adults and dislocated workers; source documentation; career services/training; coordination with WIOA Core programs; performance measures and MOSES data entry related to providing services to Career Center customers under the WIOA Title I legislation.

WIOA Title I – Youth Program provides information and technical assistance on eligibility criteria for youth, source documentation, program requirements, coordination with WIOA Core programs, performance measures, tracking youth progress in MOSES, and data entry required for state and federal reporting.

Cross-Training: State Partner Programs and Services

The Statewide MOU is designed to establish strong connection; support collaboration and cooperation; and provide a framework for joint resource sharing and service delivery among WIOA required partners. Inter-agency cross-training is one way to assist partners in understanding the needs of our respective constituent groups and the available resources to make referrals and customize services based on customer needs. Inter-agency cooperation acknowledges the need for and addresses cross-training of personnel. This is not only critical to mutual understanding, but also is essential in effective, reciprocal utilization of services and appropriate referrals.

Each of the training sessions provided Career Center staff and Partner Agency staff with a fundamental knowledge of each agency's programs; operational processes; and available resources, as well as a profile of the individual customers/consumers/clients. For each training a map or matrix was developed to indicate the locations of individual offices around the state and their proximity to Career Centers. In addition, point persons were identified at each respective location in order so enhance local contact and communication.

Each series of training sessions was conducted, by senior managers/trainers from both agencies, in a minimum of five different areas across the state (east, west north, south and central Mass). (*The MDSC/SCSEP Cross training included additional virtual trainings delivered by video conferencing.*) The content of each training program included:

- Overview of the Workforce Development System
- Overview of the Partner Agency System
- Overview of respective programs, services and resources, including eligibility information
- Discussion/description of shared customers
- Discussion of MOU or ISA mutual requirements, roles, responsibilities, and expectations
- Description of referral processes and discussion of the development of compatible referral processes

The following list of partner agencies received cross training.

- Department of Transitional Assistance – *Training delivered: July – August 2017*
- Executive Office of Elder Affairs – Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) - *Training delivered: December 2017 – April 2018*
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission - *Training delivered February - March 2019*
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) – Adult Community Learning Services (ACLS) *Training in development, target date Spring – Summer 2020*

National Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance and Training Grant

Introduction: The ***Peer to Peer Technical Assistance and Training Grant (P2P/TAT)*** is designed to showcase innovative Massachusetts Workforce Development programs, projects and best practices via a national website where other states can review and request training and technical assistance directly from the Massachusetts Workforce Development system and its partners.

The project offers specific training/technical assistance to other states and may be delivered in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, in-person classroom training; video conferencing; conference calls; instructional videos, materials (handbooks/manuals), etc. P2P/TAT will provide funds for travel, materials and other program. This project has assisted hundreds of Workforce Development professionals across the country to improve their

administrative oversight and service delivery methods for job seekers, businesses, peers and partners within the system.

Background: The P2P/TAT Grant was awarded in FY 2015, by the U.S. Department of Labor, and the initial steps in project development and design were focused on (1) identifying excellent projects; (2) preparing training and presentations materials and (3) developing a website. In addition to designing the website, the first year was spent soliciting and reviewing various programs, best practices and successful program models to offer to Workforce Development peers and constituent groups across the country. The list of offerings includes, but is not limited to Rapid Response, Layoff Aversion, Field Management and Oversight – Fiscal/Program Monitoring, Youth Services, OJT, and RESEA (Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment). For a complete list go to: www.mass.gov/national-peer-to-peer-technical-assistance-and-training

The project offers specific training/technical assistance to other states on WIOA-related programs and may be delivered in a variety of ways including, but not limited to:

- In-person classroom training
- Video conferencing
- Webinars
- Conference calls
- Instructional videos;
- Materials (handbooks/manuals), etc.

The P2P/TAT Grant was awarded in **FY 2015** and during the first-year initial activities in project design and development were focused on:

- Identifying excellent projects
- Soliciting and reviewing various programs, best practices and successful program models
- Preparing training and presentation materials; and,
- Designing and developing a website.

Marketing was accomplished via the P2P/TAT web site and word of mouth among state, local and federal entities. Service delivery began in 2016.

As of June 30, 2019, when the project ended, the P2P/TAT project had received 49 requests for technical assistance and training from 26 states. Forty projects were completed or addressed as of the end of June 2019. Nine requests were discontinued due to a change in priorities, changes in political administration and/or lack of further contact.

Figure 57: General Statistics

Total Number of Requests*	49
Total # of States Assisted**	26
Projects Completed (as of 6/30/2019)	40
Projects Discontinued	9

** Includes PR, VI and Workforce GPS

Training and technical assistance was primarily delivered on-site at the requestors’ locations; however, five states traveled to Massachusetts for the training including; Kentucky, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The most frequently requested programs were MassHire BizWorks/Business Engagement; Field Management and Program Oversight-Fiscal/Program Monitoring; and WIOA Youth.

Figure 58: Programs Requested

Program	Frequency
MassHire BizWorks	25
Field Management and Oversight	7
WIOA Youth	5
RESEA	3
WIOA overview/building partnerships/collaboration	3
WOTC	2
OJT	2
Trade	1
Systems integration-customer centered design	1

Figure 59: States Submitting Requests*

State	Number of Requests
California	2
Colorado	2
Connecticut	1
DOL – Region 1 - Conferences	2
Hawaii	1
Indiana	2
Kentucky	2
Louisiana	2
Maine	2
Montana	2
New Hampshire	2
New Jersey	9

New York	2
North Carolina	1
Oklahoma	1
Pennsylvania	2
Puerto Rico	2
Rhode Island	1
South Carolina	1
Texas	2
Vermont	2
Virgin Islands	2
Virginia	1
Washington DC	2
Washington State	1
West Virginia	1
Wyoming	1

CHALLENGES

Overall, the P2P/TAT project’s technical assistance and training sessions were highly successful. The challenges of building the project from the ground up were significant. Deciding what key elements of WIOA implementation/all WIOA programs would be of interest; designing and developing training materials and resources; developing the design, layout and content for the web site; and working with the subject matter experts to ensure coherent, consistent messaging for the greatest benefit to the recipients were some of the most significant areas of focus.

Many requestors were not clear in terms of identifying their needs and often, after much discussion, the training solutions were developed. In some cases, the end deliverables were different from the original request. While challenging; this project was also enlightening in that, we were able to observe and understand the different structural, administrative and political configurations of other states and to examine how our approaches to WIOA implementation could be translated into different models with positive effects.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK - What they say about us...

California - “...we absolutely love what Mass. is up to, especially as it pertains to building the strong connective tissue for this new world of WIOA. We’ve been singing your praises since we got back!”

Virgin Islands - “Thank you, the time spent was very informative. Can’t wait to apply what I have learned! “

Pennsylvania - “I was fortunate enough to be included in this training session and was so happy that I was. There is true passion from the MA team, and they were incredibly helpful to our team. This was one of the most productive trainings I have ever attended. The information was practical, ratable and most importantly, implementable! Thank you so much for everything!”

Puerto Rico - “...There are no words that can describe the appreciation, and admiration, we feel towards all of you. Your commitment, passion, and drive to change lives is an inspiration to us all. Seeing all that Massachusetts went through to become a model jurisdiction, moves us to work harder. We know we are not alone, and that we have the best coaches in our corner.”

HIGHLIGHTS

Washington D.C. – The Washington D.C. Workforce Investment Council requested assistance with improving service delivery to out-of-school youth with diverse barriers to employment including pregnant and parenting teens and children of incarcerated parents. Through coordination with local teachers and counselors, the New England Board of Higher Education worked on this year-long project with the WIOA Washington Literacy Center educators to engage in-school and out-of-school youth in a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) process which resulted in improved outcomes for the local programs, students and teachers.

Puerto Rico (in MA) - DOL requested TA and training for the Puerto Rico Workforce Development System. Thirty Puerto Rican Workforce Development professionals traveled to Boston to attend a four-day training and technical assistance session in Boston, including a site visit to the MassHire Downtown Boston Career Center and the Massachusetts State Workforce Board meeting.

Training topics included:

- WIOA Overview/Implementation, Building and Maintaining Partnerships
- Field Management and Oversight
- Fiscal/Program Monitoring
- MassHire BizWorks

Puerto Rico (San Juan) – A contingent of MA workforce development professionals traveled to Puerto Rico to deliver a 4-day training and technical assistance program for 350 participants in San Juan Puerto Rico. The topics discussed were much the same as those covered in the PR visit to MA - (WIOA Overview/Implementation - Building and Maintaining Partnerships, Effective Monitoring and Oversight, Fiscal/Program Monitoring, MassHire BizWorks - *Business Engagement, Rapid Response, Layoff Aversion*)

Special Features:

*Site Visit to DEDC Offices

*Presentation and Video by Hampden County, MA – Local Workforce

Board on Partner Collaboration to Aid PR Hurricane Evacuees

***Barranquitas, Puerto Rico** Site Visit to the Centro de Gestion, Unica Laboral La Montana (Career Center). Located in the central part of the island.

Hurricane Maria Video Link

[CareerPoint.mp4](#)



Virgin Islands - A contingent of workforce development professionals traveled to Massachusetts from the Virgin Islands to participate in a 4-day training and technical assistance program. Region I, DOL requested technical assistance and training in the following programmatic areas:

- WIOA Implementation
- Program and Fiscal Monitoring and Oversight
- Grants Management

This visit also included a site visit to the MassHire Career Center in Cambridge

Slide Show of VI Training Session

<https://spark.adobe.com/video/tlhWhzSdUzCX6>

Pennsylvania - A contingent of Rapid Response professionals traveled to Massachusetts from Pennsylvania to participate in a 3-day training and technical assistance program on MassHire BizWorks including – Rapid Response, Business Engagement, Layoff Aversion and Building a Business Service Model. A site visit to the MassHire Lowell Career Center was included.

P2P/TAT Next Steps

In an effort to preserve and share some of the project’s insights and best practices we have developed an educational video series that provides training, information and technical assistance. This series will soon be available online at Mass.gov and on the federal web site Workforce GPS.

Educational Video Series

Included topics:

- WIOA - Partnering and Collaboration
- RESEA – Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment
- MassHire WIOA Youth programs
- MassHire Fiscal/Program Monitoring
- MassHire BizWorks/Rapid Response/Lay-off Aversion

Video series is near completion. Scheduled to be published in early March 2020.

The MassHire Department of Career Services continues to provide ongoing support, training and technical assistance to other states, on request.

Planned Training Development Activities 2020 - 2024

As we move forward, we will continue to focus on providing innovative training opportunities to Workforce Development and Partner staff. The multiple systems and agencies we work with are constantly changing

and presenting unique challenges to our ability to deliver quality services. The diversity of job and training seeking customers is dynamic and requires continuous analysis of how best to serve and support our shared constituent groups. The following topics have been identified as areas that require further training and education around characteristics that staff must be better prepared to address. In addition, we are cognizant of the needs of employers and their desire to better understand and, if necessary, make accommodations for supporting and employing diversity in the workforce.

The following is a list of subject areas, trainings, tools and processes that we are developing to assist in these efforts.

Domestic Violence Training

The MassHire Department of Career Services and the Commonwealth Corporation are exploring opportunities to partner with appropriate organizations to develop training sessions for front line career center staff on the issues and impacts of domestic violence.

They will provide information that enables career center counselors to efficiently and effectively engage, establish rapport, and support individuals affected by domestic violence, while they pursue their career and educational goals. Training elements will include:

- domestic violence affects the health of the adult victim and their children,
- how it impacts parenting and a community's economic and cultural well-being,
- Overview of the signs and symptoms associated with domestic violence,
- Overview of strategies for responding to the impact/effects,
- Review of resources and relevant referral options

Strategies for Supporting LGBTQ Individuals to Gain Employment and Training

MassHire Department of Career Services is committed to ensuring that all individuals who participate in programs and activities through the MassHire Career Centers and sub recipients operating programs under Title 1 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) receive services in a safe and welcoming environment regardless of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation and intersex traits.

We are currently working to identify appropriate partners to assist us in developing a training course that provides a basic education on who comprises the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQ) community. Some of the primary elements to be included in this training are:

- Key terms and concepts to understand LGBTQ communities
- Overview of State laws prohibiting discrimination; Equal opportunity and affirmative action policies including Executive Order 526, (requires agencies to address inequities among clients and their employees

- Strategies and suggestions for creating a welcoming environment within the Workforce Development System – Career Centers, Affiliates and partner organizations

Motivational Interviewing Training

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs in partnership with the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) is sponsoring a two-day Motivational Interviewing (MI) training for workforce development staff working directly with job seekers, consumers, and clients who require assistance in making life choices.

Motivational Interviewing integrates an empathic style of interviewing with behavioral strategies for helping clients make life decisions. Participants will learn key principles, techniques and tools of motivational interviewing. Staff from Career Centers and partner agencies who work directly with job seekers, consumers and/or clients should attend this training. This includes employment counselors, career associates, case managers, and supervisors. Optional attendees include Operations Managers, Career Center Directors, and appropriate Workforce Board staff.

This two-day training, designed for professionals, is an introduction to MI. Participants will learn specific skills and strategies that they can begin to have more effective and satisfying conversations with clients about making changes. The training includes information about the background of MI as well as the specific MI skills. The training includes time to practice new skills, so participants understand the skills and feel confident to use them in their work with clients. Topics include:

- The Spirit of MI
- OARS Skills (communication technique)
- Recognizing and Responding to Change Talk and Sustain Talk

Coupled with this training, is a plan to conduct on-going practical follow up for training participants for one year, post training, to provide support and technical assistance. The follow up sessions will be conducted by the original trainers who are experts in this field.

MOSES Local Expert (MLE) Train-the-Trainer

The Massachusetts One Stop Employment System (MOSES) is the statewide database for documenting and recording all service activity within the Massachusetts Workforce Development System. All staff providing services to job seekers, training seekers and employers and partner constituent groups must record such data in MOSES.

With limited resources currently available to provide training on MOSES, we are embarking on a program design and training activity to expand training capability and build capacity in the local/regional offices. We will be recruiting staff from all 16 workforce areas to participate in a train-the-trainer course to become MOSES Local Experts (MLEs). Upon completion of this course participants will be able to deliver this training (MOSES 101) to new staff and certify the trainees are eligible to receive a MOSES ID and begin using the system. Because MOSES training is traditionally offered once per month and delivered primarily in Boston, the expanded trainer pool will yield several benefits.

The projected outcomes of this project are to:

- build capacity in the local areas whereby MOSES training can occur at the local level thereby reducing wait time for the next centrally scheduled training session,

- reduce travel time and costs for attending centrally scheduled MOSES training, and
- provide readily accessible local expertise to address technical assistance needs and troubleshoot problems regarding the MOSES system.

MLEs will be provided with ongoing technical support to ensure a high level of quality and expertise.

PACE: State E-learning System (Performance And Career Enhancement)

MassHire Department of Career Services is working on a plan to provide access to the PACE (Performance And Career Enhancement) Learning Management System for non-state partner and Workforce Board staff. PACE is supported by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and offers a variety of on-line training courses including, but not limited to:

- Preventing Workplace Violence for Employees/Managers
- Diversity Part II/Disability Awareness
- Conflict of Interest Law
- Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- Diversity Part III Gender Identity and Expression in the Workplace [Online]
- Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking Awareness
- Project Management for Non-Project Managers [Online]

The Massachusetts Human Resources Division (HRD) has agreed to allow the non-state employees working within the Workforce Development System, to access this valuable online training, based on a request from The MassHire Department of Career Services. They agreed with the rationale that it was important to allow access to the same level of professional development resources as their state employee counterparts in the Career Centers and Workforce Boards.

After gathering the names and email addresses of the approximately 260+ non-state staff, we began setting up individual accounts for these employees. To date, we have set up about half of the accounts and are continuing to set up the remainder. In the coming months we will begin tracking utilization of these accounts; making recommendations to managers and supervisors regarding the use of the system; and encouraging staff to take specific courses relevant to their work and the customers they serve.

Technology and Virtual Communication

The use of technology as an educational tool is becoming more and more important in terms of saving time, sharing resources and engaging broader audiences. Learning Management Systems (LMS); video conferencing; and webinars are useful ways to communicate; transmit information, teach courses and provide technical assistance. MDCS is exploring a variety of tools, topics and established practices that have been proven to be useful. Producing live webinars, recording them and making the information available on our Workforce System Staff Training website is a project that we will begin in 2020.

<https://www.mass.gov/workforce-system-staff-training>

Through the use of Adobe Connect, WebEx, and Microsoft 365 we are exploring ways to improve the ways in which we connect, coordinate and collaborate within and outside of the Workforce Development System.

Workforce Innovation Cohort Work

Workforce Innovation Cohorts, led by DOL, consist of teams of participants representing local areas, States and/or regions who collaborate through an organized process to develop solutions to improve system integration around challenges. The cohort work toward the following outcomes:

- Help cohort members address the challenge in their own States/regions
- Develop a practical solution to the challenge to be disseminated to the field
- Serve as an overall “Innovation Lab” for ideas that could drive integration, promote improved efficiencies and get ahead of Federal ideas of how the system needs to be reformed

Cohorts combine “team time” (within own State/region) with cross-state/regional collaboration using both virtual and in-person engagement. The cohorts yield innovative yet practical solutions for each cohort member to take back to their community for adaptation and implementation.

EOLWD/MDCS, with a team of state and local partners engaged in the cohort work depicted in the chart below.

Figure 60: MA Technical Assistance Cohort Participation

Cohort	Duration	Scope	Deliverable
Credential Attainment	October 2019 - May 2020	Explore different methods for identifying types of degrees, credentials, licenses that qualify as industry recognized credentials according to the WIOA definition of a credential.	Establish and state action plan that outlines a process and set of criteria that can be applied in identifying IRCs.
Maximizing WIOA and Non-WIOA Performance Data Cohort	July 2018 - September 2019	Focus time and space to share, identify, and explore strategies for using performance data to demonstrate programmatic achievements, challenges, and stakeholder return-in-investment.	Developed state action plan designed to maximize the use of performance data.
Accessibility	November 2018 – April 2019	Strategize to further maximizing physical and programmatic access for customers with disabilities using career centers.	Developed state action plan for implementation of universal strategies to promote physical and programmatic accessibility.
Co-Enrollment	March 2018 – May 2018	Identify and explore approaches to co-enrollment and advance efforts to integrate services that promote co-enrollment.	Developed a state-cross agency action plan for co-enrollment of shared customers.
Out of School Youth	February 2018 - May 2018	Unpack out-of-school youth engagement and retention	Developed resources in the following areas: Empowering Youth as Active Participants; Using Technology in Innovative Ways through Programming; and Recruitment, and Marketing, and Outreach Strategies
Future of AJC	January 2018 – April 2018	Consider how AJCs can be proactive and creative in planning ahead to remain competitive and relevant as technology advances and other social and industry trends emerge.	Future of AJCs Cohort Resource Tool
Integrated Business Services	January 2018 – June 2018	Explore integration of business outreach and services with partner agencies to provide a unified business service strategy to businesses.	Deliverable was MassHire BizWorks was used as a model and recognized by many of the participants as the model to follow.

Customer Service Partnerships: Specialized Programs

The programs described below are funded through state interagency service agreements. Policies for each of these programs are located here: www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-joint-partner-policy

FY2020 Adult and Community Learning Services Adult Career Pathway

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) has committed \$200,000 in Adult Career Pathway funds to support local workforce area efforts to work in partnership with local adult education programs to identify and develop career pathway opportunities for adult learners.

The ACLS Adult Career Pathway funds have been allocated to the 16 MassHire Workforce Boards based on FY2019 adult education student enrollments in each of the local workforce areas

MassHire Workforce Boards work in partnership with local adult education programs in the development of career pathways opportunities for adult learners. Funds provided to the Workforce Boards are intended to support the following activities: review of adult education proposals (CALC, workplace education, etc.); participation of MassHire Workforce Board staff on program quality reviews (PQR) (monitoring) and selected site visits and related trainings and determine the quality of services against a set of Indicators through a diagnostic assessment. The reviews ensure state and federally funded adult education providers are compliant with state and federal policies; promising practices will be identified and disseminated.

The funds will also support the development of effective employer partnerships in order to place adult education graduates. And, provide support and guidance to adult education programs related to the development of viable career pathways for adult learners in the local workforce area as well as to adult education programs related to the development of bridge classes and integrated education and training programs, serving “shared customers” and to the out-stationed adult education staff located at MassHire Career Centers

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Training Partnership

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) provides training funds to MassHire Career Centers (MCCs) to provide training to MRC consumers.

In FY19, MRC committed \$450,000 in funding to support workforce training for MRC consumers. MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) and MRC partner to assist training ready MRC consumers to enroll in workforce training through Individual Training Accounts (ITA) to increase employment opportunities. Funds provided by MRC for training are supplemental to WIOA training funds.

All MRC consumers referred to the MassHire Career Center system are required to complete a career center registration, which allows MRC consumers access to basic services including labor exchange services, information on programs and services, and referrals. MRC consumers who complete a career center registration are considered shared customers.

This program continues through FY20, with an infusion of \$550,000 into the MassHire Career Center system.

Work Participant Program (WPP)

The Department of Transitional Assistance, in partnership with the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) are collaborating to operate Work Participant Program (WPP) to provide career planning support and resources to DTA clients, who are prioritized by WIOA.

Staff work collaboratively to ensure that Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) clients receive tailored and appropriate job readiness, job matching, coaching and employment supports. The DTA designated staff (Full Engagement Workers/FEWs) from DTA local offices are also co-located at the MassHire Career Centers and provide support, information and resources to Career Center staff and DTA clients on a locally established schedule and frequency.

The Local Umbrella Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and regular, ongoing local partner meetings drive the model for local partner staff to work together to provide a full array of services to shared customers, the range of which encompasses initial assessment, career planning, workshops, event coverage and more.

The successful completion of WPP services is expected to result in full-time, unsubsidized employment for consumers that is aligned with labor market needs and participant goals toward a career pathway.

The funding level for the WPP program is currently \$2,000,000.

MassHire Workforce Board Certification: Responding to the requirements of WIOA (20 CFR Part 679 Subpart C), the Commonwealth enhanced its strategy to continue to strengthen the capacity of the MassHire Workforce Boards by examining the challenges posed by the changing economic landscape and the needs of industry and businesses. Massachusetts continues to drive improvements for the workforce system through continued high standards of excellence for Workforce Boards.

The Massachusetts biennial workforce board certification process for FY20 augments the standards required for certification, the genesis of which was the 2008 “High Performing Workforce Board” initiative. Massachusetts’ enhanced board certification standards are intended to move the Commonwealth’s workforce boards further along a continuum toward performance excellence.

The MassHire Workforce Board certification includes standards for workforce board certification that are intended to promote improvements in board performance, partnering, business engagement, program oversight and related policies.

MassHire Workforce Board certification criteria promotes the articulation of regional workforce development activities to optimize services to residents, businesses and partners. The measurable standards evidence the fact that the work of the boards is both business-driven and aligned with workforce resources through regional markets.

The criteria and standards are focused on quality systems and practices for career center operator competitive Selection, career center oversight, youth services strategy and oversight, business-driven strategies and solutions and partnerships/MOUs.

As the Commonwealth continues to implement the state strategies reviewed above, we expect to achieve positive change across the Massachusetts workforce development system.

MassHire Career Center Certification WIOA 20 CFR §678.800 requires that the One-Stop Career Centers be certified by the Local Boards, and that the State Board, in consultation with chief elected officials and Local Boards establish objective criteria and procedures for use by the MassHire Workforce Boards when certifying MassHire Career Centers. The career center standards are consistent with the Governor's and State Board's guidance and vision and evaluate the MassHire Career Center delivery system for effectiveness in addressing business and job seeker needs in Massachusetts' business-driven workforce delivery system. Massachusetts' first round of career center certification included categories of cost effectiveness, integrated services, accessibility, effective leadership, performance and responsiveness to the demand driven model. The standards are key indicators of career center fitness, effectiveness and quality service implementation.

The certification process demonstrates that the MWBs oversee the delivery of employment and training programs and business services in their communities through a quality lens and ensure that Career Centers are operating at the highest level of effectiveness and sustainability. The certification process gives the MWB the opportunity to make a formal assessment of the local service delivery system based on the established standards. Certification is one way to ensure a consistent level of quality in the services provided in the local workforce area.

One-Stop Operator Competitive Selection Process: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that Local Boards, in agreement with the Chief Elected Official, select One-Stop Career Center Operators through a competitive process to be conducted not less than every 4 years. Local Boards must each conduct an open, transparent, procurement process to select one-stop operators in compliance with WIOA law and regulations, applicable local procurement rules/policy and Massachusetts' One-Stop Operator Competitive Selection Policy www.mass.gov/doc/competitive-selection-of-operatorservice-provider-of-one-stop-career-center

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts authorized/empowered the 16 MassHire Workforce Boards (Local Boards) as the entities to conduct the competition to procure a One-Stop Career Center Operator/Service Provider within their Local Workforce Area (Local Area), pursuant to their responsibility under sec. 107(d)(10)(A); sec. 121(d)(2)(A) of WIOA; COFAR/Uniform Circular 2 CFR 200 and MassWorkforce Issuance 100 DCS 01-102 (Procurement and Contracting) www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/sy/01-102.pdf.

This was a limited Local Board authorization to conduct the procurement of the operator only. It recognized the Local Board's authority and negotiating and oversight roles, but did not empower local boards outside that authority and role to execute one-stop operator contracts or contracts for operator space nor relieve Local Boards from compliance with municipal rules and the CEO-designated authority of the Fiscal Agent.

Local Boards used a competitive process that fulfilled the requirements of sec. 121(d)(2)(A) of WIOA while remaining consistent with the principles of competitive procurement set forth in the Uniform Administrative Guidance set out at 2CFR 200.318 through 200.326 and MassWorkforce Issuance 100 DCS 01-102 (Procurement and Contracting). At the conclusion of the competitive process, the recommendation to award a contract to the selected One-Stop Lead Operator/Service Provider was ratified by a quorum-vote of the full Local Workforce Board at a properly posted public meeting.

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD)/MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) continues and will continue to provide extensive written and in-person guidance in advance of and during the procurement process.

FY21 Career Center Certification will further gauge effectiveness, service quality and strength of leadership in preparation for a new round of Operator procurement in FY22.

(B) Alignment with Activities outside the Plan. Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by mandatory MassHire partners and other optional MassHire partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

The Commonwealth integrates information on how the workforce system aligns with education programs and other activities through the vision, goals, and strategies section.

Alignment with Career and Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) and Apprenticeship opportunities as well as other education programs and activities occurs at the local level in each local area. The sixteen MassHire Workforce Boards, through their board membership participation and required strategic plans develop strategies and actions to promote the alignment of all programs with WIOA-funded programs. Additionally, sector strategies and youth initiatives promote integration of services across programs.

At the state level, the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development worked on a new economic development plan that focused on a high priority for aligned education and workforce activity. The WIOA state plan reflects these strategies and now informs new strategic planning for higher education for capital planning. This has led to a new regional planning process established by the Secretaries of Education, Workforce and Economic Development, which required the participation of CVTE and public higher education as well. The state plan also articulated the state-level requirements for each local umbrella WIOA MOU process. That process included CVTE, community college and other partners as part of the planning team. The process continues to energize these collaborations and Partners engage in designing new customer flow strategies for shared customers between workforce, education and other partners. In addition, the Commonwealth operates federal Apprenticeship grants that support the expansion of apprenticeship to non-traditional occupations and the expansion of traditional apprenticeships to diverse populations.

Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Individuals

(C) Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals. Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and mandatory and optional One-Stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

The MassHire Workforce Boards and Career Centers and the Core Partner Programs continue to provide services to job seekers, consumers, participants, students based on the mission and directives of the existing resources and resulting service systems. Through the WIOA State Plan, these partners have worked together to leverage relationships with the business community and to develop a coordinated approach to

outreach and service delivery. Most importantly, connecting outreach activities to job placement across the partners is a significant task for a truly integrated system.

In addition, enhanced “priority of service” requirements ensure that individuals with barriers (including individuals who are low-income, have limited skills, are recipients of public assistance, homeless, have a disability, limited English, age barriers or face other barriers to employment) are able to access critical employment and training services through the MassHire Career Center system. All Core WIOA Program Partners and other broader workforce partners work together with MassHire Career Centers to:

- **Build out “pathway maps” or customer-centered design models** for specific populations for “shared” customers between partner programs to create a clear understanding of how multiple providers, services and resources should support an individual person or business;
- **Improve the MassHire customer Flow** and service practices to prioritize individuals with barriers and work across partner agencies;
- **Utilize robust technology tools to scale-up practices and provide more significant supports for individuals with barriers to employment**, including basic skill assessment, remediation, and career development tools;
- **Sponsor cross-training for staff across partner agencies** (Statewide MOU) to understand the needs of populations and available resources to make referrals and customize services based on customer need; including cross-training for resources such as, JobQuest, TORQ, Career Information System, etc.;
- **Track and evaluate the outcomes** for individuals who face barriers to employment (see federal WIOA measures and state-designed measures in Section II).

Models and Services for WIOA Target Populations

The WIOA and non-WIOA partners will continue to work with job seekers who represent populations who need additional support. Through the local MOU Teams, who meet regularly to examine career center service provision and think through process improvements, Massachusetts has effectively re-designed certain career center services with its partners. In addition, grant-funded or state-based initiatives often supplement and expand the public system’s ability to work with individuals who face barriers to employment:

a) Age Barriers: MA-SCSEP works closely with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) to help promote and coordinate the SCSEP and MassHire Career Center service delivery systems. State strategies of the State Plan outline specific steps in pursuit of the goals to achieve the vision for the workforce system. To that end, EOEA (Executive Office of Elder Affairs) will work with EOLWD to enhance the services to customers of the One-Stop Career Centers by:

- Training MassHire Career Center staff on the needs of people 55 and over
- Offering more training classes geared to people 55 and over
- Helping Business Service Representatives (BSRs) establish more effective employer pipelines to hire older workers

b) Low-Income, Low-Skilled: Many individuals who are homeless, receiving public assistance or public housing, those with CORI issues, or individuals with limited skills (LEP or lack of high school credentials etc.) face challenges that require multiple supports offered across a range of partners.

State-level partners have developed curriculum and delivered cross-training to ensure staff at multiple agencies can help an individual understand available resources, the impact of work on wages and public benefits (benefits counseling or “cliff effect” information for TANF-SNAP), and next steps to move along a career pathway. The adult education network of providers contributes information on evidence-based models that support integrated education and training, career pathways, wraparound/college and career readiness support services to assist staff in building supports that create positive outcomes for low-income, low-skilled populations.

c) Individuals with Disabilities: MassHire Department of Career Services, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind as well as a variety of disability service agencies work together to enhance and build employment related services for individuals with disabilities. MassHire through its network of career centers is committed to ensuring all individuals regardless of disabilities have access to integrated programs and services.

MRC Vocational Rehabilitation and its Core Workforce partners developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for each of the 16 Workforce Development Board (WDB) areas in the Commonwealth. The MOUs outline the activities that will be aligned across the partnership. These activities include but are not limited to: pre-employment vocational services, post-secondary education services, Adult Basic Education (ABE), One-Stop Career Center services, cross-training of staff, consultation on accessibility issues, sharing employer and labor market needs and information in specific geographic areas across the state, among others. The Commonwealth will establish a common client ID numbering system to share information and referrals between partners regarding common consumers. The MOUs address each region’s infrastructure needs to operate successfully and ensure alignment.

The Commissioner of MRC is a member of the Statewide Workforce Board (SWB). In addition, MRC has staff members assigned to each WDB and career centers across the Commonwealth and plays key roles in the WIOA Steering Committee and associated WIOA planning committees including the Common Measures Committee, Policy and Youth Workgroup, ensuring the needs of individuals with disabilities are blended and braided into all workforce system activities.

The MRC’s job placement specialists and other assigned MRC staff work closely with local career centers and core partners to provide high quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities seeking expanded employment opportunities and to assist the career centers and other partners to better meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. MRC provides training, including disability sensitivity training, accessibility, and information and referrals for career center and partners.

MCB has staff members assigned to each WDB and career center across the Commonwealth and plays key roles in the WIOA Steering Committee and associated WIOA planning committees including the Common Measures Committee, Policy and Youth Workgroup, ensuring the needs of individuals with visual disabilities are blended and braided into all workforce system activities.

The MCB’s employment specialists and other vocational rehabilitation counselors work closely with local career centers and core partners to provide high quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with visual disabilities seeking expanded employment opportunities and to assist the career centers and other partners to better meet the needs of individuals with visual disabilities. MCB provides consultation on accessibility and training, including disability sensitivity training, accessibility, and information and referrals for career center and partners.

Massachusetts has been awarded a total of three Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grants aimed to increase access to career center services and expanding capacity within existing career pathways to serve youth and adults with disabilities. DEI is jointly funded by the Office of Disability and Employment Policy and Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. MassHire Career Centers involved in the DEI projects have implemented proven practices that have improved quality of services and have contributed to increased employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Disability Resource Coordinators (DRC) were hired and to implement the provision of services outlined in the grant which includes building integrated resources teams, blending and braiding or resources, and strengthening collaborations and partnerships to service individuals with disabilities.

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. Prior grants and resources for this population were solely focused on employment and did not expand work to enroll more individuals into post-secondary or training programs.

Through WIOA, the MassHire, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other partners are participating in a customer-centered design process to identify new ways to integrate and share services. The goal is to transfer the best practices created by the Disability Employment Initiative grants to regions of the state that were not awarded these resources.

As a result of participation with DEI the following best practices have been identified:

- Staff training on issues and resource regarding disabilities.
- Benefits planning for individuals on either SSI or SSDI.
- Development of in-house flowcharts indicating how services for individuals with disabilities are served by MassHire.
- Engagement with MassMatch the state's assistive technology agency.
- Exposure to Employment Networks and Ticket to Work.
- Implementation of IRTs (Individual Resource Teams).
- Enhanced and continued partnership with state agency that provides services to individuals with disabilities.

Over the next four years these practices will be scaled across the 16 workforce areas to ensure a more systematic approach to serving individuals with disabilities.

d) Homeless: MassHire Workforce Boards and Career Centers foster ongoing local partnerships with shelters and organizations that specialize in services for homeless individuals.

MassHire Career Centers maintain lists of resources and local contacts to assist the Homeless population. The web-based registration form within JobQuest asks the "Are you Homeless" question. That alerts staff to a customer's situation. Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has several programs targeted to serving the Homeless. Programs such as:

- Emergency Housing and shelter
- Housing Stabilization programs
- Rental Assistance
- HomeBASE (provides funding for furniture; 1st and last month's rent; utilities; travel costs, etc.)

(e) Veterans: MassHire Department of Career Services as well as a variety of Veteran service agencies work together to enhance and build employment related services for Veterans. MassHire through its network of career centers is committed to ensuring all Veterans and their families have access to integrated programs and services.

Dedicated staff is available throughout the state to help Veterans transition to civilian employment. Veterans and their eligible spouses receive Priority of Service throughout the full array of services provided through the Career Center system. Veterans' employment representatives also:

- Supervise services to Veterans including counseling, testing, and identifying training and employment opportunities
- Monitor federal job listings to see that eligible Veterans get priority referrals
- Promote participation in federally funded employment and training programs
- Work with the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#) to identify Veterans who need work-specific prosthetic devices, sensory aids or other special equipment
- Contact community leaders, employers, unions, training programs, and Veterans' service organizations to be sure eligible Veterans get the services to which they are entitled

(f) Long-Term Unemployed: MassHire Career Centers offer various workshops targeted to older and long-term unemployed individuals, such as:

Age-Related Questions

This clinic gives participants an opportunity to brainstorm age-related questions that might be asked in an interview - or might be in the mind of an interviewer but not asked.

Using Age to Your Advantage

Explore common misconceptions about age in the workplace and outline the advantages seasoned workers bring to the table. Identify strategies to get in the door and develop effective answers to challenging age-related interview questions.

Hire Opportunity

Intensive series of weekly two-hour sessions over six weeks that features group activities and peer support to help participants approach their job searches with sharpened skills, renewed energy and focus.

(g) *Ex-Offenders*: MassHire Department of Career Services, as well as a variety of agencies work together to enhance and build employment related services for Returning Citizens. MassHire through its network of career centers is committed to ensuring individuals have access to integrated programs and services.

Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers

(D) Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Employers. Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, mandatory and optional One-Stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

MDCS operates the MassHire BizWorks program which includes partnerships with all mandatory and non-mandatory partners. Statewide meetings are regularly held where real time information on services that are being provided to businesses and their employees is shared and coordinated. BizWorks committees that include the statewide partners: Staff Training; Marketing; Systems Coordination and Development. Products from these committees have resulted in cross-training modules, marketing materials and cross agency/partners business dashboards.

Coordination and collaboration of the partners and entities that provide services to businesses has been and continues to be a major business service strategy for the Commonwealth. The key principles established to guide business services across partner agencies across the Commonwealth are as follows:

1. There is “no wrong door” for business services; business assessments are consistent, regardless of the entry point.
2. Staff interact and operate in a professional business manner.
3. A single point of contact within a coordinated regional structure/strategy is a key business-serving tenet.
4. All staff, regardless of their role, are to be well versed in the leading industry sectors in their local area and region.
5. All staff have a role in collecting business intelligence and contribute to their organization and system’s learning about business needs.
6. All staff, regardless of their role, must be well-versed in the needs of employers who are Federal Contractors to ensure that a diverse talent pool is available to meet their needs and to assist them with compliance of Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 503) at 41 CFR Part 60-741
7. All staff represent the MassHire Workforce System (not just a specific center, program, or agency) and are ambassadors to other state system partners offering business services.
8. Business-based talent development service models (sector strategies, internships, apprenticeship) are priorities.

MassBizWorks continues to lead efforts around marketing, staff development and systems/communications with a primary focus of information sharing, coordinating and making linkages electronically. MassBizWorks played a fundamental role in the organization and work of the State Plan Advisory Committee’s Business Services and Engagement workgroup that developed goals and strategies to support business growth and sustainability through leveraging interagency collaboration to increase outcomes for businesses, meet business demand for hiring and talent development, and identify industry need for skills training models (on-the-job training, apprenticeship, sector strategies).

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and MassHire Department of Career Services, with local MassHire Workforce Board and Career Center input, has developed a specialized process to support businesses seeking recruitment and hiring assistance through the Governor’s Office, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development or other State Partners. The communication and accountability structure of this process is the **Recruitment Solutions Initiative (RSI)**. These businesses will be designated as “RSI businesses.”

The goal of RSI implementation is to manage high-level business recruitments consistently. RSI establishes a referral team dedicated to job matching, a regional lead to coordinate all communications, and a local lead to support on-the-ground logistics.

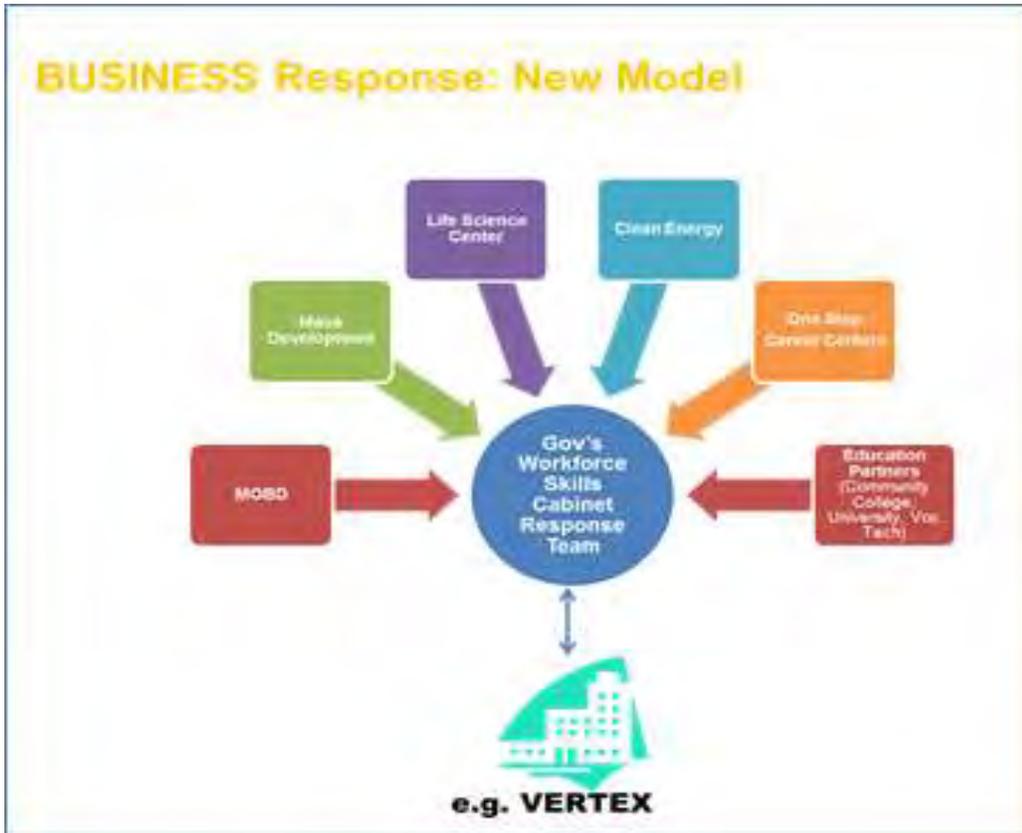
RSI is intended to increase the volume of qualified job seekers referred, interviewed and hired by Massachusetts businesses. The RSI also establishes a consistent process for assessing, vetting and referring qualified MassHire Career Center job candidates to business customers for employment consideration.

All service delivery components for designated “RSI businesses” must be provided in accordance with the Recruitment Solutions Initiative (RSI) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

The Core WIOA program partners participate in the BizWorks organizing effort as well as the SPAC Business Services and Engagement Workgroup. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) has a robust set of outreach and direct service activities with businesses across the state and most likely works with the highest number of employers across programs funded by Title IV of WIOA. MRC participates in a business strategy workgroup between key workforce partners as part of the Commonwealth’s effort to coordinate services to employers amongst partner agencies and subscribes to the established key principles to guide business services amongst key partner agencies.

A key goal for the WIOA Business Strategies Workgroup is to also actively engage the Massachusetts Business Leadership Network, which is an association of Massachusetts companies committed to a diverse marketplace that includes people with disabilities as both customers and employees. The Massachusetts Business Leadership Network (MassBLN) is an affiliate of the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN) initiative, a national business-led endeavor upholding workforce initiatives that enable qualified individuals with disabilities to succeed in the workplace.

Figure 61: Business Response



Partner Engagement with Educational Institution

(E) Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions. Describe how the State’s Strategies will engage the State’s education and training providers, including community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

Describe how the State’s Strategies will engage the State’s community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

That includes building on the state’s past success with the USDOL TAACCT initiatives. Recent conversations have included the Department of Transitional Assistance and the Executive Office of Community Colleges to identify additional opportunities to expand access to post-secondary credentialing for SNAP recipients through recruitment and SNAP Employment and Training (E&T)

reimbursements. The Administration has continued to support sector initiatives in high demand occupations as well.

The Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Centers, adult education and post-secondary systems have had the experience of rethinking the connections and pathways for individuals who need to move from low to mid to high skilled credentialing and continue to build on those lessons. The Massachusetts community colleges, in concert with the Commonwealth's higher education, economic development, adult basic education (ABE) and workforce development systems, and industry stakeholders continue working to transform the delivery of education and training programs in Massachusetts. State and local workforce development entities are integrated with community colleges to support better access to the colleges. New or revised accelerated and stackable programming is being delivered at many campuses. Statewide teams continue to deliver and look to develop industry recognized curriculum in targeted industry sectors, and the ABE system and developmental education faculty from most campuses helped develop and are utilizing contextualized curriculum modules to better prepare students for high demand careers.

This work and the partnerships developed, initially through the Transformation Agenda TAACCCT grants, is continued. With the knowledge gained about the different systems, leveraging and braiding resources is a regular practice which have helped Massachusetts increase the number of individuals using WIOA funding through Individual Training Accounts at community colleges. In addition, the new Administration applied for a longitudinal data grant through US Department of Education to build out the capacity to share wage record data and information across education and workforce systems. This data analysis designed under this grant will open new doors to understand which initiatives and interventions are most successful.

(F) Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers. Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's other education and training providers, including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. See below.

(G) Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access. Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E). See below.

(H) Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials. Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses or certifications, and that are portable and stackable. See below.

Education Partnerships, Leveraging Resources for Education, and Access to Post-Secondary Credentials

The continued vision for the WIOA Plan to organize and promote the progression of individuals along career pathways depends upon a larger number of individuals moving into post-secondary attainment of credentials in order to meet the job demand in the Massachusetts economy. While higher education is not a required Core Partner program in WIOA, our higher education system, represented by the Department of Higher Education, is a key partner on the WIOA Steering Committee and in the implementation of the WIOA Plan. State leaders will focus on new strategies that assist more individuals, especially individuals with

limited education and skill, in accessing higher education. That includes building on the state's past success with the USDOL TAACCT initiatives.

The MassHire Workforce Board, MassHire Career Center, adult education and post-secondary systems have had the experience of rethinking the connections and pathways for individuals who need to move from low to mid to high skilled credentialing. We continue to build on those lessons. The Massachusetts' community colleges, in concert with the Commonwealth's higher education, economic development, adult basic education (ABE) and workforce development systems, and industry stakeholders have transformed the delivery of education and training programs through Massachusetts' innovative "Transformation Agenda", funded through a USDOL TAACCT Grant. Through accelerated programs linked closely to industry need, the Transformation Agenda built a systems approach to enable greater economic opportunities for Massachusetts residents. The goal of the Transformation Agenda was to develop a shared effort to support students along efficient career pathways into high-demand careers. This grant created new positions called Community College Navigators. These individuals are hired by Community College and work at the MassHire Career Centers to provide support to unemployed individuals planning to earn post-secondary credentials.

State and local workforce development entities are integrated with community colleges to support better access to the colleges. New or revised accelerated and stackable programming continues to be delivered at many campuses. Statewide teams developed and began implementing industry recognized curriculum in targeted industry sectors, and the ABE system and developmental education faculty from most campuses helped develop and are utilizing contextualized curriculum modules to better prepare students for high demand careers.

The work created through the Transformation Agenda TAACCT grant is continued through an additional TAACCT award. This grant supports many of the same alignment and reform strategies of the Transformation Agenda with a focus on STEM pathways. The Guided Pathways (GP) STEM grant is building linkages for unemployed individuals and students coming up into post-secondary to achieve degrees and certificates in STEM fields.

MassHire Career Center staff were trained by staff paid for by the TAACCT grants to train them on financial aid information. And, the Community College Navigators help MassHire Career Center customers understand their higher education options, especially two-year programs. The combined grants have helped Massachusetts increase the number of individuals using WIOA funding through Individual Training Accounts at community colleges (compared to prior years of ITA expenditures).

Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies

(I) Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies. Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

As discussed in Section II goals and strategies, the Commonwealth developed its Economic Development Plan with significant input from the education and workforce systems. The Economic Development Plan is being utilized in the development of the WIOA State Plan. In addition, the Governor leveraged the required WIOA regional planning process to create an integrated regional planning process across the economic, education, and workforce Secretariats. The regional planning structure is based on an aligned regional map between workforce areas, economic development, and education regions. The process required seven

coordinated teams led by MassHire Workforce Boards, Community Colleges and Vocational Technical Schools, and economic development (Massachusetts Office of Business Development) with additional partners (business leaders, community-based-organizations, etc.) to ensure that education and training systems are focused on the career pathways needed in the regional economy. The regional leadership from economic development therefore drives the activities of the Workforce Boards and key WIOA partners through the resulting regional plans.

Coordination between MDCS and economic development occurs regularly between the Rapid Response team the Biz Works program and the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD), which is also a partner in the MassHire BizWorks program. The Rapid Response manager is a voting board member of MOBD's EACC board which approves tax incentives for growing business, The Rapid Response team coordinates business growth and business layoff activities with MOBD as well.

State Operating Systems and Policies

(b) **State Operating Systems and Policies** The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section II **Strategic Elements**. This includes-

(1) The State operating systems that will support the implementation of the State's strategies. This must include a description of-

(A) State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, job banks, etc.).

Systems to Support Coordination

Labor Market Information (LMI)

The primary operating systems for the workforce core partners are described below in the next section. The Research Division within the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance operates the primary labor market information systems in Massachusetts as part of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. The Divisions' data is possible because of its cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the United States Census Bureau. The Division is focused on producing reliable and timely data in order to assist individuals make data-driven decisions in the areas of business, career and education.

Labor market data and economic statistics are publicly available on the EOLWD website to help stakeholders make informed plans, choices, and decisions for a wide range of purposes, including business investment decision making, career planning and preparation, education and training offerings, job search opportunities, hiring, and public or private workforce investments. The Division also works with local workforce development system partners as well as external stakeholders to provide custom workforce data, which further the efficiency and impact of the system.

Currently, the core partners each have a myriad of tools available to assist customers in the development of career pathways and the state workforce agency offers these tools to partner agencies and their clients through online systems.

Burning Glass Labor Insight - provides job market data to enable the identification of opportunities for training programs, closer alignment of education and training initiatives with employer demand, and improved site selection and recruiting decisions.

Transferable Occupation Relationship Quotient (TORQ) - an LMI tool that provides a real-time triage process, which analyzes an individual's occupational knowledge, abilities, and skills, and assesses the transferability of those characteristics to other, potentially more in demand, occupations they might not have considered.

Massachusetts JobQuest - the workforce system's front-facing web application used by members of the public (job seekers and businesses) to access programs and services such as job search and application, training programs research and, for employers, to locate job candidates.

ACT WorkKeys Curriculum - a self-paced, adaptive, online remediation system supports the evaluation and development of employability skills, graphic literacy, numeracy, and reading comprehension for the workplace. Through this assessment, staff can match the skill assets of participants against occupational requirements to improve screening and candidate referral.

MassHire Career Information System - is a free on-line app that is offered to all Massachusetts residents. MassHire CIS is designed to provide occupational and educational information to help people make better-informed career and school choices. MassHire CIS contains career, education, and workforce information, as well as many career exploration tools. The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's (EOLWD), MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) provides MassHire CIS to Massachusetts residents free of charge. MassHire CIS has 3 versions, Junior, High School and Adult and agency. MassHire CIS junior version supports reading, writing, decision-making, and critical thinking skills while developing self-awareness, career exploration, research, and planning skills. The reading requirement for this product is fifth-grade level, making it appropriate for special populations.

MassHire CIS version (also known as High School/Middle School version) version provides comprehensive career information for students developing and updating educational plans. Using MassHire CIS in high school supports lifelong career planning and promotes career self-reliance. MassHire CIS includes tools that encourage self-assessment, exploration, research, goal setting, and decision-making. MassHire CIS adult and Agency version provides users a resource for practically any career information needs. Easy to access and simple to use, MassHire CIS provides a wealth of occupational and educational information.

Data-collection and reporting processes

(B) Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in MassHire Career Centers.

The core partners each have separate data and operating systems, which are described in the next subsection. To address immediate WIOA needs for the partners, the Commonwealth will explore the use of MassHire JobQuest as the main entry portal for individuals who intersect with the MassHire Career Centers

and who may be “shared” between two WIOA enrollments (both job seekers and employers). In the long term, the WIOA partners are working toward a technological system integration to facilitate the customer flow for our shared customers. This system will support an upfront common intake/registration and case management tracking. The concept will utilize the One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) for job seeker and employer tracking all services provided and programs and activities accessed by all shared customers across core MassHire service points.

In addition to enrollment and tracking across systems, MassHire and partners work on additional ways to utilize similar tools to develop career plans, assess skill levels and connect with the labor market information tools described above. System coordination would benefit from partners having the ability to utilize and recognize ABE assessments currently used and NRS approved when assessing basic skills to determine ABE Title II student eligibility.

MassHire Career Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education and other partners utilize different action plans or career assessment tools. Adult Education uses the Education and Career Plan (ECP) as a core tool, MassHire Career Centers use Career Action Plan (CAP) as core tool, Vocational Rehabilitation uses the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) and other partners such as Veterans programs or TANF and SNAP utilize different tools as well. The state partners work together to review how the customer tools can work together to build a set of common intake questions that can populate the various tools and to design cross-training to share areas of expertise, best practices, and ensure consistency and quality of education and career planning approaches across systems.

Data Collection and Reporting Systems for Core WIOA programs - The largest group of workforce development programs are administered by the **MassHire Department of Career Services** (MDCS) within the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) and operate through the State’s network of MassHire Career Centers. MDCS manages the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) - a client/server application and database that serves as the unified management information, client tracking, case management and reporting system used by staff at career centers and other workforce development service providers in Massachusetts. The application is distributed through an AWS (Amazon Work Space) providing users with flexibility for data entry and report access. MOSES collects information and tracks data through the MOSES database for the following programs: • Title I Adult • Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) • National Dislocated Worker Grants (formerly NEG) • Title I Dislocated Worker, including Rapid Response • Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) • Disability Employment Initiative Grants (DEI) • Title I Youth • Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) • Unemployment Insurance employment assistance services • Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA).

Several web-based applications collect information and interface with the MOSES database, including: (a) MassHire JobQuest which is used by job seekers to access job listings, eligible training providers and courses, services and workshops at career centers, and assessment tools, such as TORQ and Career Readiness, and is also used by employers to post jobs and search for qualified applicants; (b) MassHire TrainingPro which is used by training providers to register for approval under WIOA ITAs, Trade TAA and UI Section 30 (TOP, Training Opportunity Program for UI Claimants); (c) a WOTC application providing on-line access for employers seeking tax credits and that interfaces with the Department of Transitional Assistance to verify TANF/SNAP eligibility; and (d) a Foreign Labor Certification application was developed to manage H2A and H2B. However, the new application is now used only for H2B while H2A is managed through the new DOL FLAG system.

The **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS)** unit oversees Title II. In FY19 ACLS transitioned to a commercial off-the-shelf data system, LACES (Literacy, Adult, and Community Education System) by LiteracyPro Systems, Inc. to meet the National Reporting System (NRS) requirements.

LACES is a web-based electronic data collection and reporting system. Local adult education providers submit student-level data (demographics, participation, assessment, and post-exit outcomes) and the application aggregates the information to meet the WIOA Title II reporting requirements.

LACES interfaces with GED and ETS to receive high school equivalency results and with the University of Massachusetts, Amherst to receive MAPT (Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Test) scores. Local providers can enter employment and post-secondary enrollment and credential attainment outcomes. ACLS also matches participant wage records with the MA Department of Unemployment Assistance and uploads those outcomes in the LACES records for students who signed release forms. ACLS seeks to match postsecondary enrollment by matching with the Department of Higher Education and the National Student Clearinghouse.

ACLS uses LACES to monitor grantee performance and compliance. All providers have enrollment and performance targets. State policy requires timely data collection and entry. This enables locals and the state office to monitor performance. LACES has a range of tools, reports, and diagnostics to support day-to-day operations and identify data issues quickly.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) provide vocational rehabilitation services that fall within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). MRC and MCB are separate agencies and have individual management information/case management systems.

The **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)** has a web-based Management Information System known as MRCIS, which serves as the case management and data system for MRC's Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Data is tracked and managed at the client level for all MRC VR consumers. The system documents and covers all aspects of the VR process from referral to exit. The system is used to produce a quarterly data file entitled the RSA-911 report submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration containing detailed client and employment data. MRC is in the process of exploring further enhancements to its data system to further modernize the system, and create a frontal facing portal for consumers and providers and allow better integration of data between WIOA partners. This is expected to be pursued over the course of the four-year state plan period.

The **Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)** has a Management Information System known as Aware, which serves as the case management and data system for MCB's Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Data is tracked and managed at the client level for all MCB VR consumers. The system documents and covers all aspects of the VR process from referral to exit. The system has been modified to produce a quarterly data file entitled the RSA-911 report submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration containing detailed client and employment data.

The **Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)** within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) administers the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the employment and training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through the BEACON system.

MDCS and DTA operate an interface between BEACON and MOSES by which MDCS provides information on services that selected TANF recipients (identified as work ready) received at career centers.

The **Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA)** within the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development administers the UI program in Massachusetts through its use of UI Online, a web-based system which serves as a self-service application that both job seekers and employers can use to engage with DUA. DUA staff also uses UI Online to manage DUA's operations.

State Policies

(2) The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes). In addition, describe the State's process for developing guidelines for State-administered One-Stop partner programs' contributions to a One-Stop delivery system, including benchmarks, and its guidance to assist local boards, chief elected officials, and local One-Stop partners in determining equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure in accordance with sec. 121(h)(I)(B). Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, the State must also include such guidelines.

The WIOA State Partners have agreed that youth and job seekers that are eligible for and receive services from more than one WIOA Partner program are considered shared customers. Shared customers benefit from the services and resources delivered across multiple WIOA Partner programs and other stakeholders that are aligned to meet an individual's needs. Shared customers also meet the definition in the title II regulations of WIOA, CFR 34 Part 463.3 of "concurrent enrollment or co-enrollment referring to enrollment by an eligible individual in two or more of the six core programs administered under the Act." (Programs and Activities authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of WIOA)).

One of the key reforms of WIOA is the strategic alignment of workforce partners and the services they provide to their shared customers. The tracking of shared customers is an important aspect of this strategy, not only for statistical measurement, but also to avoid duplication of service and to enable staff to better align services with the goals of the customer's career plan.

Each State WIOA Partner has criteria that must be met before an individual is eligible for the respective Partner services. Communication among partners is essential to ensure accurate identification of shared customers. The link to the MA Joint Partner Policy on Shared Customers, is here: [Massachusetts Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act joint partner communication](#)

WIOA law (Sec121 B1 and h) and 20 CFR §463.510 cites that all required Partners must contribute to support both shared and infrastructure costs of the one-stop centers. The Final Rule notes, "Jointly funding services is a necessary foundation for an integrated service delivery system." The State WIOA required Partners include:

- Adult Community Learning Services (ACLS)
- Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)
- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)
- Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP)

Commonwealth State Partners, MassHire State Workforce Board, MassHire Workforce Boards, Local CEOs and MassHire Management Team agreed:

- All partners have a joint funding responsibility to support and maintain an effective local integrated service delivery system
- The major funding sources (WIOA and W-P) were distributed through a federal formula process
- State Partner funds had certain imposed caps on funding for infrastructure costs
- All other funding was part of specific grant funds, e.g., Jobs for Veterans State Grant, NDWGs, TAA etc. with specific guidelines
- Technically, local partner staff did not have the authority to negotiate infrastructure or shared cost
- Local Partners did have the authority to negotiate through MOU and budget process the use of the funds, individualized based upon each Partners' contribution
- All stakeholders agreed, in the best interest of the shared customers, the State Partners would develop a formula methodology for infrastructure and where applicable, shared cost distribution
- This process allowed Local Partners to focus on customer service
- Local Fiscal agents ensure allocations are incorporated within the integrated budget and annual planning process

Relevant section from the State Umbrella MOU:

“The Parties of this MOU agree that all required partners have a joint funding responsibility to support and maintain an effective local integrated service delivery system. In addition, all parties to the MOU recognize that shared and infrastructure costs are applicable to the all required Partners. As such, all parties to this agreement acknowledge that the Local MOU herein serves the purpose of the infrastructure funding agreement (IFA) as required by WIOA. The infrastructure funding agreement as described will be revisited on an annual basis and periodically reconciled against actual costs incurred and adjusted accordingly to ensure that it reflects a cost allocation methodology that demonstrates how infrastructure costs are charged in proportion to relative benefits received. Infrastructure funds are apportioned at the state level based on the percentage of shared customers served in each local workforce area. State Partners will establish a methodology that will ensure costs are allowable, reasonable, necessary and allocable. As appropriate, State Partners will enter into Interagency Service Agreements (ISAs) or Contracts with the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), as the designated State Workforce Agency (SWA), to issue the local allocations. Local Boards will ensure all allocations are incorporated into the local integrated budget during the annual planning process. MDCS will monitor the spending of all shared and infrastructure costs and local partners agree to meet regularly to discuss integrated service delivery strategies and the shared and infrastructure funds needed to actualize services. On an annual basis, local partners will provide suggestions and recommendations to state level partners for adjustments to shared and infrastructure funds allocated. The utilization of infrastructure funds will be reviewed quarterly.”

WIOA State and Local Partners agree that the most important activity within the local MOU process is the regular convening of local MOU teams to build new or build upon established relationships, refine services to shared customers and continually examine and improve customer flow within each of the MassHire Workforce System's sixteen workforce areas. At the state level, Partners continue to work together to develop and/or adjust the formula for distribution of infrastructure funding based upon local data from each of the 16 workforce areas, identify expected outcomes to be locally achieved and determine a

methodology for redistribution or reallocation of funds if performance expectations are not met or funds are underutilized.

The Massachusetts guidance for Partner program contributions is located here:

[WIOA Joint Partner Local MOU Guidance – Revised](#)

3) State Program and State Board Overview

State Agency Organization

State Agency Organization. Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

The Governor serves as the grant recipient for the Commonwealth. The Governor appoints most members of the (MA) Workforce Development Board (State Board) [1] who in conjunction with the Governor provide leadership across the workforce system to ensure businesses secure a skilled workforce. The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), on behalf of the Governor oversees the MassHire Department of Career Services, the designated State Workforce Agency (SWA) that holds primary responsibility for oversight of the Massachusetts Workforce Development System and will provide staff to the State Board.

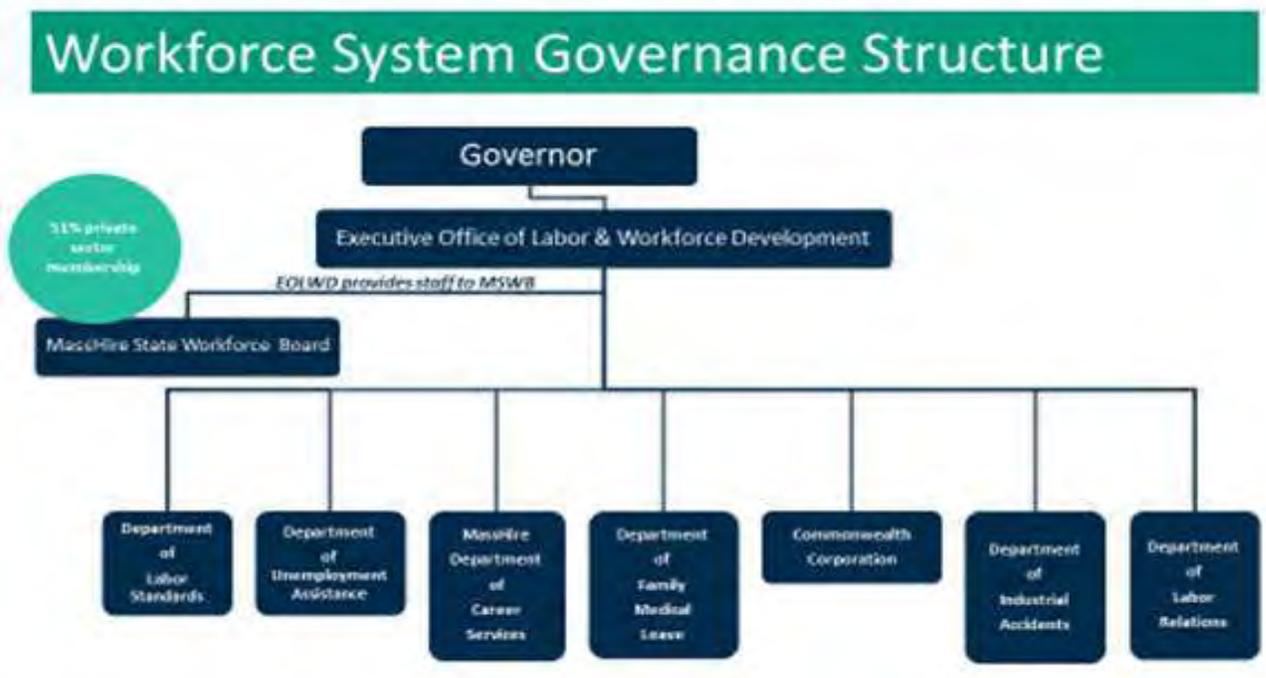
The Governor has designated 16 Workforce Development Areas and the Chief Elected Officials (CEO) within those areas to act as grant recipients.

MassHire Workforce Areas: Berkshire, Boston, Bristol, Brockton, Cape and Islands, Central Massachusetts, Franklin/Hampshire, Greater Lowell, Greater New Bedford, Hampden County, Merrimack Valley, Metro North, Metro South/West, North Central Massachusetts, North Shore, and South Shore

The Local CEOs appoint the business-driven, MassHire Workforce Boards (Local Boards) who in conjunction with the CEO govern the system locally including 32 One-Stop Career Centers.

(25 comprehensive centers and 4 affiliate centers), ensuring coordination across all core partners, developing workforce strategies that meet the needs of regional businesses, as well as job seekers. Leadership from the State and Local Boards are strengthened by requiring WIOA core partners to have representation on all workforce boards; this partnership is further supported by requiring core partners to be signatories on the statewide MOU.

Figure 62: Massachusetts Workforce System Governance Structure



[1] Legislative members on the Massachusetts State Board are appointed by the presiding officer of their respective legislative chamber. All other State Board members are directly appointed by the Governor.

State Board

State Board. Provide a description of the State Board, including- *Membership Roster*. Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members’ organizational affiliations.

The MassHire State Workforce Board (MSWB) is a 33-member board that serves as an advisor to the Governor on building a strong workforce development system aligned with state education policies and economic development goals. The Board is charged with developing strategies that guide the Commonwealth’s efforts in ensuring workers have the skills they need to fill the jobs businesses create, for a more prosperous Commonwealth, with higher wages for workers, larger profits for businesses and stronger communities for all.

1. Membership roster

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members’ organizational affiliations.

Governor

Sherry Dong, Director, Community Health Improvement Programs, Tufts Medical Center
Designee for Governor Charlie Baker

Business and Industry Members

Donna Cupelo – Chair, Vice President, State and Local Government Affairs, Central and New England Regions Verizon

Zamawa Arenas, CEO, Flowetik

Joanne Berwald, Vice President, Human Resources, MESTEK, Inc.

Anne Broholm, Chief Executive Officer, Ahead, LLC

Jesse Brown, Co-Founder/ Director of Operations, Heidrea Communications LLC

James Cassetta, President and CEO, WORK, Inc.

Pamela Everhart, Sr Vice President, Head of Regional Public Affairs/Community Relations, Fidelity Investments

Jessyca Feliciano, Associate Director, Global Human Resources Business Partner, Takeda Pharmaceuticals

Rainer Gawlick, Board Member, Progress Software

Axel Grippo, Vice President of Business and Portfolio Planning, Editas Medicine

Juliette C. Mayers, President and CEO, Inspiration Zone LLC

Jennifer Morales, Senior Manager Internal Audit, Vertex

Radhames Nova, Acting Chief Operating Officer, Association of Latino Professionals of America

Sherri Pitcher, Vice President, Business Development, Fidelity Bank

Joanne Pokaski, Sr Director, Workforce Development/Community Relations, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

Beth Williams, CEO, B.W. Consulting Services and Solutions

Raymond Wrobel, Vice President, Align Credit Union

Legislature

Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Representative, Fifth Essex District, Massachusetts House of Representatives

Senator Eric Lesser, Senator, First Hampden and Hampshire District, Massachusetts Senate

Representatives of the Workforce Labor

Warren Pepicelli, Executive Vice President, UNITE-HERE

John G. Mann, President, NAGE, Local 292

Apprenticeship

Elizabeth Skidmore, Business Representative/Organizer, North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters

Community-Based Organizations

Dr. Pam Eddinger, President, Bunker Hill Community College

Maicharia Weir Lytle, President and CEO, United South End Settlements

Janice Ryan Weekes, Director, MassHire Central Career Centers

Maria Ferreira-Bedard, Executive Director, Southeastern Mass SER-Jobs for Progress

Titles I and III Representative

Secretary Rosalin Acosta, Secretary, MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Titles II Representative

Robert LePage, Assistant Secretary for Career Education, MA Executive Office of Education
Designee for Secretary of Education, James Peyser

Titles IV Representative

Marylou Sudders, Secretary, Health and Human Services

Chief Elected Officials

Mayor Daniel Rivera, Mayor, City of Lawrence

Other Representatives

Juan Vega, Assistant Secretary for Communities and Programs, MA Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

Designee for Secretary of Housing and Economic Development, Michael Kennealy

Board Activities. Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

The Board meets quarterly. During these meetings the Board is updated on and discusses high-level strategic priorities that foster continuous improvement of the workforce system, as well as considers activities and recommendations from one of the Board's committees. There are currently four committees of the Board:

MassHire Performance Committee (formerly the WIOA Oversight Committee): captures system-level performance data to drive decision-making and strategy; identifies and pursues opportunities to boost MassHire system performance, and provides general oversight of the MassHire system, including policies, programming, and development of the WIOA State Plan.

This MassHire Performance Committee is developing a performance dashboard for the workforce system, based on state-driven performance metrics. The Committee has also maintained responsibility for adjudicating appeals in the Career Center operator selection process and selecting winners of the MassHire Awards.

Workforce Intelligence Committee (formerly the Labor Market and Workforce Information Committee): supports the development of labor market information to stakeholders; drives MassHire toward using common and consistent labor market data; distills labor market information to support the MassHire State Workforce Board.

The Workforce Intelligence Committee produces a labor market and workforce information dashboard to update the Board on the Commonwealth's economy and workforce. The Committee also produces industry and occupational "Deep Dive" on priority sectors in the Commonwealth.

Youth Pathways Committee: develops recommendations to enhance integrating programming and career pathways for youth; provides general oversight on the development and implementation of the WIOA State Plan youth goal.

In CY 2020 the Youth Pathways Committee will be focused on developing a convening for youth workforce development practitioners in support of implementation of the 2020 WIOA State Plan. Moving forward, the Committee will develop policies to ensure systemic integration of the key strategies and tactics in the 2020 WIOA State Plan youth goal.

Adult Pathways Committee: supports the integration of statewide workforce-related resources, programs, and initiatives to enhance career and economic outcomes for adult job seeker customers; may be tasked with providing general oversight to MassHire initiatives that improve programs and resources for adult customers, including Apprenticeship Expansion.

In CY 2020 the Adult Pathways Committee will be focused on identifying areas of programmatic and resource alignment to pursue the goals, strategies and objectives in the 2020 WIOA State Plan.

Assessment of Core Programs

(A) Assessment of Core Programs. Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

(B) Assessment of Partner Programs. Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals

The Baker-Polito Administration supports enterprise-wide performance management as a tool for both process and outcome improvement. As such the Administration embraces the federal Indicators of Performance, as well as the latitude afforded states to create their own distinct indicators stemming from WIOA. All Partner agencies have signed the SWIS Agreement and are able to access wage data from Massachusetts (through in-state agreements with the Department of Unemployment Assistance) and other states through SWIS.

Federally Required WIOA Measures: All partners' federally funded programs are measured in the same way for these same outcomes. All measures are applied to participants in each WIOA primary funding stream by Partner agency. Appendix 1 provides the Federal Performance Goals as required by all WIOA Partner Agencies. The chart below shows Federal performance for Program Year 2018 for each of the Partner funding streams.

Figure 63: Federal Indicators of Performance

FEDERAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

Federal Indicator of Performance	MDCS Title I Adult	MDCS Title I Youth	MDCS Title I Dislocated Worker	MDCS Title III Wagner-Peyser	DESE/ ACLS Title II Adult Education	MRC Title IV Rehabilitation Services	MCB Title IV Rehabilitation Services
Employed 2 nd Quarter After Exit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Employed 2 nd Quarter After Exit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Employed 4 th Quarter After Exit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter After Exit	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Credential Attainment Rate	X	X	X	NA	X	X	X
Measurable Skill Gains	X	X	X	NA	X	X	X
Effective in Serving Employers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Proposed goals for the federal indicators of performance are provided in Appendix I.

Legend

- MDCS: MassHire Department of Career Services
- ACLS/DESE: Adult Career and Learning Services, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- MRC: Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
- MCB: Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) evaluates the performance of the workforce system quarterly and annually based upon negotiated local performance goals. As warranted, technical assistance and/or corrective action is provided based upon the result of the evaluations. Refer to Program Year 2018 Annual Report for state and local MassHire Workforce Area performance on the WIOA Federal measures.

[FY 2019/PY 2018 WIOA Title I Annual Performance Report](#)

The WIOA performance measures provide one strategy for assessing the quality of services provided by partner programs. Presented below are other key primary metrics shared by all WIOA partners.

Figure 64: Key Primary Metrics Shared by all WIOA Partners

Results for Key Populations State Designed Job Seeker Performance Measures Statewide Metrics	All MassHire Career Center Participants (WIOA Title I, III, Vets, TRADE, SCSEP, UI)	Adult Education Participants (WIOA Title II)	Vocational Rehabilitation Participants (WIOA Title IV)
Number and Percent of customers enrolled in training and employed in a training related job 2 nd Quarter After Exit	<i>Career Center customers enrolled in a training program</i>	<i>Title II individuals enrolled in a training program</i>	<i>Title IV individuals enrolled in a training program</i>
Number and Percent of Veterans Employed 2 nd Quarter After Exit	<i>Career Center customers who self-declare Veterans</i>	<i>Title II individuals who self-declare Veterans status</i>	<i>Title IV individuals who self-declare Veterans status</i>
Number and Percent of Individuals with Language Barriers at Registration Employed 2 nd Quarter After Exit	<i>Career Center customers who self-declare ESOL status</i>	<i>Title II individuals with ESOL status</i>	<i>Title IV individuals who self-declare ESOL status</i>
Number and Percent of Individuals without High School Equivalency at enrollment that obtained a HS equivalency and who are Employed at 2 nd Quarter After Exit	<i>Career Center customers without HS Equivalency at intake (WIOA Title I, III, Vets, TRADE, etc.)</i>	<i>All Adult Education Participants (WIOA Title II)</i>	<i>All Vocational Rehabilitation Participants without HS Equivalency at intake (WIOA Title IV)</i>
Number and Percent of Individuals with a Disability Employed 2 nd Quarter After Exit	<i>Career Center customers who self-declare disability</i>	<i>Title II individuals who self-declare disability</i>	<i>Title IV individuals who self-declare disability</i>
Number and Percent of Individuals receiving TANF or SNAP Employed at 2 nd Quarter After Exit	<i>Career Center customers receiving TANF or SNAP required to enroll in job assistance services (WIOA Title I, III, Vets, TRADE, etc.)</i>	<i>All Adult Education Participants receiving TANF or SNAP (WIOA Title II)</i>	<i>All Vocational Rehabilitation Participants receiving TANF or SNAP (WIOA Title IV)</i>
Number of Older Workers (50+) who were employed in the 2nd quarter after exit	<i>Career Center customers 50+ years and SCSEP participants served at Career Centers</i>	<i>All Adult Education Participants 50+ years</i>	<i>All Vocational Rehabilitation Participants 50+ years</i>
Number of New Businesses served	<i>New business customers of Career Centers</i>	NA	NA
Number and percent of Businesses registered with MassHire Career Centers that hired Customers referred by Career Centers	<i>Career Center customers who were hired by businesses registered with Career Centers</i>	NA	NA
Number and percent of Adults and Youth participating in Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning (WBL) Programs	<i>Career Center customers (Adults and Youth) in Apprenticeship or WBL Programs</i>	<i>Title II individuals enrolled in Apprenticeship or WBL Programs</i>	<i>Title IV individuals enrolled in Apprenticeship or WBL Programs</i>

Number of Businesses sponsoring apprenticeship or WBL programs	<i>Career Center Business customers Sponsoring Apprenticeships or WBL Programs</i>	NA	NA
Number of Shared Customers Across Partner Agencies	<i>Career Center customers that are also receiving services from a Partner program</i>	<i>All Title II participants who are also receiving services at Career Centers</i>	<i>Title IV participants who are also receiving services at Career Centers</i>

Previous Assessment Results

Previous Assessment Results. Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other One-Stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner program included in the plan during the preceding two-year period. Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments. Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

Federally Required WIOA Measures: All partners and their federally funded programs are measured in the same way for these same outcomes. All measures are applied to participants in each WIOA primary funding stream by Partner agency. Appendix 1 provides the Federal Performance Goals as required by all WIOA Partner Agencies. The chart below shows Federal performance for Program Year 2018 for each of the Partner funding streams.

Figure 65: PY 2018 and PY2017 Federal Indicators of Performance

Program Year 2018 Performance	Employed 2nd Quarter After Exit	Employed 4th Quarter After Exit	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	Credential Attainment Rate	Measurable Skill Gain
MDCS Title I Adult	75.8%	74.8%	\$6,298	72.1%	38.5%
MDCS Title I Youth	70.0%	72.0%	\$3,410	70.4%	41.7%
MDCS Title I Dislocated Worker	78.5%	80.2%	\$10,064	74.9%	44.1%
MDCS Title III Wagner Peyser Employment Service	65.5%	67.6%	\$7,207	NA	NA
DESE/ACLS Title II Adult Education	41.0%	41.9%	\$6,413	21.2%	46.8%
MRC/MCB Title IV Rehabilitation Services*	48.2%	*	\$4,333	*	8.4%
Program Year 2017 Performance					
MDCS Title I Adult	74.6%	73.5%	\$6,265	75.5%	21.3%
MDCS Title I Youth	77.5%	82.1%	\$3,293	54.1%	38.1%
MDCS Title I Dislocated Worker	81.6%	81.1%	\$9,843	77.2%	24.4%
MDCS Title III Wagner Peyser Employment Service	65.0%	68.6%	\$7,119	NA	NA
DESE/ACLS Title II Adult Education	37.4%	38.4%	\$6,085	21.0%	44.5%
MRC Title IV Rehabilitation Services*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.1%
MCB Title IV Rehabilitation Services*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

*Note that MRC and MCB Title IV are combined for Federal Reporting purposes. The Vocational rehabilitation Program serves individuals with significant disabilities who often require multiple services over an extended period to achieve employment. VR performance is comparable to other VR agencies. **For PY18:** data were not yet available for Employed 4th Quarter After Exit and for Credential Obtainment. These will be available in PY19. **For PY17:** data were only available for VR agencies for Measurable Skills Gains. The Vocational Rehabilitation Program serves individuals with significant disabilities who often require multiple services over an extended period to achieve employment. VR performance is comparable to other VR agencies.

Figure 66: Combined Partner Measure

Combined Partner Measure EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS	PY 2018	PY 2018	PY 2017	PY 2017
	Retention with Same Employer 2nd and 4th Quarters	Repeat Business Customers Rate	Retention with Same Employer 2nd and 4th Quarters	Repeat Business Customers Rate
Combined Partner Measure	87.1%	29.3%	87.1%	29.3%

MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) evaluates the performance of the workforce system quarterly and annually based upon local workforce area performance goals negotiated with the MassHire

Workforce Boards. As warranted, technical assistance and/or corrective action is provided based upon the results of the evaluations.

Refer to Career Center Performance Reports developed and posted quarterly for the State and MassHire workforce areas. <https://www.mass.gov/massworkforce-career-center-performance-reports-ccpr>

Refer to Program Year 2018 Annual Report for state and local MassHire Workforce Area performance on the WIOA Federal measures. [FY 2019/PY 2018 WIOA Title I Annual Performance Report](#).

Evaluation

Evaluation: Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

The State may conduct evaluations and research projects with respect to the WIOA core programs in coordination with the State Workforce Development Board, local boards, and State partner agencies. These projects will include an evaluation component to be conducted by an independent entity and be consistent with evaluation requirements established by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

The MassHire State Workforce Board, the MassHire Department of Career Services and Commonwealth Corporation (both within the MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development) have been in discussions to support the development of a WIOA Evaluation Agenda. It is anticipated that the Agenda, with input from partners and local MassHire workforce boards and career centers, will guide the design and implementation of program analyses and evaluations to review program impact and identify promising practices.

In a related development, Commonwealth Corporation has executed an agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance for access to wage record data. This access will allow for evaluations of the post-program outcomes of state supported YouthWorks and WCTF sectoral training by using wage record matching results combined with participant characteristics and program services data. This evaluation work will be coordinated with the Agenda and, as there are shared WIOA customers in many of these programs, may suggest methods and approaches for WIOA evaluations as well.

Distribution of Funds for Core Programs

Distribution of Funds for Core Programs. Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for-

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) provides a forum for annual review of the data used for formula allocations under WIOA Title I through a Workforce Allocations Task Force

established in 2014. The Task Force includes the Executive Director of the MassHire State Workforce Board (serving as the chair) and representatives from local MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Centers, local Fiscal Officers, and staff at EOLWD’s MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) responsible for development and distribution of WIOA Title I program allocations. The Task Force makes its recommendations to the Governor through the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development. In addition, at the discretion of the Secretary, the Task Force may be called upon to recommend allocation methodologies for distribution of State funds appropriated for One-Stop Career Centers. MDCS is responsible for computing the 16 local workforce area allocations for WIOA Title I programs based on the approved formula data and methodology and for providing the allocation levels to EOLWD’s Finance Department. Local area allocations are published annually with the detailed input data and formulas through the Fiscal Year WIOA Local Operations Plan Guidance Policy and are updated as necessary during the fiscal year if there are changes in federal allotment levels.

WIOA Title I Youth and Adult local area allocations are computed in accordance with instructions in the WIOA sections identified above and are distributed by percentage share to the sixteen local MassHire Workforce Development Areas (local areas) according to the formula shown below.

The state’s unemployment rate for Program Year 2017/Fiscal Year 2018 (July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018) was 3.6% and, therefore, in PY2019/FY2020 Massachusetts had substate Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASUs) defined in accordance with the methodology proscribed by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Employment and Training Administration (ETA). It is anticipated that the State will have sub-state ASUs for the program years beginning July 1, 2020 (PY2020) and July 1, 2021 (PY2021).

Figure 67: Factors informing Title I Adult and Youth Formulas

Adult: WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3)

Youth: WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3)

Factor/Source	Weight	Title I Youth	Title 1 Adult
Average Number of Economically Disadvantaged Youths <i>(Census Bureau, American Community Survey)</i>	1/3	X	
Average Number of Economically Disadvantaged Adults <i>(Census Bureau, American Community Survey)</i>	1/3		X
Number of Unemployed in Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASUs) <i>(EOLWD/Department of Unemployment Assistance, Economic Research, BLS methodology)</i>	1/3	X	X
Number of Excess Unemployed in Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASUs) <i>(EOLWD/Department of Unemployment Assistance, Economic Research, BLS methodology)</i>	1/3	X	X

A hold-harmless provision ensures that each local area’s percentage share of the State allotments designated for local WIOA Title 1 Youth and Adult program activities does not fall below 90% of the local area’s average percentage share for the prior two fiscal years.

The Workforce Allocations Task Force reviews the formula for distribution of Title I Dislocated Worker funds to local workforce areas in accordance with the requirements in WIOA section 133(b)(2)(B) and makes its recommendations to the Governor through the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development. This review is done annually to ensure that the most current data are used for the formula allocations to local workforce areas.

The Task Force’s final recommendations for Program Year 2019/Fiscal Year 2020 are shown on the following table. The primary considerations for the Task Force with respect to the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker formula are presented in the table below. The Task Force worked with DUA Economic Research to develop a viable data source for the *Plant Closing and Mass Layoff Data* factor to replace the BLS Mass Layoff Statistics data used in prior years.

Figure 68: Data sources for Title I Dislocated Worker Formulas **WIOA 133(b)(2)**

Required Information Element/Factor Program Year 2019	Data for PY19/FY20	Data Source	Factor Weight
Insured Unemployment Data	CY 2018 Average Monthly UI Claimants	UI Claimant Data <i>DUA Economic Research</i>	25%
Unemployment Concentrations	CY 2018 Average Annual Unemployment Rate	Labor Force Data <i>DUA Economic Research</i>	25%
Plant Closing and Mass Layoff Data	CY 2018 UI Claimants in Layoffs of 25+	UI Claimant Data <i>DUA Economic Research</i>	10%
Declining Industries Data	3-Year Job Loss in Declining Industries	Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) <i>DUA Economic Research</i>	10%
Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship Data	Not a significant economic factor in MA at 0.24% of total employment	NA	NA
Long-Term Unemployment Data	CY 2018 Average Long-Term UI Claimants (26+ Continuous Weeks)	UI Claimant Data <i>DUA Economic Research</i>	15%
Long-Term Unemployment Data	CY 2018 Annual Total of UI Claimants Exhausting Benefits	UI Claimant Data <i>DUA Economic Research</i>	15%

A hold-harmless provision ensures that each local area’s percentage share of the State allotment designated for local Dislocated Worker program activities does not fall below 90% of the local area’s average percentage share for the prior two fiscal years.

Title II

For Title II:

- (i) Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.
- (ii) Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

Open and Competitive Request for Proposals

On July 18, 2017, ACLS issued an Open and Competitive (O&C) Request for Proposals (RFP) for implementation of the new AE system starting July 1, 2018. The RFP was broadly disseminated to ensure direct and equitable access to eligible providers. The state trained proposal review teams comprised of state adult education staff, regional local workforce development board (LWDB) staff, and consultants as needed. In collaboration with the LWDB directors, ACLS developed a separate process for LWDB review of proposals for alignment with local plans.

The O&C process marked a new funding model which shifted from a rate-based model to a cost per student seat model. Applicants could propose a cost per seat range from \$2,300 to \$3,300 per seat. Programs could also propose a higher cost per seat with supporting rationale for consideration. Programs would be held accountable for maintaining the enrollment for the funded seats. The goal of this shift was to allow programs greater flexibility.

As a result of the RFP, ACLS funded 70 Community Adult Learning Centers (CALCs), eight Adult Education in Correctional Institutions (AECIs), ten Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs, 14 Integrated English Language and Civic Education (IELCE) programs, one distance learning hub, one primary instruction by volunteer program, and eight workplace education programs. AE programs are located in all 16 local workforce areas.

Proposals that scored under 90 points out of a total of 205 points were placed on conditional funding for FY19 and required to submit corrective action plans and/or meet with ACLS leadership. Funding beyond FY19 was contingent upon the successful execution of the approved improvement plan. DESE conducted fiscal audits on three programs that received FY19 conditional funding due to fiscal findings based on audit reviews. Eight formerly funded AE programs did not submit competitive applications but received one-year transitional grants of up to \$120,000 for FY19 only.

In FY19, using federal and state funds, the AE system served:

Figure 69: Number of Student served by Adult Education System

Category	Number of Students
ESOL/ABE (GED/HiSet)	12,322/5,758
Men/Women	6,443/11,637
Employed/Unemployed	9,959/8,121
Out of School Youth	3,013
In correctional institutions	927
Receiving public assistance	6,689
Parents with dependents <18	1,341

Continuation Grant Funding

In March 2019, program enrollment was assessed for each program by averaging enrollment over a five-month period (i.e., September to January) relative to target for which they were funded. The following funding methodology was applied to the FY19 base funding award to determine program grant awards for FY20.

Figure 70 – Methodology to Determine Program Grant Awards for FY20.

ESOL FY19 average monthly enrollment relative to target	Applies only to ESOL seats	ABE FY19 average monthly enrollment relative to target	Applies only to ABE seats
> 100	3% increase	> 100	5% increase
90 - 100	Level funded	75 - 100	Level funded
89 - 80	1% decrease	74 - 70	1% decrease
79 - 75	2% decrease	69 - 65	2% decrease
74 - 70	3% decrease	64 - 60	3% decrease
69 - 60	4% decrease	59 - 55	4% decrease
59 - 50	5% decrease	54 - 50	5% decrease
49 - 40	10% decrease	49 - 40	10% decrease
0 - 39	20% decrease	0 - 39	20% decrease

In April 2019, notices for continuation funding were posted to DESE's Current Grant Funding Opportunities and ACLS websites. Each continuation application was assessed on the merits of its proposed program design, budget, and narrative responses related to activities aligned with WIOA. Awards were contingent upon the provider demonstrating satisfactory performance and average monthly enrollment relative to target.

As of July 1, 2019, these CALC activities are funded with federal and/or state funds:

- Literacy, ELA, and mathematics instruction for ABE students by offering a continuum of services from grade level equivalent (GLE) 0-8.9 and high school equivalency preparation at GLE 9-12 using curricula aligned with the standards and benchmarks of the CCRSAE;
- ESOL for ELLs lacking communication skills (i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking), including basic literacy using curricula aligned with the standards and benchmarks of the MA ELPS with integrated civics education and mathematics instruction as needed;
- Both ABE and ESOL services.

Additional activities and services include but are not limited to the activities and services described below.

- ACLS engaged in activities with WIOA partners and other interested stakeholders:
 - ACLS collaborates at the state level with core partners and has played a significant role in the development of the combined state plan. The ABE State Director is a member of the WIOA Steering Committee and several ACLS staff participate in WIOA workgroups. ACLS staff will continue cross-agency collaborations to ensure a successful implementation of the state plan and with other core programs and one-stop partners.
 - Participated in Massachusetts WIOA stakeholder activities (e.g., WIOA Steering Committee, WIOA work groups) to establish and maintain collaborations among core partners and advance the state plan.
 - Participated in national WIOA activities organized by the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTAE).
 - Provided opportunities for programs to learn about WIOA (e.g., regional meetings across the state, WIOA content at annual Directors' Meeting and ACLS sponsored events, information shared through monthly communications with the field, AE local representation on WIOA workgroups and task forces).
 - In FY19, ACLS issued an RFP (including eligible providers not currently funded) to fund Integrated Education and Training pilot models.
- To ensure successful implementation of policies and initiatives, ACLS holds a required annual statewide Directors' Meeting for programs. Regular communication with the field is ensured through monthly mailings that include announcements, resources, reminders, and updates on a wide variety of topics ranging from curriculum and assessment to data collection to leadership opportunities.
- Educational and career advising supports students with the development of individual education and career plans as they pursue their college and career goals.
- Programs integrate level appropriate employability skills for students (e.g., workforce preparation, contextualized curricula, integration of job readiness skills).
- Programs integrate digital literacy in curriculum and instruction and provide:
 - distance learning (DL) to increase student access to educational services, instructional intensity, and technology skill development; and

- expanded use of Career Ready 101, as part of the Massachusetts Career Readiness Initiative (CRI), a statewide, multi-agency effort to increase the educational attainment of Massachusetts residents and assist them in securing a desirable career. CALCs may use ACT Career Ready 101, an online remediation tool for improving hard and soft skills, building resumes, and exploring careers with the capacity to assess and pair competencies, interests, and skill level and suggest appropriate jobs. In FY20, the CRI entered into a new, two-year contract with ACT for the WorkKeys Curriculum. ACLS provides funds for 21 AE programs to receive licenses. ACLS intends to continue making this resource available to agencies that have integrated it into their programming
- Program staff and directors collaborate on multiple levels and for multiple purposes. AE is represented on each statewide WIOA working group led by the workforce system. In each workforce region, one AE director is selected to represent AE on the local workforce board and AE directors are encouraged to participate in WIOA working groups and discussions of regional employment needs. ACLS continues to convene the MassHire Workforce Board AE representatives on a quarterly basis. Career center operations, adult education messaging, and local area collaborations are typical meeting agenda items.
- ACLS intends to continue convening the MassHire Workforce Board AE representatives on a quarterly basis. ACLS staff will also be available to meet with workforce board and career center directors to discuss issues related to AE operations. In addition, ACLS will continue to provide orientations to new representatives to help familiarize them with the role and responsibilities of the position. ACLS also intends to attend a sampling of local area workforce board and local WIOA partner meetings each year.
- Additionally, ACLS funds programs to provide direct service to MassHire Career Centers in the form of outstationed staff who help with intake, assessment, and referral of customers who need AE classes. ACLS outstationing funds are used to support programs in connecting career center customers with AE programs in the region. The outstationing model was revised to ensure that outstationed AE staff also connects eligible AE students with partner services to ensure that eligible AE students become “shared customers” with the workforce system and get the workforce services they need.
- ACLS supports the provision of family literacy and family engagement activities to help adult learners who are parents and caregivers achieve their goals as learners, workers, and community members as well as their goals as parents and caregivers. Data consistently shows that approximately 40% of enrolled students are parents of school age children. Programs use multiple tools to integrate family literacy in programming including family centered contextualized curriculum, family action plans, and family engagement activities, often in collaboration with early childhood programs and/or schools.
- Workforce preparation activities provided include but are not limited to:
 - integration of college and career readiness culture in all programs;
 - development of Individual Education and Career Plans for students at all levels to promote college and career awareness;
 - integration of job readiness skills (i.e., level appropriate foundation skills) at all levels;
 - integration of digital literacy at all levels to prepare adult learners for employment and further education and/or training;
 - when applicable, for students in higher levels, curriculum contextualized to in-demand industries as identified in local plans; and

- in collaboration with workforce partners, further development and promotion of concurrent education and training opportunities through ITAs, participation in MassHire Career Center training programs, and other integrated education and training models.
- AE providers are required to integrate workforce preparation activities into all levels of AE programming. To assist programs with this task, ACLS offered a workshop at an annual directors' meeting, Workforce Preparation and Employability Skills. The workshop was presented by Sandy Goodman, Co-Director, SABES Program Support PD Center. Participants learned about resources and strategies that can be used to teach interpersonal, intrapersonal, cognitive workforce preparation, and lifelong learning skills.
- Workplace education partnerships continue to be funded in two phases: (1) planning and (2) implementation grants for applicants that conduct a successful planning process. During implementation, workplace education programs include AE and literacy activities concurrently with workforce preparation activities so that low-skilled incumbent workers can improve their skills and more easily advance to more high demand occupations with their current employers. ACLS made expanding the number of workplace education programs a goal in FY20. Targeted outreach was done to all 16 MassHire Workforce Boards and adult education providers. In June 2019, ACLS received nine proposals in response to a Workplace Education Planning RFP. The previous year, ACLS only received three proposals in response to its Workplace Education Planning RFP. This outreach tripled the number of proposals received from one year to the next (i.e., from three to nine).
- ACLS also issued a separate O&C RFP for Distance Learning Hub(s) for FY19-20 and Primary Instruction by Volunteers (FY19-22) to provide services statewide.
 - The purpose of the DL Hub RFP is to establish and support DL instructional Hubs in order to increase access to and the intensity of educational services for eligible adult learners in order to strengthen their technology skills in preparation for college and careers.
 - The purpose of the FY19-22 Primary Instruction by Volunteers RFP is to provide eligible adults who cannot or will not enroll in class-based instructional services at a CALC with access to highly effective AE services. The priority is to support one statewide standalone program that offers volunteer tutoring services annually to approximately 1,000 eligible adult students in cities and towns in the Commonwealth including [Gateway Cities](#).

Future Direction

ACLS will issue an open and competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) and Request for Responses (RFR) in FY22 for the implementation of Title II services in FY23. Massachusetts will distribute AEFLA funds to provide adult education and literacy services in all 16 workforce regions of the Commonwealth.

The projected timeline for implementing the FY23 Open and Competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) follows:

<u>Step</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>
<i>Post RFP Announcement</i>	<i>March 2021</i>
<i>Draft RFP</i>	<i>April 2021</i>
<i>Final Draft</i>	<i>May 2021 – June 2021</i>
<i>Post RFP</i>	<i>July – August 2021</i>
<i>Bidders Conference</i>	<i>August – September 2021</i>
<i>Proposals Submitted</i>	<i>December 2021 – January 2022</i>

*Announce Awards/Letters
1st year FY23-4th year FY26 funding
(Optional) 5th year FY27 funding*

*April – May 2022
July 2022 – June 2026
July 2026 – June 2027*

The Open and Competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process will consist of two separate competitive processes.

- A regional competition will make funding available for Community Adult Learning Centers (CALCs) offering ABE and/or ESOL services, which may also include Adult Career Pathways or bridge programs, Integrated Education and Training, and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education grant programs, etc. The regional allocations will be determined using a formula that takes into account data from the American Community Survey. Successful applicants will be awarded funding based on the quality of their responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA. They will also be awarded points based on past performance. The regional competition will be reviewed for alignment with local plans by local boards.
- A statewide competition will make funding available for programs that may include Adult Education in Correctional Institutions (AECI), Transition to Community College, Primary Instruction by Volunteers, Workplace Education, and Distance Learning Instructional Hubs, etc. Applicants will compete for funds based on a statewide allocation and be awarded funding based on the quality of their responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA without regard to the workforce regions in which they are located. The statewide competition will also be reviewed for alignment with local plans by local boards.

Title IV

Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

By formula, 85% of Massachusetts's VR funding goes to the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and 15% of the VR funding goes to the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB).

MRC makes funds for needed services available to any eligible consumer without regard to location within the state.

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind allots vocational rehabilitation funds to local offices as necessary throughout the year, the agency's currently and funds for needed services are made available to any eligible consumer without regard to location within the state.

Program Data

Data Alignment and Integration

Data Alignment and Integration. Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education

through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

- (i) Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.
- (ii) Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.
- (iii) Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across mandatory One-Stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.
- (iv) Describe the State's plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).

1. Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.

Ensuring that Massachusetts has a world-class workforce system by integrating the use of modern tools and techniques is a primary goal over the next four years. This will be accomplished through the adoption of a technological infrastructure across workforce partners to track activity, services and outcomes of shared customers. The development of an integrated data system between unemployment insurance (currently UI Online) and MassHire/Workforce Connect (currently MOSES and associated applications) is a critical step to achievement. These changes are driven by the need to increase the availability and delivery of virtual workforce services (e.g., career exploration, virtual job fairs, skill development tutorials, etc.) and provide first class connectivity between job seekers and businesses. Toward this end EOLWD has engaged a multi-faceted process to initiate needed changes: strategically redesign business processes and prioritize interim solutions that support current systems and build capacity; design a future customer-focused streamlined technology architecture that considers commercial solutions that meet needs; and create a comprehensive data management strategy to include a transition to a new system/platform.

Certain efforts are currently underway. The Commonwealth's current workforce system will be augmented by aligning programs, services, and activities across core partners identified within WIOA. This entails a common intake/registration application with real-time triage processes. This common intake and case management system is imperative to our ability to strengthen the consistency and quality of services provided by the system to job seekers and businesses. Massachusetts has been working on MassHire Workforce Connect that will feature a single sign-on, a job seeker dashboard with the capability for partners to share information with their customers, and a case management dashboard that will permit case managers to view selective customer information with partner case managers for comprehensive service provision. This new functionality will also serve to support the design of the new customer flows for shared customers described elsewhere in this plan and in the state MOU.

MassHire currently uses MassHire JobQuest, an online application that connects to the MOSES database and is the front-facing web application used by members of the public (job seekers and businesses) to access programs and services such as job search and application, training programs research and, for employers, to

locate job candidates. JobQuest serves as a portal to register individuals working with WIOA Program partners who will be co-enrolled in the MassHire system for career development, job search, educational and occupational assessments, occupational training and job placement. The new IT system functionality will allow all program partners to easily register individuals at MassHire Career Centers, track referrals and track the service results for those “shared” customers. Currently, no cross-program, cross-agency tracking process exists.

2. Describe the State’s plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.

See response to 1 above.

3. Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.

A primary goal for the workforce system is to modernize the system and ensure that Massachusetts has a world-class workforce system by integrating the use of modern tools and techniques.

- Safeguard the integrity of the system by enhancing security and reliability.
- Adopt a technological system across workforce partners that can track activity, services and outcomes of shared customers (job seeker and businesses) – e.g. Learn to Earn DULA, P20 data system etc.
- Develop integrated data system between unemployment insurance (UI Online) and MassHire (MOSES/Workforce Connect) that accelerates progression from job loss to job gain.
- Increase availability and delivery of virtual workforce services (e.g. career exploration, virtual job fairs, skill development, etc.).
- Implement an applicant tracking system that will enhance matching and connectivity between job seekers and job openings.

Refer to additional information in item 1 above.

4. Describe the State’s plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).

The MassHire Department of Career Services will be responsible for coordinating production of the Annual Performance Report, the contents of which are described below and to be submitted per required report formats.

The State commits to performance reports that adhere to the requirements described under section 116, moreover, the reports will include a mechanism for electronic access to the State local area and ETP performance reports. The state submits the required data described below through the PIRL report.

WIOA Section 116(d)(2): Performance Reports – Required report content for core programs:

(2) Contents of state performance reports. – The performance report for a State shall include [subject to Data Validation] –

- (A) information specifying the levels of performance achieved with respect to the primary indicators of performance described in subsection for each of the programs described in subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii) and the State-adjusted levels of performance with respect to such indicators for each program;

- (B) information specifying the levels of performance achieved with respect to the primary indicators of performance described in subsection (b)(2)(A) for each of the programs described in subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii) with respect to individuals with barriers to employment, disaggregated by each subpopulation of such individuals, and by race, ethnicity, sex, and age;
- (C) the total number of participants served by each of the programs described in subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii);
- (D) the number of participants who received career and training services, respectively, during the most recent program year and the three preceding program years, and the amount of funds spent on each type of service;
- (E) the number of participants who exited from career and training services, respectively, during the most recent program year and the 3 preceding program years;
- (F) the average cost per participant of those participants who received career and training services, respectively, during the most recent program year and the 3 preceding program years;
- (G) the percentage of participants in a program authorized under this subtitle who received training services and obtained unsubsidized employment in a field related to the training received;
- (H) the number of individuals with barriers to employment served by each of the programs described in subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii), disaggregated by each subpopulation of such individuals;
- (I) the number of participants who are enrolled in more than 1 of the programs described in subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii);
- (J) the percentage of the State's annual allotment under section 132(b) that the State spent on administrative costs;
- (K) in the case of a State in which local areas are implementing pay-for-performance contract strategies for programs--
 - (i) the performance of service providers entering into contracts for such strategies, measure against the levels of performance specified in the contracts for such strategies; and
 - (ii) an evaluation of the design of the programs and performance of the strategies, and, where possible, the level of satisfaction with the strategies among employers and participants benefitting from the strategies; and
- (L) other information that facilitates comparisons of programs with programs in other states.

Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success

Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success. Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

Massachusetts has a long-term goal of development of a longitudinal follow-up capability on participant employment using wage record data and completion of education and attainment of degrees by use of higher education data. However, this capacity will not be pursued until more immediate data exchange and required performance reporting are in place for all core workforce partner agencies.

Massachusetts will be using results from wage record matches of program exiters/completers on the required measures that assess employment, earnings and persistence in employment for one year following exit for the core WIOA programs. We will similarly follow up for the year following exit for program participants that entered training or postsecondary education as part of their program services. The state is pursuing an interface with core partner systems that will also provide information on shared customers and partner services.

Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data

Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data. Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Based upon the WIOA requirements to utilize wage record data for performance review and evaluation, EOLWD led a process with the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) to discuss WIOA wage record matching needs of partner agencies and to design MOUs with the partners to match wage records of Core Program Partner participants to develop baseline data for the WIOA Plan. The Massachusetts Workforce Board, EOLWD, and DUA will work with each of the Core Program partners to continue to meet performance accountability reporting requirements. Specific MOUs for ongoing wage matching are in place.

In addition, the Administration passed state legislation to allow the use of wage record data for WIOA reporting. Additional legislation will be filed to meet the evaluation and research goals set to support data sharing with education agencies to evaluate the long-term impact of investment and workforce outcomes for individuals who move along a career pathway. The Commonwealth is setting up a Data Advisory Group across major Secretariats and agencies to help guide this process (building off the members of the WIOA Performance Workgroup) and to implement a recent US Department of Labor grant award to build out a longitudinal evaluation of education and workforce programs.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) each worked with EOLWD, Massachusetts Adult and Community Learning Services, and DUA to initiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and data sharing agreement in order for MRC, MCB and DESE to obtain client-specific UI wage data records for the purposes of WIOA reporting and to measure progress on the Common Performance Measures.

Under WIOA, the MRC is required to report VR data to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) through the RSA-911 report which will be submitted via the RSA portal on a quarterly basis with open and closed case data. As part of its WIOA reporting process to report data and to measure performance on the Common Measures to RSA, MRC requires individual level wage data from Unemployment Insurance data. MRC reports data for consumers exiting from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program both successfully and unsuccessfully at the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarter after exit from the VR program for the following fields from Unemployment Insurance data from DUA based on Social Security Numbers provided by MRC to DUA using a secure interchange method of data transmission.

Data fields to be provided to MRC from DUA for matching records using an interchange secure data transmission system will be as follows:

- Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Earnings (at 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarter after exit)
- Employer Name (at 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarter after exit)
- Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) (at 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarter after exit)
- Matching Quarter
- NAICS Code (4 digits)

MRC requires a record for each matching client with individual earnings per employer.

The MOU agreement ensures adequate time for MRC staff to test the process for scripting this data into the RSA-911 report prior to the first quarterly submission as required by the final rules and regulations of the revised RSA-911 file. MRC will use the MRCIS case-management system to submit the RSA-911 data file to the RSA portal on a quarterly program schedule.

MCB and DESE receive similar information from DUA under MOUs entered into with those agencies.

All Massachusetts core partner agencies participate in the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) clearinghouse to obtain employment wage data from other states to supplement wage data provided by DUA.

Privacy Safeguards

Privacy Safeguards. Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State’s workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

All Federal and State laws and provisions concerning the privacy of personal and business information for all partners will be strictly adhered to and protocols will be established to monitor all partners’ access to and use of participant and employer data required to fulfill their programmatic requirements.

As such, the Commonwealth and its workforce development partners are subject to and must comply with all applicable federal and state regulatory and statutory requirements, and any amendment thereto, pertaining to confidentiality and privacy, including but not limited to: General Laws Chapter 151A, §46 ; General Laws Chapter 23H, §6(b)); Fair Information Practices Act (G.L c. 66A); General Laws Chapter 214, §3B; General Laws Chapter 93H, § 2; General Laws Chapter 151A, § 14P; and Internal Revenue Code 6103and 801 C.M.R. 3.00 et seq. In addition, the Commonwealth and its workforce development partners must comply with the notification requirements of M.G.L. c. 93H (Security Breaches) and Executive Order Number 504 (Order Regarding the Security and Confidentiality of Personal Information), and Executive Order 526, Non-Discrimination Policy, including any supplemental procedures or regulations thereto. MDSC gives training to all its staff and partner staff on safeguarding personal and business information, and all MDSC staff and partners must sign off on the EOLWD Confidentiality Policy and EOLWD Information Technology Resources Policy.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/dcs-policy-03-109-massachusetts-identity-theft-legislation/download>

(Workforce Issuance Number 100-DCS-03-109) Mass Identity Theft Legislation and

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/confidentiality-for-eolwd-and-non-eolwd-employees-contractors/download>

(Workforce Issuance No. 100-DCS-03-106) Policy to Protect Confidential Information)

Priority of Service for Veterans

Priority of Service for Veterans. Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for Veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for Veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

Massachusetts has established policies for the delivery of priority of service for Veterans and eligible spouses by the state workforce agency or agencies, MassHire Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Centers for all qualified job-training programs delivered through the Commonwealth's workforce system.

The policies:

- Ensure that covered persons are identified at the point of entry and given an opportunity to take full advantage of priority of service.
- Ensure that covered persons are aware of a) their entitlement to priority of service; b) the full array of employment, training and placement services available under priority of service; and c) any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/ or services.
- Require local workforce development boards to develop and include policies in their local plan to implement priority of service for the local MassHire Career Centers (OSCC) and for service delivery by local workforce preparation and training providers.

The Commonwealth's Career Centers are fully and seamlessly integrated with the full array of WIOA, Wagner-Peyser and other key workforce partner services co-located under one roof. The goal is to as quickly as possible, deliver the desired and appropriate services.

Recipients and sub recipients of DOL funds are required to provide Priority of service to Veterans and eligible spouses. Agreement of a program operator to implement priority of service is a condition of receipt of DOL funds. Priority of Service to Veterans applies to all WIOA Wagner-Peyser Title III funded activities including technology assisted activities, Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Indian and Native American Programs (INAP), National Farmworker Job Training Programs (NFJP), Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs (TAA), job training programs funded by the Women's Bureau, and other current or future qualified job-training program.

For the purposes of eligibility for priority of service, the broad definition of Veteran under 38 USC 101(2) applies. To be eligible for priority of service the term Veteran means a person who served at least one day of active duty (other than active duty for training) and was discharged or released under other than dishonorable conditions, under 38 USC 101(2). Eligible spouse is defined under 38 USC 101(2) applies to any Veteran who died of a service-connected disability, has a total 100% service connected disability; is missing in action, or captured or detained in the line of duty. Veterans and eligible spouses eligible for priority of service are referred to as covered persons; while those not eligible for priority of service are referred to as non-covered persons.

Priority of service means that Veterans and eligible spouses are given priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under a qualified job-training program. Priority means that a covered person is entitled to precedence over non-covered persons for services. This means that a covered person receives access to services before a non-covered person, and if resources are limited instead of a non-covered person.

All operators must enable covered persons to identify themselves at point of entry through a user-friendly process, such as our online Massachusetts Job Quest registration. During any registration process, all customers are prompted by staff to determine if they are a Veteran or the spouse of a Veteran. Once the

Veteran or eligible spouse has been identified as a covered person they must be made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and subsequently informed of the full array of employment, training, and placement services and the eligibility requirements for those programs and services.

Verification of covered persons is not necessary or desired at point of entry to provide priority of service unless the covered person is to immediately undergo eligibility determination and become registered or enrolled into a specific program and the applicable federal rules require verification of Veteran status at that time. Veterans and covered persons are encouraged to identify themselves through self-attestation at all points of entry.

Prioritizing services to the targeted Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) is facilitated by specifically “flagging” such “at risk” Veteran customers within the Massachusetts One Stop Employment System (MOSES) database. The initial assessment identifies the individual’s “job readiness”. If the Veteran is not identified as having an SBE, services are provided on a “priority” basis by OSCC staff. If individual career services are appropriate, a case plan is developed and the Veteran is assisted directly by the DVOP or referred to supportive services, as appropriate.

For those programs with statutory priorities that require preference to be given to a particular group, covered persons who meet those statutory requirements receive the highest priority for the program or services; while covered-persons receive the highest priority for programs or services without any discretionary targets. (Covered persons who are veterans receive the highest priority).

Monitoring of Priority of Service is a shared responsibility with each area, career center, and multiple program operators. The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) places genuine emphasis on priority of services to Veterans through routine leadership visits, periodic staff training, and scheduled Field Management and Oversight (FMO) WIOA program monitoring. Priority of service elements are incorporated in the MDCS monitoring process. In conjunction with MDCS, Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service, (DOL/VETS) periodically conducts site visits to ensure signage is posted and career center staff understand the requirements and implementation of priority of service.

Addressing the Accessibility of the MassHire Delivery System

Addressing the Accessibility of the MassHire Delivery System for individuals with disabilities. Describe how the MassHire delivery system (including MassHire Career Center operators and the MassHire delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State’s MassHire Career Center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

WIOA NPRM at 20 CFR §678.800 requires that the state’s network of MassHire Career Centers be certified by the Local Boards. WIOA further mandates that the State Board, in consultation with chief elected officials and Local Boards must establish objective criteria and procedures that Local Boards must use when certifying career centers. These career center standards further and are consistent with the Governor’s and State Board’s guidelines, guidance and vision. The criteria evaluate the MassHire Career Center delivery

system for effectiveness in addressing business and job seeker needs in the Massachusetts business-driven workforce delivery system. The criteria also ensure compliance with WIOA Section 188 nondiscrimination provisions and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In order to implement the MassHire Certification process and policy under WIOA, the Massachusetts State Board created the Career Center Standards and Process Workgroup (CCS&P). The CCS&P Workgroup comprised a statewide diverse group of workforce professionals, representatives of core and other partner programs, including Vocational Rehabilitation, representatives of targeted customer groups, and business representatives. The group rolled out Massachusetts' inaugural statewide career center standards in the areas of cost effectiveness, integrated services, **accessibility**, effective leadership, performance and responsiveness to the business-driven model. Accessibility standards include the examination of systems to ensure staff knowledge of and compliance with Section 188 of WIOA.

The standards are a core driver of continuous service quality improvement. Through the MassHire Career Center standards development process, career center responsive service delivery structure was determined to be a critical element in career center operation. This includes assessing the career center location for accessibility to the communities it serves, whether hours of operation are responsive to all partners', possessing adaptive technology, and ADA-compliance.

The MassHire Workforce Board Certification standards include the examination of board systems to conduct comprehensive annual reviews for programmatic and physical accessibility, including level of engagement of the disability community in conducting these reviews. Standards for certification will also require MassHire Workforce Boards to demonstrate how MassHire Career Centers are incorporating a universal design approach as the basis of standards for accessibility, ensuring a comprehensive process that focuses on both programmatic and physical access to meet the needs of a full array of customers.

Every MassHire Career Center in Massachusetts is currently fully accessible and in compliance with WIOA Section 188 regulations on non-discrimination. As stated above, the certification process for MassHire Career Centers and the state guidelines for local WIOA plan submissions both address matters pertaining to physical and programmatic accessibility. The MDCS Field Management and Oversight unit conducts on-site monitoring at all 29 MassHire locations, using the MassHire Career Center Quality Assurance Standards. Further, the Massachusetts Department of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) conducts an accessibility review for any new leases or lease renewal activities based on ADA guidelines. Policy dictates that if any deficiencies are identified that One-Stops are informed in writing of the findings and given a deadline for when corrections need to be completed.

MDCS has made a commitment to work with the MassHire Workforce Boards and Career Centers to make the programs and services more accessible to individuals with disabilities. Accessibility is part of MassHire Career Center quality assurance and has been incorporated as a basic tenet in MassHire staff training. The high percentage of individuals identified as having a disability utilizing the career center system is indicative of the full accessibility of the MassHire system.

The MassHire Department of Career Services adheres to Section 188 of WIA, [The Governor's Executive Order No. 478](#), and the [100 DCS 03.102](#). All career centers, statewide, have incorporated practices to effectively serve persons with disabilities through required assistive technology and equipment at each center. Accessibility to serve job seekers with a disability is reviewed annually. Standard adaptive

equipment for MassHire Career Centers include: ZoomText, Jaws, Scanner for Jaws/ZoomText, Dragon Naturally Speaking hands-free voice activated software, Braille Labeler, Assistive listening devices, Text TTY line, height adjustable tables, and Trackball mouse, and other assistive technology.

Addressing the Accessibility of the MassHire Delivery System for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency. Describe how the MassHire delivery system (including MassHire Career Center operators and the MassHire delivery system partners) will ensure that each MassHire Career Center is able to meet the needs of Limited English Proficient individuals, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

It is the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) policy to provide universal access to programs and services to persons who are limited in English proficiency.

MassHire Career Centers are required to develop standard operating procedures that include a Language Access Plan (LAP). The local LAP follows the Commonwealth's guidelines, policies, procedures and protocols as established in the EOLWD's Language Access Plan, which represents the Secretariat's administrative blueprint to provide meaningful and universal access to EOLWD agencies' programs, services and activities for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals.

Please refer to the Multilingual Services Resources webpage on MassWorkforce System website <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/multilingual-language-guidelines> for assistance to provide access to language services to LEP individuals.

Also, refer to Mass Workforce Issuance 100 MDCS 08.101 <https://www.mass.gov/doc/updated-language-services-guidelines-to-assist-limited-english-proficiency-lep-customers/download> for more specific language guidelines - Office of Multilingual Services:

The Office of Multilingual Services provides ongoing support, guidance and expertise on Language Access issues (i.e., quality control and consultation on translation, interpretation and cultural awareness) to the Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) partner's agencies, which are co-located at MassHire Career Centers. The Multilingual Unit Staff possesses a vast array of international and multicultural knowledge, including collective fluency in 12 languages, resulting in excellent communication with the LEP community. The Office acts as the central internal language facilitation unit for all EOLWD departments and its Partners.

The Multilingual Unit currently operates a 12-language toll-free telephone line, which LEP claimants (who speak one of the 12 statutory languages) can call should they have any issues or concerns.

Interpreter Services: In addition, the Career Center Staff have access to a professional over-the-phone language services (vendor providing over 170 languages) to provide language services to customers needing interpreter services.

Training: On a regular basis language access training is provided to MassHire Career Centers staff having contact with the public, so such staff be trained to work effectively with LEP customers and telephonic interpreters.

Internal Volunteer Bilingual Staff: The Office of Multilingual Services maintains an Internal Volunteer Bilingual staff list made up of Career Center staff who have the linguistic capability to assist customers across the Commonwealth.

Communications: Statewide communications are disseminated in 12 different languages to customers based on language preference as established during the enrollment process. Standard Publications are translated and posted on the EOLWD website: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/office-of-multilingual-services> “Your right to an Interpreter” poster is displayed at all MassHire reception areas announcing the availability of free language assistance services.

Language Flashcards: “I Speak” language flashcards are available at the front desk area for a customer to point to language of choice if they should not be able to speak English, which will trigger the language assistance plan.

Websites: The Office of Multilingual maintains several language access sites:

1. Multilingual webpage at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/office-of-multilingual-services>
2. MassWorkforce System resources at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/multilingual-services-staff-resources>
3. Multilingual Intranet: <http://intranet/CO/SitePages/Home.aspx>

IV. COORDINATION WITH COMBINED STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

IV. COORDINATION WITH COMBINED STATE PLAN PROGRAMS. Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required One-Stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

Massachusetts Joint Policy Workgroup

The Commonwealth’s workforce system is continuously strengthened through joint coordination and development of services and activities across a variety of WIOA core partners using the strategic framework established in the 2016 WIOA State Plan.

The WIOA implementation planning process started in November of 2014 through the creation of a new WIOA Steering Committee of the then Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board. The WIOA Steering Committee and its subcommittees served as the main organizing body for joint planning and coordination of WIOA core and partner programs. See 2016 WIOA State Plan for a full description of the WIOA Steering Committee and Subcommittees.

After submission of the 2016 WIOA State Plan, members of the WIOA Steering Committee continued to meet regularly under a newly formed organizing body, the WIOA Joint Policy Workgroup (“Joint Policy Workgroup”). The Joint Policy Workgroup provided oversight of WIOA State Plan implementation across all partner program agencies, coordinated policy and program development, recognized emerging promising practices, and supported the broader workforce system through technical assistance. Members of Joint Policy Workgroup and their corresponding agencies included:

- Adult Education (ABE)/Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS)
- Title II Apprenticeship/Division of Apprenticeship Standards
- Economic Development/Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED)

- Older Workers and Senior Community Service Employment (SCSEP)/Executive Office of Elder Affairs, and Operation A.B.L.E. and Senior Service America
- State Administration for USDOL Programs—Titles I and III, TRADE, DOL Vet etc./MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS)
- Vocational Rehabilitation/Mass Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)/Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)
- Low-Income/Temporary Aid for Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program/Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)/Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)
- Unemployment Insurance/Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA)
- State Board/MassHire State Workforce Board (MSWB)
- Workforce Skills Cabinet/Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), EOHED, Executive Office of Education (EOE)
- Youth Build
- Job Corps
- Local Workforce Investment Boards/Massachusetts Workforce Board Association and MassHire Career Centers/Massachusetts Workforce Professionals Association (MWWPA) – later jointly represented by the merged organization, the Massachusetts Workforce Association
- Sector Projects, Research, Evaluations/Commonwealth Corporation
- Higher Education/Department of Higher Education (DHE)
- Veterans/Department of Veterans’ Services (DVS)

Meeting monthly or bi-monthly, the Joint Policy Workgroup coordinated across one-stop partner programs and other programs to hold two WIOA State Plan Convenings for all required and non-required partners at the state and local levels to receive information and guidance on implementing the WIOA State Plan, as well as engage in peer-to-peer sharing of promising practices emerging from locally-driven partnerships.

The Joint Policy Workgroup also developed and issued [Joint Partner Policies](#) and [Joint Partner Information](#) across the broader workforce system network to inform all partners of key policy or programmatic changes in the workforce system. Examples of key Joint Partner Policies include policies on the local Memorandum of Understanding (local MOU), WIOA State Partner Infrastructure contributions, and WIOA Shared Partner Contributions.

In December 2018, the MassHire State Workforce Board established the framework for developing the 2020 WIOA State Plan, which included utilizing the Joint Policy Workgroup (renamed to the State Plan Advisory Committee - SPAC) as the body to establish identify key priority and strategy areas of the WIOA State Plan, and create a plan for implementation. The SPAC was tasked with carrying out an initial “Visioning Session” of representation from state and local partners. Then, based on the 2020 WIOA State Plan emerging themes of: (1) Accelerating Employment; (2) Scaling up proven models, and (3) Modernizing the workforce system, develop a framework of workgroups for developing the WIOA State Plan.

In March 2019, the MassHire State Workforce Board approved the SPAC proposed WIOA State Plan development framework, which included naming four functional workgroups for development of the WIOA State Plan that reports back to SPAC, while the SPAC focused on developing a cohesive vision for the workforce system, and developing policy and operational recommendations to align all partners of the

system toward meeting the needs of the system's customers and meeting job demand/industry need. In addition, the SPAC focused on further development of cross-agency partnerships to increase system impact.

The following is an overview of the 2020 WIOA State Plan workgroups with an explanation of the workgroup charge and areas of exploration within which each workgroup was to develop key goals, strategies, and tactics for the WIOA State Plan.

Challenges to Employment. This workgroup will work to accelerate employment and economic self-sufficiency for target populations (*people with disabilities, people with Limited English Proficiency, Veterans, returning citizens, older workers, youth, low-income, low-skilled, underemployed, etc.*) by streamlining service provision, case management, and skill development across partners. This group explored cross-partner communities and/or teams to support retention and long-term engagement with people with barriers to employment; integrated case management for long-term career planning; and modernized training and skill development.

Business Services and Engagement. This workgroup supports business growth and sustainability by aligning and elevating workforce services for businesses. This group explored cross-system adoption of modern job matching processes and tools; statewide business adoption of work-based learning models (apprenticeship, co-ops, etc.); streamlined information sharing between businesses and workforce system for more effective operations; enhanced and aligned engagement with key industry sectors (health care, manufacturing, tech).

Data Integration and Analytics. This workgroup generated and maximized data-sharing across WIOA partners to capture cross-system activity and outcomes to drive data-driven decision-making. The issue areas of exploration for this workgroup includes data and information sharing across systems; using shared data to streamline customer experience and case management; supporting cross-partner communities and/or teams through shared data and reports; and measuring long-term engagement with the customer.

Cross-System Alignment. This workgroup, which consists of members of the SPAC, engendered broader workforce system unification by developing an infrastructure for cross-system operations, policies, and information sharing. This workgroup explored cross system policies on co-location, shared costs, referrals to support cross-partner communities and/or teams; cross-training priorities and processes to streamline workforce system operations; and effective methods for partner information sharing and collaborating.

Under the direction of the SPAC, each workgroup featured representation across the broader workforce system partnership, including required WIOA career center partners. It is anticipated that once the 2020 WIOA State Plan is submitted and approved, the SPAC will transition to a body comprised of required and non-required partners focused on providing guidance and support to state and local partnerships in implementation of the vision, goals and strategies of the WIOA State Plan.

Massachusetts Combined State Plan Public Comment Process

To further solidify WIOA implementation and coordination among the WIOA partners, the State Plan Advisory Committee held a collective public comment process on the Massachusetts Combined State Plan from February 3 through March 26, 2020. The partners include the Executive Office Labor and Workforce Development, MassHire Department of Career Services, Department of Unemployment Assistance, Adult and Community Learning Services (Adult Education), Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission,

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, Department of Transitional Assistance, and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (SCSEP). The draft State plan is posted on the Massachusetts' WIOA State Plan website www.mass.gov/wioa-state-plan, where interested parties can submit commentary and feedback on the draft plan. The SPAC held a series of seven public forums on the draft State Plan in seven different regions throughout the Commonwealth from February 3 - 14th, 2020. These public forums featured a joint plenary session where all partners presented on the key highlights of the draft State Plan, followed by breakout sessions led by each of the plan partners in order to provide attendees an opportunity to pose questions and provide feedback on the draft plan directly to agency staff. All comments on the draft State Plan, and the notes from the public sessions will be posted on the State Plan website.

Figure 71: Common Assurances

V. COMMON ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:	
	www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-policy-issuances-by-category
1.	<p>The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;</p> <p>All Commonwealth employees and appointed members of the State and Local Workforce Development Boards are “special state employees” within the meaning of the Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law, G.L.c. 268A, §S 125, and, therefore, are subject to the provisions of that statute. The State Ethics Reform Law, G.L.c. 268A, § 28, imposes education and biennial online training requirements on public employees, including individuals appointed to Local Workforce Development Boards. All Commonwealth employees and local Board Members are provided with a Summary of the Conflict of Interest Law prepared by the State Ethics Commission and must take an online training every two years. See: www.mass.gov/ethics/education-and-training-resources/implementation-procedures/state-employees-summary.html</p> <p>www.mass.gov/ethics/new-online-programs-available-december2012.html</p> <p>During the MassHire Workforce Board certification process, local boards are required to provide assurance that they are adhering to the Commonwealth’s Conflict of Interest Law, including receiving Conflict of Interest training on a biennial basis.</p> <p>The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the Governor’s Office of Boards and Commissions ensures that state board members are properly apprised and trained of the Commonwealth’s Conflict of Interest Laws during the appointment and reappointment process, and on a biennial basis.</p> <p>MRC has conflict of interest policy for all employees as well as for consultants and SRC members.</p>
2.	<p>The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding the activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;</p>

	<p>The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is in compliance with WIOA §101(g) - the “Sunshine Provision”, and the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, G.L.c. 30A, §§ 18-25, which impose certain obligations on Local Workforce Investment Boards. Among these obligations are the legal requirements to conduct all business in an open and transparent manner. The purpose of the Open Meeting Law is to ensure transparency in the deliberations on which public policy is based. The Local Board must assure compliance at all times with the Open Meeting Law by, among other things, posting all meeting notices in a manner consistent with the law, by opening all meetings up to the public to attend, and by keeping accurate minutes of all meetings.</p> <p>In addition, the Commonwealth has posted all WIOA implementation workgroup on a state sponsored website, which lists all meeting minutes, agendas, relevant documents, etc. See: www.mass.gov/massworkforce/wioasubcommittees/</p> <p>See also: www.mass.gov/ago/government-resources/open-meeting-law/</p> <p>During the MassHire Workforce Board biennial certification process, local workforce boards are required to provide assurance that they are adhering to the Commonwealth’s Open Meeting Law,</p> <p>The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, and relevant state agencies, ensure that the State Board maintain compliance with the Commonwealth’s Open Meeting Law.</p>
3.	<p>The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;</p>
	<p>The Massachusetts statewide Memorandum of Understanding (state MOU) requires that all signatories review, comment and approve the elements of the Combined State Plan as it pertains to the programmatic and fiscal operations supporting services to shared customers.</p>
4.	<p>(a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required One-Stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public;</p> <p>(b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;</p>
	<p>(a) The State Board formed a WIOA Steering Committee to address the strategic and operational opportunities generated in WIOA and to create a Combined State Plan. The Steering Committee and its issue-specific sub-committees consisting of representation from local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, community colleges, core program partners, training vendors, and community-based organizations to ensure the</p>

	<p>perspective of the workforce systems' stakeholders are included in the development of the combined state plan.</p> <p>A draft of the Combined State Plan was made available on the MWDB website for public review and comment (www.mass.gov/massworkforce/state-plan/). Additionally, the draft state plan was presented at [Number TBD] public forums where the general public was given an opportunity to review and comment on the plan.</p> <p>(b) The MassHire Workforce Board was provided a draft Combined State Plan in February and met for review and comment on the plan and its elements; the Board will vote to approve the state plan on March 9, 2020.</p>
5.	<p>The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;</p>
	<p>The state utilizes the Commonwealth's mandated MMARS (Massachusetts Management Accounting and Reporting System) System supported by agency accounting records and a structure which includes data warehouse systems and reports, annual audits, certification of local systems and intensive monitoring.</p>
6.	<p>The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this <i>Act</i>, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);</p>
	<p>The Commonwealth's Field Management and Oversight unit conducts annual on-site fiscal and program monitoring, according to State Monitoring policies - www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-field-management-oversight-policy-issuances, all Title I and Title III programs are monitored in each local area in accordance with the requirements established in the draft Regulations in NPRM §683.400 and 683.410 to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations and policies. Monitoring includes biannual systems certification and annual review of all local policies and standard operating procedures.</p>
7.	<p>The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination as applicable; (See section III.(b)(8))</p>
	<p>The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is in compliance with WIOA §188, M.G.L. 151B (Mass. non-discrimination statute), and Massachusetts Executive Order 526 (Massachusetts non-discrimination and equal opportunity Executive Order), 100 DCS 03.101 (MDCS complaint policy). MDCS regularly trains career center staff on non-discrimination and Limited English proficiency (LEP) clients. Further, through the Workforce Board certification process and the Career Center annual planning, all local areas have agreed to be in compliance with non-discriminatory practices, as required under the state and federal laws referenced above.</p>
8.	<p>The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;</p>
	<p>The Commonwealth continues to utilize an aggressive system of monitoring grant reports, MOSES data and local grant activities together with mandated biennial certification of local systems in order to ensure that Federal funds are only utilized to support the grant activities reasonable, necessary and appropriate to and authorized by each fund source.</p>

9.	The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;
	The State Board, as part of its ongoing workgroup to address WIOA implementation, created a sub-committee dedicated to establishing a new cost infrastructure standard which addresses mandated partner support for infrastructure costs including cost support for the Commonwealth's Performance Accountability system. Agreements to the shared infrastructure costs are included in the Massachusetts State Agency WIOA Memorandum of Understanding (state MOU).
10.	The State has a MassHire certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all MassHire Career Centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);
	The Commonwealth of Massachusetts imbedded adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) to its MassHire certification policy to ensure comprehensive programmatic accessibility to all MassHire Career Centers.
11.	Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate;
	The Commonwealth of Massachusetts hereby assures that it will comply with Chapters 41 and 42 of 38 U.S.C. and provide proper oversight to ensure DVOP Specialists provide case management services for Veterans with significant barriers to employment. State agency partners agreed to establish referral processes for Veterans, including those SBEs, in the WIOA MOU. MDCS ensures continuance of a plan that targets those Veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE), as well as any populations targeted by the Assistant Secretary DOL/VET. MDCS will monitor and provide proper oversight to ensure proper case management services are provided for Veterans with an SBE.
12.	Priority of service for Veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.
	The MWDB and EOLWD assures that evaluation and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with State and local boards, state agencies and coordinated with the evaluations provided by the federal Secretaries of Labor and of Education. www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-veterans-policy-issuances

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

General Requirements

Regions and Local MassHire Workforce Development Areas

Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State.

Massachusetts WIOA MassHire Workforce Areas

Berkshire	Greater New Bedford
Boston	Hampden County
Bristol	Merrimack Valley
Brockton	Metro North
Cape Cod and Islands	Metro South West
Central Massachusetts	North Central
Franklin Hampshire	North Shore
Greater Lowell	South Shore

Process for designating local areas

Describe the process used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions.

Process and Identification of Local Areas

On May 20, 2015, the MassHire Department of Career Services issued MassWorkforce Policy number 100.DCS 03.100 “Initial Designation of Local Workforce Development areas,” providing local chief elected officials the opportunity to request designation of the current workforce investment area as a workforce development area under WIOA. **All the sixteen local workforce areas designated under WIA requested and were granted designation under WIOA.**

Massachusetts, through its Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) database maintains quarterly reports for each local area that determine local programmatic performance against federal performance goals. Each of the sixteen workforce areas in Massachusetts demonstrated successful performance. Staff of the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) determines the sustenance of fiscal integrity based on reviews of quarterly fiscal reports. Additionally, staff of the MDCS Field Management and Oversight unit conducts annual local reviews for each of the sixteen local workforce areas, including an analysis of fiscal and programmatic performance.

Process for determination of Planning Regions

Pursuant to WIOA Section 106(a), the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) on behalf of Governor Baker presented draft proposed regions to the Workforce Skills Cabinet (i.e., Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development; Secretary of Economic Development; and Secretary of Education) as part of the Governor's regional planning process. These proposed regions were sent to local Chief Elected Officials, Local Workforce Boards, and the State Workforce Board for consultation via [MassWorkforce Issuance #100 DCS 03.103](#). EOLWD and the State Board have reviewed comments on the proposed planning regional designations and finalized the regional designations in accordance with the above-cited issuance.

Massachusetts WIOA Planning Regions

The seven regions identified below have been designated as the Massachusetts WIOA Planning Regions:

- 1. Berkshire Region:** Comprised of the Berkshire Workforce Development Area
- 2. Pioneer Valley Region:** Comprised of the Franklin/Hampshire and Hampden Workforce Development Areas
- 3. Central Massachusetts Region:** Comprised of the North Central and Central Massachusetts Workforce Development Areas
- 4. North Shore Region:** Comprised of the Greater Lowell, Merrimack Valley and North Shore Workforce Development Areas
- 5. Greater Boston Region:** Comprised of the Boston, Metro North and Metro South West Workforce Development Areas
- 6. South Shore Region:** Comprised of the South Shore, Brockton, Bristol and Greater New Bedford Workforce Development Areas
- 7. Cape Cod and Islands Region:** Comprised of Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Workforce Development Area

Appeals process – local area designations

Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas.

MDCS Policy 100.DCS 03.101.2, Unified Workforce Development System Complaint and Appeals Process, posted on May 29, 2018 delineates the process to appeal the Governor's decision rejecting a request for designation as a workforce development area. www.mass.gov/massworkforce/issuances/wioa-policy/03-legal-regulatory/

Appeals process – infrastructure funding

Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.

MDCS Policy 100.DCS 03.101.2, Unified Workforce Development System Complaint and Appeals Process, posted on May 29, 2018 delineates the process to appeal infrastructure funding. www.mass.gov/massworkforce/issuances/wioa-policy/03-legal-regulatory/.

From the WIOA MOU policy: A MassHire Career Center/Partner may appeal its portion of funds required for Career Center infrastructure costs after determination by the Governor under the State infrastructure funding on the basis that the State Board/Governor's determination is inconsistent with proportionate share requirement in 20 CFR 678.735(a), the cost contribution limitation in 20 CFR 678.735(b), or cost contribution caps in 20 CFR 678.735.

The appeal must be made in writing to the MassHire State Workforce Board within ten (10) business days of the Governor's determination. The appeal will be heard at the next MassHire State Workforce Board meeting, provided there are at least 14 days before the next meeting. If the Council's regularly scheduled meeting is sooner than 30 days from the appeal submission, the Council chair will schedule an auxiliary meeting at least 30 days and no less than 30 days from the appeal submission. The MCC/partner program entity shall have the opportunity to submit written and verbal information to the Workforce Development Council. The Council will issue a decision within 14 days of the Council appeal hearing. Its decision will be final. Each partner may only appeal once per program year.

The request for appeal and/or formal appeal hearing must be sent to:

Executive Director
MassHire State Workforce Board
Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development
Charles F. Hurley Building
19 Staniford Street 4th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

If the appellant chooses to request an appeal without specifically requesting an appeal hearing, the State Board, or its designee (Authorized State Official - ASO), may decide to either make a determination based solely on the information included in the case file or conduct further investigation and issue a written determination without scheduling a formal hearing.

In either case, the State Board/ASO must submit a written determination to the appellant within 30 days of receipt of the original appeal request or 30 days after having received additional information from further investigation or 30 days after a formal hearing request.

If the State Board/ASO has made a written request for information to the appellant or the appellant's authorized representative, and they do not respond within the given time frame the appeal is considered resolved.

If the State Board/ASO deems that a formal hearing is necessary or if the appellant specifically requests such a hearing, the State Board/ASO will notify the parties (in writing) that the matter has been scheduled for a formal hearing. The notice must inform the parties of the following conditions of the hearing process:

Formal Hearing Process

The notice must inform the parties of the following conditions of the hearing process:

- The date, time and location of the hearing.
- Instruction that the State Board/ASO will conduct and regulate the course of the hearing to assure full consideration of all relevant issues and the actions necessary to ensure an orderly hearing are followed.
- Instruction that the State Board/ASO must rule on the introduction of evidence* and afford the parties the opportunity to present, examine, and cross-examine witnesses.
- For clarity it must be noted that an administrative hearing is not the same as a Court of Law. Technical rules of evidence do not apply. It is up to the State Board/ASO to follow principles and procedures that are designed to assure credible evidence that can be tested through cross-examination.

In conjunction with the hearing process the State Board/ASO:

- May decide to make a determination based on the information included in the case file or investigate further prior to the formal hearing.
- May decide to conduct a hearing on more than one appellant if the issues are related.
- May permit (at his/her discretion) the participation of interested parties (amicus curae) with respect to specific legal or factual issues relevant to the complaint/appeal.
- May choose to conduct the hearing at a single location convenient to all parties (preferred) or, if that would represent a hardship for one or more parties, the State Hearing Official may elect to conduct the hearing by a telephone conference call.
- Must conduct the hearing and issue a written determination to the appellant, the respondent and any other participating interested parties within 30 days from the date the hearing was requested. The State Board/s/ASO's written determination must include:
 - the results of the State level investigation;
 - conclusions reached on the appeal;
 - an explanation as to why the decision was upheld or not upheld;

A decision under this state appeal process is final and may not be appealed to the U.S. Secretary of Labor. 20 CFR 683.630(b)(3).

Statewide Activities

Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities.

The Commonwealth utilizes its' authority to set-aside 15% of its Title I Adult, Dislocated and Youth as Governor's Discretionary funding to accomplish all the required statewide employment and training activities under WIOA including: Program Administration and Oversight, Evaluation, Monitoring, Technical Assistance, establishing and disseminating information on best practices, eligible training providers, and performance.

The Commonwealth has utilized these funds to: develop sector partnership initiatives in Healthcare, Manufacturing and STEM; and develop statewide initiatives to target specific customer populations, including, but not limited to homeless individuals, individuals with disabilities, long-term unemployed, out-of-school youth and other individuals facing significant barriers to employment.

Going forward, the Commonwealth will utilize Governor's Discretionary funding to design and develop programs and initiatives responding to specialized business, job seeker and youth needs through innovative and responsive programming and to support the development of programs and activities that connect older out-of-school youth and other disconnected youth to education, training, and employment opportunities along career pathways that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

The Commonwealth will continue to utilize this funding opportunity to explore effective strategies that will match businesses with a skilled workforce.

State use of Governor's Rapid Response set aside funding

Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers

The Commonwealth utilizes its' authority to set-aside 15% of its Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth as Governor's Discretionary funding to accomplish all the required statewide employment and training activities under WIOA including: Program Administration and Oversight, Evaluation, Monitoring, Technical Assistance, establishing and disseminating information on best practices, eligible training providers, and performance.

The Commonwealth has utilized these funds to: develop sector partnership initiatives in Healthcare, Manufacturing and STEM; and develop statewide initiatives to target specific customer populations, including, but not limited to homeless individuals, individuals with disabilities, long-term unemployed, out-of-school youth and other individuals facing significant barriers to employment, as well as for the effort to rebrand the Commonwealth's workforce system (primarily workforce development boards and one-stop career centers.)

From 2020 to 2024, the Commonwealth will utilize Governor's Discretionary funding to design and develop programs and initiatives that support the implementation of the four goals outlined in the WIOA Combined State Plan.

Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A).) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide trade-affected workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the trade-affected dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group *that files a TAA petition*.

The Commonwealth's Rapid Response, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA) and National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) programs are fully integrated both programmatically as well as electronically through the TAARRNEG database. The TAA/TRA program is fully automated.

If the RR team determines that the employees of the company were impacted due to competition from a foreign country, the RR team will initiate a petition through the MDCS TAA Unit. This information is available to all parties including the career centers and DUA TRA unit. In cases where Rapid Response is not working with the employer upon notification that a petition has been filed, the TAA Unit notifies Rapid Response in order that outreach efforts to that employer can commence. The state also compiles a list of those workers who have filed UI claims against the company from the impact date to present through interfaces with the Massachusetts UI Online system and receives updates to those lists to provide notice to individual workers regarding the TAA Program. When available, the Trade Unit also uses a list from employers to provide these notices. Two years ago, TAA sent their notification letters to readability experts to ensure the notices are understandable and comprehensible to workers receiving the notice. The notices reference the state's website and DOL's website for more detailed information regarding benefits and directions to contact their local One-Stop Career Center immediately. Notices are sent with babel notices for those that speak English as a second language.

Since the impacted worker has attended either a "Gateway Session" or a Career Center Seminar (CCS - Career Center Orientation) they were informed of the Trade program and its' benefits. Once the TAA petition is certified all the impacted workers are notified immediately that they may be eligible for trade reemployment services and benefits and to visit a career center to begin the eligibility process. An ICON appears within the MDCS MOSES (job seeker database) to inform the career center of the customers' pending eligibility. This information is also available in the MDCS Central TAA unit, as well as, DUA TRA Unit. All the TAA and TRA eligibility is processed electronically.

The job seeker works with the career center case counselor to determine the appropriate career pathway which in most cases leads to training. The job seeker receives case management throughout the TAA/TRA process, and all information is readily available to all parties. In keeping with transparency, all TAA policies are disseminated to career center staff and posted through workforce issuances for the public to research and obtain. Training is regularly conducted for field staff and state policies are in place and are all posted on the MDCS website for staff and customers to reference. A dedicated phone line is also available for customers to contact the TAA Unit with other specific questions or concerns.

MDCS has established a process that allows local workforce areas to seek grants to address lay-off aversion strategies, bridging the gap between receipt of NDW Grants and staffing grants if a significant lay-off or multiple lay-offs that occur in a local area or region.

In case of natural disaster

In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.

In case of natural disaster -

In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.

In cases of natural disaster, Rapid Response provides services to both the affected Business as well as affected employees. When a Natural Disaster occurs, Rapid Response coordinates with FEMA, MEMA, and the Department of Labor Natural Disaster Coordinator as well as the MassHire Career Center(s) and Workforce Board(s).

Services for businesses include coordinating with the Small Business Association (SBA) as well as other Economic Development agencies that can assist with connecting the businesses with loan and grant programs. Rapid Response also coordinates services with Unemployment Assistance (UI)/ MassHire Career Centers for other business assistance and assists affected employees by providing information about all career center services including unemployment assistance and disaster-related employment, if applicable.

Massachusetts Rapid Response responds to all disasters, including those that are not considered “natural” events, such as fires, explosions, etc. that affect the operation of businesses cause job loss to employees.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements

Alternative Training Models

Work-Based Training Models. If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g. on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State’s strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

On-the-Job Training (OJT)

The success of the Massachusetts OJT National Emergency Grant has demonstrated that one of the most effective methods for ensuring sustainable employment for many customers is OJT. Massachusetts initial OJT NEG award was made in June 2010, which gave impetus to the implementation of a statewide system for OJT in Massachusetts. Policy, standardized procedures, statewide training and technical assistance were developed, including a website providing policy guidance, training presentations, OJT forms, sample training plans, outreach materials and other resources intended to support local areas in OJT implementation.

In 2016, USDOL approved a sliding scale waiver for Massachusetts OJT employer reimbursement under the WIOA DW formula program. The waiver is also applicable to Dislocated Worker Grants on an as-requested basis. Massachusetts has included a new application for this waiver within this state plan.

Other Work-Based Training Models

Several training providers in the Boston area possess experience and capacity to develop industry-specific contextualized training in advanced math and reading, as well as soft skills, career exploration and counseling support. Boston has also had success with integrated ESL/Skill-Training models for the limited English population. The Merrimack Valley is also experienced in the development of additional career pathways which generally combine contextualized education and occupational skills training for individuals who may need language or educational remediation in combination with technical skill development to obtain employment, particularly in the health care or IT fields.

Registered Apprenticeship

Registered Apprenticeship. Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., job center staff taking applications and conducting assessments).

Massachusetts' Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS) and MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), both under the auspices of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), work in collaboration to ensure information about the registered apprenticeship opportunity is widely disseminated to stakeholders in the broader workforce system, including Workforce Boards, Career Center staff, and WIOA partner staff who in turn communicate with business and job-seeker customers.

MDCS is the recipient of multiple Department of Labor apprenticeship grants, totaling more than \$8M. The overarching goal of the Massachusetts American Apprenticeship Initiative [AAI] grant and State Apprenticeship Expansion [SAE] is to expand the registered apprenticeship model to non-traditional industries and diversify the apprentice pipeline. The Apprenticeship Accelerator grant supported the hire of an Apprenticeship Liaison, to conduct business outreach and assists with program development. Via the Apprenticeship Liaison, DAS has engaged the Community College system, vocational schools, chambers of commerce, and professional organizations in the apprenticeship conversation. The AAI, SAE and the most recently awarded Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grant support the development of apprenticeship industry intermediaries that will sponsor and develop programs in the state's priority industries as well as engage MassHire Career Centers in recruitment and screening.

The initiatives supported by the DOL-funded apprenticeship grants spearheaded and strengthened the working relationship between MDCS and DAS. Both agencies are committed to the growth of apprenticeship in traditional and non-traditional industries and occupations and support the "[Apprenticeship Expansion in Massachusetts: Strategic Plan](#)", published in June 2018. In September 2019, with support from the SAE grant, the Commonwealth hired a new Director of Apprenticeship Expansion and Work based Learning, charged with implementation of the apprenticeship strategic plan.

The regional planning process resulted in identification of three priority industries across the Commonwealth: Healthcare, Technology and Manufacturing. In support of apprenticeship expansion in these industries, Massachusetts implemented a [Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit](#). Employers are eligible for up to \$4800 in tax credits for each qualified apprentice.

DAS frequently informs MDCS of apprentice recruitment opportunities. MDCS shares the information with Career Center Directors, Workforce Boards and WIOA Partners via MassHire Workforce Informational Issuances in order to reach the largest possible pool of jobseekers.

As part of DAS's program approval process, all newly approved registered apprenticeship sponsors receive with their program approval letter a second letter containing information about automatic eligibility for, and the benefits of, inclusion on the Massachusetts Eligible Training Provider List. (See ETPL section below for additional details)

The MassHire Career Center Seminar includes an overview of Registered Apprenticeship (RA). Job-seekers are provided with resources to connect to construction and trade apprenticeships and to non-traditional apprentices in industries such as manufacturing, healthcare and technology.

MDCS includes topics related to Registered Apprenticeship on the agenda at Workforce Partners Meetings, hosted by MDCS on a bi-monthly basis. Attendees of these meetings are practitioners from WIOA partner agencies. Topics have included the new Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit (passed in 2018, effective in the 2019 tax year), and the benefits of working with Apprenticeship Intermediaries such as Apprenti Massachusetts, or MassHire Workforce Boards.

The Commonwealth participates in National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) annually by hosting, encouraging and attending events that highlight the success of Massachusetts registered apprenticeship programs. Each year during NAW, the Governor issues a proclamation in support of apprenticeship expansion in the Commonwealth.

EOLWD, MDCS and DAS collaborated on the development of a Sponsor Application package and an Apprentice Agreement for programs in expansion industries, making the language more user friendly to sponsors and apprentices in non-traditional occupations. The sponsor application includes the application for the Registered Apprentice Tax Credit. Forms tailored for construction and trade programs remain available for employers and apprentices in traditional occupations.

Funds from an apprenticeship line item in the state budget supported development of print marketing material, both employer and jobseeker facing. Materials include general information about apprenticeship, case studies and contact information for interested employers and job seekers. Additional materials under development will be industry specific and include resources for employers interested in sponsoring registered apprenticeship programs.

[MassHire BizWorks](#), a federal and state collaboration designed to enhance and align the services offered to Massachusetts businesses, publishes a Resource Guide for employers in the Commonwealth. The guide contains multiple pages of information related to registered apprenticeship and in 2020 and going forward, MDCS and MassHire BizWorks will formalize a training series with information specific to separate groups of practitioners, Workforce Boards, Career Center Directors, Career Center Staff and business service staff. Topics will include apprenticeship basics, employer engagement, apprentice support, data collection and data entry into Massachusetts One Stop Employment System (MOSES).

The Massachusetts Community College system is comprised of 15 Community Colleges located within 50 miles of each other across the Commonwealth. Each college has a Business and Industry department that is in constant contact with employers and industry associations. Currently 6 of the 15 Community colleges are directly involved in the AAI and SAE grants. MassHire DCS communicates frequently with Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges (MACC) related to DOL funded apprenticeship grant announcements and possible areas of collaboration on apprenticeship projects and programs.

Training Provider Eligibility Procedure

Training Provider Eligibility Procedure. Provide the procedure for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122). Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), which applies to individualized career services and training services funded by the Adult Formula program. Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

The MassHire Department of Career Services and the Department of Unemployment Assistance jointly issued and have revised over the years policy 100.DCS 14-100.3 “Massachusetts Eligible Training Provider List (Massachusetts ETPL) Initial and Subsequent Eligibility Process – UPDATED on August 15, 2017. Please follow the link to access the policy.

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-training-policy-issuances>

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) sponsors and/ or their vendors are included on the Massachusetts Eligible Training Providers list. The RA Sponsors must apply to the local workforce board to be placed on the list. Massachusetts DAS accepts a training provider that appears on the licensing board’s website for licensed occupations. For unlicensed occupations Massachusetts Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS) accepts vendors approved by the Massachusetts Department of Education, in conjunction with Massachusetts Division of Professional Licensure (DPL) Occupational Schools Division. Massachusetts DAS approves in-house related instructional programs in unlicensed occupations if: the instructor has six or more years in the occupation, attends adult learning seminars through Massachusetts DESE, and curriculum materials are industry approved. After the program receives RA approval from DAS, they can apply through the local board to be placed on the ETPL list.

MassHire Boards, MassHire Career Center Operators and other local providers of federally-funded employment and training programs must review all policies and procedures to assure compliance with the POS requirements, including the assurance of POS requirements for Veterans at each point of entry for all applicable employment and training programs.

Massachusetts has developed training and will continue to revise and conduct training to staff of the Career Centers regarding POS related to federal employment and training programs.

Career Center Staff must assure that at the initial contact point (point of entry) at Veteran and/or covered persons are made aware of:

- their entitlement to priority of service;
- the full array of employment, training, and placement services; and
- any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs or services.

State and Local policies and procedures will ensure:

- monitoring and evaluation of priority of service will be incorporated within monitoring policies and procedures; and
- all reporting requirements will be met.

Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), which applies to individualized career services and training services funded by the Adult Formula program.

Describe the State’s criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

Priority of Service Implementation and Monitoring

Please see the Massachusetts policy regarding priority of services, here: [WIOA Priority of Service for Jobseeker Customers](#).

Priority of Service implementation is included as part of annual local monitoring of MassHire Career Center operators by the MassHire Workforce Boards. MDCS monitors the boards on an annual basis, ensuring sound monitoring procedures and practices.

Local Funds Transfer: WIOA allows a local board to transfer, if such a transfer is approved by the Governor, “up to and including 100% of the funds allocated to the local area under paragraph (2)(A) or (3), and up to and including 100% of the funds allocated to the local area under paragraph (2)(B), for a fiscal year between (A) adult employment and training activities; and (B) dislocated worker employment and training activities.”

Massachusetts requires that local Boards submit a formal request for such a transfer that includes the following information:

- Amount of funds being transferred
- Program from/to
- Assurance that the transfer of funds will not impact the level of services available to the population from which the funds are being moved
- Number of participants to be served by each program
 - Number of participants receiving training services for each program

The Massachusetts WIOA Funds Transfer Authority Policy may be viewed, here: [WIOA Funds Transfer Authority](#).

Youth Program Requirements

- (a) Youth Program Requirements. With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA,—

State-developed criteria

Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants.⁶

Local boards follow [Youth Procurement Guidance: 100 DCS 19.100](#) and Training Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) WIOA. 21-16 to procure and award grants for youth workforce investment activities. As part of the procurement process bidders will describe how they will meet primary indicators of performance. Local boards will review youth performance of competitively procured youth service providers on an annual basis and take performance outcome information into consideration when refunding contracts.

Local boards are responsible for the youth service strategy in the local workforce area and as such will procure services that meet the needs of the respective youth population. As stated in 20 CFR §681.400, a

local board may determine that the grant recipient or designated fiscal agent may, “provide directly some or all of the youth workforce investment activities. It is highly encouraged that Local Boards with recommendations from the local area Standing Youth Committee, when such a committee is established, determine the most effective and cost-efficient delivery of youth services.

Youth Program Elements

Describe how the State will ensure that all 14 Program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented.⁷

Policy [100 DCS 19.107: WIOA Youth Individual Service Strategy](#) states program staff must inform youth of the 14 WIOA program elements. The policy further states that WIOA eligible youth must participate in at least one of the WIOA program elements as required for program participation. Program elements should be selected based on the youth’s objective assessment and individual need.

Youth are required to have access to all program elements and may benefit from a mix of program elements and services. Local areas may have policies in place that require all youth to participate in a specific set of program elements.

Youth program staff must document in the youth Individual Service Strategy (ISS) the program element(s) in which the youth will participate. Staff must also document in the ISS when a youth is referred to an appropriate service provider for participation in a program service element.

Requires Additional Assistance

Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out of school youth specified in WIOA sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).

The State policy [100 DCS 19.104 Youth Requires Additional Assistance](#) provides language for requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out of school youth specified in WIOA sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).

Local Workforce Boards may choose to establish locally approved additional barriers based on demographic and unique local area circumstances. Utilization of the Youth Requires Additional Assistance barrier for program eligibility determination must be supported by a locally approved policy. The local definition must be approved by the Local Board and included in the Annual Plan. Implementation of the Youth Requires Additional Assistance barrier must include documentation that clearly demonstrates that the youth meet this definition.

State Definition of Alternative Education

Provide the State's definition of "alternative education".

In accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an Alternative School is defined as an initiative within a public-school district, charter school, or educational collaborative established to serve at-risk students whose needs are not being met in the traditional school setting. For the purposes of this definition, Alternative Education does not include private schools, home schooling, high school equivalency services, or gifted and talented programs. Alternative Education may serve some students with disabilities but is not designed exclusively for students with disabilities.

Alternative Education may operate as a program or as a self-contained school:

- Alternative Education Programs may function within a single school or be a program affiliated with one or more schools or districts. Alternative Education programs must be affiliated with at least one school that has a school code assigned by the Department.
- Alternative Education schools that operate as self-contained public schools must comply with Massachusetts laws and regulations that guide the operation of schools in the Commonwealth and must be assigned a school code by the Department.
- Students enrolled in Alternative Education programs or schools shall be taught to the same academic standards established for all students in the Commonwealth. Alternative Education programs or schools shall employ highly qualified teachers as defined by the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. At the secondary level, Alternative Education programs or schools shall not limit student access to the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. All students enrolled in an Alternative Education program or school must be reported in the Student Information Management System (SIMS) as an enrolled student and assigned the designated Alternative Education code.
- Students who may benefit from an Alternative Education include those who are pregnant/parenting, truant, suspended or expelled, returned dropouts, delinquent, or students who are not meeting local promotional requirements.

Not attending school

Include the State definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If State law does not define "not attending school" or "attending school," indicate that is the case.

Not Attending School - An individual who is not enrolled or not attending a secondary or post-secondary educational program is considered out-of-school. An individual who attends a high school equivalency program or is enrolled in non-credit postsecondary courses is considered out-of-school.

- According to the Department of Labor, providers of Adult Education under Title II of WIOA, YouthBuild Programs, and Job Corps programs are not considered schools. WIOA youth programs may consider a youth to be out-of-school for the purposes of WIOA youth program eligibility if they are attending Adult Education provided under Title II of WIOA, YouthBuild, or Jobs Corps. (§681.230).

Attending School - An individual who is enrolled and attending a secondary or post-secondary educational program is considered in-school unless the individual attends a high school equivalency program or is enrolled in non-credit postsecondary courses in which case the individual is considered out-of-school.

Basic Skills Deficient

If utilizing the portion of the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the specific State definition.

Massachusetts’ definition of an individual that is basic skills deficient is defined as youth or adults that have English, writing, or computation skills at or below 8.9 grade level or are English Language Learners or an individual that meets the following criteria:

- Lack a high school diploma or high school equivalent and is not enrolled in secondary education
- Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education/Literacy program
- Lack basic computer literacy or basic financial literacy skills

Single-area State requirements.

Single-area State requirements. In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

1. Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)
2. The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)
 - a. The type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities, including an identification of successful providers of such activities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)

Not applicable.

Waiver Requests

Waiver Requests (optional). States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested: Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;

- (1) Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;
- (2) Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;
- (3) Describes how the waiver will align with the Department’s policy priorities, such as:
 - (A) supporting employer engagement;
 - (B) connecting education and training strategies;
 - (C) supporting work-based learning;
 - (D) improving job and career results, and
 - (E) other guidance issued by the Department.

- (4) Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and
- (5) Describes the processes used to:
 - (A) Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;
 - (B) Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;
 - (C) Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;
 - (D) Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.
 - (E) Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State’s WIOA Annual Report.
- (6) The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

Massachusetts is requesting the approval of 2 WIOA waivers at this time:

1. On-the-Job Training for Small Employers
2. ETPL Training Provider - waiver of obligation to collect performance information on all students

1. On-the-Job Training (OJT) - reimbursement during training period of up to 90% of trainee’s wage for small employers (50 and fewer employees).

The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), is requesting a waiver to the current allowable employer reimbursement rate of up to 50 percent of the wage rate of an On-the-Job Training (OJT) participant for the extraordinary costs of providing training and additional supervision related to the OJT as described in WIOA Section 134(c) (3)(H)(ii)(II). The waiver request has been developed in accordance with the WIOA guidelines in Section 189(i) (3) (B) and the WIOA Federal regulations at 20 CFR 680.720 (b).

Massachusetts is proposing a sliding scale of reimbursement to the employer based on employer size. Under the waiver, the following sliding scale will be implemented: up to 90% reimbursement for employers with 50 or fewer employees; up to 75% reimbursement for employers with 51 – 250 employees; and for employers with more than 250 employees, the statutorily defined 50% limit will continue to apply.

The waiver is requested for use with all WIOA formula funds: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, National Dislocated Worker Grants and other Discretionary grants, as appropriate. MDCS looks forward to approval of this waiver for Massachusetts and, upon approval request that the waiver period be effective immediately.

A. The statutory and/or regulatory requirements for which the waiver is requested:

WIOA Section 134(c) (3)(H)(ii)(II) and the accompanying regulations as promulgated at 20 CFR 680.720 (b) state that employers may be reimbursed up to 50 percent of the wage rate of an OJT participant for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the OJT.

B. Description of the actions the state or local area has undertaken to remove state or local barriers:

There is no state or local statutory or regulatory barrier to implementing the proposed waiver.

C. Description of the waiver goals; relationship of goals to the strategic plan goals; and expected programmatic outcomes:

The waiver is consistent with national policy to develop a workforce system that is responsive to the demands of both individual and employer customers. The Commonwealth anticipates the following goals will be achieved with approval of the waiver request:

- Maximize the flexibility needed to impact local economic vitality and direct resources where demand for services is greatest by assisting local areas in marketing OJT as a vehicle to engage employers, particularly in targeted sectors, to hire and provide training to new workers. This will build the capacity and future viability of both the workforce and the industries themselves.
- Assist with the transformation of the current workforce system to a demand-driven, sector based and regionally driven talent development pipeline.
- Increase training and transitional employment opportunities for unemployed workers and hard-to-serve youth and adults.
- Equip individuals with relevant job training and transferable skills in high-skill, high-wage, high-demand occupations and industries.
- Increase business usage of the local workforce system by providing added incentives to hire and train new workers.

Local workforce development partners have provided feedback with regard to employer needs for assistance with economic competitiveness in the current economic downturn. Allowing businesses to be reimbursed on a sliding scale will address the primary reason for prior limited use of OJT and increase employer participation. Employer feedback indicates that they will be more likely to use this opportunity if reimbursement was greater than 50%.

Small to medium-sized employers are responsible for 51% of all the jobs in Massachusetts, therefore the Commonwealth estimates that small to medium-sized employers will comprise a significant percentage of OJT opportunities.

D. Description of the individuals impacted by the waivers:

The need for training is especially acute for those workers most in need: dislocated workers transitioning to new occupations and industries, long-term unemployed individuals in need of advancing outmoded skills in order to catch up with emerging technologies, and low-income and entry-level workers seeking to start their careers in a weak economic climate. Approval of the waiver will increase training options for WIOA-eligible job seekers.

The reduced match requirement for employers, particularly new start-ups and other small to medium-sized businesses, will provide an attractive and cost-effective financial incentive, increasing the opportunity to utilize the OJT model to hire and train new workers. This waiver will allow Massachusetts businesses to more rapidly adapt to both technological and general marketplace changes by improving their capacity to expand and remain competitive with affordable OJT options uniquely designed to achieve their specific developmental goals.

E. Description of the process used to: Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment from business and labor; provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver; provide affected local boards the opportunity to comment; and monitor implementation:

The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) actively sought the input of local regions during the development of this waiver request. As with all major workforce policies and procedures, the Commonwealth has solicited dialogue and input from local workforce boards, MassHire Career Center operators and workforce development partners concerning the impact of this waiver. The local workforce areas overwhelmingly support this request based upon past experience with the utilization of this waiver.

MDCS will monitor implementation of this waiver and work with the 16 local workforce development regions to implement the appropriate state and local policies to govern its individualized use by local regions.

2. Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Waiver – waiver of the obligation of training providers listed on the ETPL to collect performance data on all students.

For training providers listed on the Massachusetts ETPL, this waiver eliminates the need to report performance outcomes for students whose training is not funded through the Workforce System. The Commonwealth continues to require training providers to report on customers attending training funded through one of the Workforce System’s funding resources (i.e. WIOA, Trade, Training Opportunities Programs (Section 30), National Dislocated Worker Grants, etc.).

MassHire Workforce Boards will base ETPL approval on performance that is reported for those students whose training is funded through the MassHire workforce system.

The Commonwealth anticipates achieving the following goals with implementation of this waiver:

- Removal of a potential disincentive for schools and training providers to participate an ETPs in anticipation of maximizing the available marketplace of training curriculum.
- An increase in varied training offerings for individuals utilizing Individual Training Accounts (ITA) via the public workforce system (increased consumer choice).
- Greater utilization of the ETPL by individuals pursuing training in the Commonwealth related to jobs that are in-demand by employers.
- Improved overall performance outcomes for individuals pursuing training utilizing ITAs.
- Strengthen partnerships and relationships between training providers and the public workforce system.
- Enhanced ability of local boards to respond quickly and efficiently to immediate local job seeker and employer needs.

Statutory and/or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived - Eligible Training Provider List Requirements

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is seeking a waiver from the requirements outlined in the WIOA at Sections 116 and 122, and at 20 CFR 677.230 and 20 CFR 680.400 through 680.530, which require the collection and reporting of performance related data on all students participating in training programs listed on the state’s ETPL.

Background

With the passage of WIOA, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts implemented the new law's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) provisions. In July 2016, the state launched its new ETPL requirements and some new features for providers related to data entry. MA's revised ETPL requirements provide an improved and enhanced vendor experience compared to the state's former requirements. Massachusetts is currently working to leverage existing data systems and data sources to assist with meeting the WIOA ETPL performance reporting requirements.

Despite these efforts, Massachusetts has faced several challenges while working to implement the WIOA ETPL requirements, which include:

- Ensuring that local areas have sufficient numbers of, and diversity of, training providers necessary to create an effective marketplace of training programs for WIOA participants utilizing ITAs.
- Ensuring fairness in the process of determining training provider eligibility.
- Reducing the burden of the requirement for training providers to submit performance information to the state, which may not be readily accessible.
- Much of the performance information is self-reported through surveys, etc., which makes it difficult to get accurate performance data since students may not respond to surveys and, as a result, schools may just provide performance information previously collected without resurveying students.
- Proprietary schools do not currently have a statewide system to report student data, and as such, there is no way to automatically match students with other data sources to calculate outcomes. This results in a large burden on what tends to be the smaller training providers.
- Proprietary schools would have to collect sensitive information, such as social security numbers, etc., on all students for the state to match wage and earnings information on students utilizing ETPL programs, which may leave students open to identity theft, privacy considerations, etc.
- The burden on training providers to collect and provide information on all students once they leave or graduate from the program, results in certain providers electing not to be on the ETPL, which limits consumer choice, especially for proprietary schools.
- WIOA-paid students at Community Colleges represent a small portion of their enrollment. Non-WIOA paid students are more likely to be planning to enter training-related employment after an entire suite of courses over a longer period of time. Therefore, including these (non-WIOA) students in the cohort that count toward that course's performance unfairly skews the outcome in a negative direction.
- Providing information on eligible training programs to WIOA participants in a way that helps make informed decisions about how to use their ITAs is challenged by the inclusion of non-WIOA students in performance calculation.

Actions Undertaken to Remove State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts regulations and policy statements are in compliance with current federal law.

Waiver Goals and Outcomes

Goals and outcomes related to this waiver request include:

- Remove the most significant disincentive for schools and training providers to participate in the ETPL, in anticipation of maximizing the available marketplace of training curriculum.
- More numerous and varied training offerings for individuals utilizing ITAs via the public workforce system (in other words, greater consumer choice).
- More training providers can lead to lower cost options.
- Greater utilization of the ETPL by individuals pursuing training in the Commonwealth related to jobs that are in-demand by employers now and in the future.
- Improved overall performance outcomes for individuals pursuing training via ITAs.
- Strengthen partnerships and relationships between training providers and the public workforce system.
- Enhanced ability of local boards to respond quickly and efficiently to immediate local job seeker and employer needs.

Individuals Impacted by the Waiver

Individuals who access training services in Massachusetts via ITAs, Commonwealth of Massachusetts staff and partner staff, AJCs, subcontracted service provider staff, and training providers will benefit from this waiver.

Monitoring Progress and Implementation

Annual WIOA on-site programmatic reviews will include an evaluation of how waivers are impacting local programs to ensure programmatic goals and outcomes are being met.

State staff involved with the administration of the ETPL and performance reporting will periodically examine the appropriateness and the effectiveness of this waiver. This strategy ensures that the goals described above, as well as those outlined in the State's Combined Plan, are consistent with established objectives of the WIOA and federal and state regulations.

Notice to Local Boards and Public Comment

In accordance with the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.135, Massachusetts is submitting a Massachusetts' waiver request is currently posted on our website for comment and review by required parties and the general public.

Currently waived through June 30, 2020: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/dcs-policy-16-100-wioa-waiver-for-eligible-training-providers-approved/download>

Figure 72: Title I-B Assurances

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:	
1.	The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients or basic skills deficient;
	The MassHire Department of Career Services has established a policy that requires that Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of career and training services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients or basic skills deficient. (See: MassWorkforce Policy Issuances number 100.DCS 18.101 WIOA Title I Eligibility Requirements, Attachment C “Priority for Services” can be accessed at the following link: www.mass.gov/massworkforce/issuances/wioa-policy/18-wioa/)
2.	The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring Veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;
	Through the WIOA MOU local areas agree to have in place a referral process whereby Veterans, including those SBEs, are referred to career services provided by the DVOP specialist.
3.	The State has established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;
	The MassHire Department of Career Services has established a local Workforce Development Board certification policy that sets forth criteria and process chief elected officials must use when making appointments to the local workforce development board. (See MassWorkforce Issuance <u>100 DCS 17.100 – Certification of Local Workforce Development Boards – Interim Certification</u>)
4.	The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);
	Massachusetts Boards have been certified under basic WIOA requirements. Please refer to Massachusetts Policy Issuance number 100.DCS 17.102.1 . Massachusetts has certified all its 16 boards under this policy through June 30, 2020.
5.	Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;
	n/a
6.	The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;
	The Massachusetts Workforce Development Board created a Workforce Allocations Committee (formerly the Workforce Allocations Task Force) which is composed of members of the workforce system, including representatives of chief elected officials. This board sub-committee brings to the full state board recommendations on the factors of distribution for

	Title I within state Allocations; once adopted by the Board, these recommendations are submitted to the Governor for state adoption.
7.	The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);
	The Commonwealth hereby assures that it will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7)
8.	The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;
	Through the Workforce Allocations Committee (formerly the Workforce Allocations Task Force), the Commonwealth established a policy on the formula and methodology for distribution of Title I adult and youth funds, within WIOA guidelines. A hold-harmless provision ensures that each local area's percentage share of the State allotments designated for local WIOA Title 1 Youth and Adult program activities does not fall below 90% of the local area's average percentage share for the prior two fiscal years.
9.	If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;
	The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) are the two state agencies that administer state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, and the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) is the state agency that administers the Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, and Youth Programs under Title I. All agencies are party to the WIOA MOU with establishes agreement to cooperate and coordinate across shared customers.
10.	The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.
	The State hereby agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.
11.	The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);
	The State performs Annual on-site monitoring reviews of each local area to ensure compliance with 2 CFR part 200, as required by WIOA section 184(a)(3). During this on-site review, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State ensures that established policies achieve the appropriate program quality and that outcomes meet the objectives and regulations of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). • The review enables the Governor/State to determine if sub-recipients and contractors are compliant with WIOA and Wagner-Peyser requirements. • The review enables the State to determine whether a local plan will be disapproved for failure to make acceptable progress in addressing deficiencies as required in WIOA section 108(e)(1); and

- The review enables the state to ensure compliance with the non- discrimination, disability and equal opportunity requirements of WIOA 188.
- The State reports the review outcomes, provides technical assistance and follow-up and initiates corrective action (if necessary).

Local Boards, as part of the annual planning process assure to adhere to the financial recordkeeping, cost principles and cost allocation requirements in WIOA. (See:

[MassWorkforce Issuance 100 DCS 04.106.1](#))

Employment Service Professional Staff***Provision of Labor Exchange Services***

Describe how the state will staff the provision of labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act, such as through state employees, including but not limited to state merit staff employees, staff of a subrecipient, or some combination thereof. *(Note- States not seeking to utilize the staffing flexibility in the final rule as part of their 2020 State Plan submission can answer this question by entering that the state will utilize state merit staff employees.)*

The Commonwealth will continue to employ its current staffing with regard to provision of Wagner-Peyser services. The Commonwealth and its WIOA partners will research the potential impact of the options outlined in the final rule as part of the ongoing agenda for the WIOA state planning team.

Professional Development

Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

EOLWD/MDCS continues the work of MassBizWorks providing training on standard staff business service knowledge and competencies across multiple state agencies that are responsible for the provision of a myriad of programs and services to the Commonwealth's employers.

EOLWD/MDCS is invested in ensuring Career Center management and staff have the knowledge and understanding of the local, state, national and global economy as the Commonwealth implements a demand-driven system. EOLWD/MDCS has focused on additional specific areas of professional development as follows:

Platform Skills: MDCS has reviewed the levels and skills sets that are required to enhance/improve staff abilities to conduct one on one career counseling, workshops and public presentations and giving exceptional customer service to both job seekers and employers. These skills are critical to ensuring that the employer and jobseeker customers understand the depth and breadth of the services available to them and to promote knowledge and utilization of the Massachusetts Workforce Development System.

Labor Market Information (LMI): It is essential to understand that LMI touches every aspect of the job search, as far as locating and understanding the skills level of in-demand jobs, and how to identify transferable skills, or the need to upgrade current skills to meet the needs of employers. It also assists staff and customers identify appropriate salary demands and many labor trends. Staff and customers will also

understand the need for researching companies and building interview skills to prepare for the interview and negotiate salaries. EOLWD/MDCS has invested in tools to help in this effort.

Using Tools Effectively: Staff have and will continue to be provided training on: Burning Glass/Labor Analytics, Mass Career Information Systems (Mass CIS), O*Net Online and TORQ. The training demonstrates how to assist job seekers to search for and access valuable labor market information on industry trends and career projections that will inform their choices in seeking employment and/or training. Breaking down job descriptions and resumes to identify and focus on the skills required for the job utilizing such software, as TORQ moves Massachusetts significantly in a demand driven manner.

Business and Demand Driven Methodologies: By utilizing a variety of training and professional development resources including classroom training and online resources - such as www.workforcegps.org/ staff will stay current with the latest tools and techniques for enhancing employer engagement and connecting jobseekers with quality jobs.

Technology: EOLWD/MDCS consistently upgrades its IT resources including hardware and software to ensure that staff is kept up to date with innovations in technology that assist them in providing high quality services to jobseekers and employers. Specific training is conducted on the statewide database, the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES), consistently as software and programming upgrades are made. Internal training sessions as well as online programs, webinars and video conferencing are used to keep staff, and subsequently customers, aware of advances in relevant technology resources and tools.

Social Media: Another important aspect of staff training, and development continues to be to enhance their skills in the effective use of technology in the job search. Staff must be able to assist job seekers in utilizing technological tools such as using email, social media, and online job applications to communicate and to market their skills to employers. Understanding that many employers will review an applicant's Internet profile as a part of a background check is important. Mastering the use of electronic communication via email and other online applications (for example, LinkedIn) is essential to ensuring that staff can communicate with job seekers for the purposes of doing outreach for targeted recruitment and connecting those job seekers to appropriate employers.

The Commonwealth is committed to providing consistent and current professional development activities and training to all staff within the Massachusetts Workforce System including the State Board, Local CEOs, Local Boards, Career Center Staff, including Core Partner staff and external Partners as well.

Training to identify Unemployment Insurance Eligibility Issues

Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance program and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of Unemployment Insurance (UI) eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is a fully integrated and interconnected workforce development system. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's (EOLWD) Departments of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) and Career Services (MDCS) are responsible for the direct oversight of all the Massachusetts Workforce Development programs, including Unemployment Insurance (UI), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and Wagner Peyser/Employment Services (ES) funded

through the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). MDCS/DUA continuously works to improve communication and integration internally and externally through the Massachusetts Workforce System. Internally, MDCS and DUA continue to support in each agency an integration and coordination liaison that tackles a number of cross agency issues and assists in the training and development of all career center and call center staff. MDCS/DUA will continue to provide training across the Commonwealth to MassHire career center staff, including partner staff, regarding the identification of potential UI eligibility issues. MassHire Career Center staff have been trained when conducting face to face interviews on how to utilize open ended questions regarding ongoing work search strategies which are utilized across all job seeker customers. DUA/MDCS have put protocols in place on how to report potential UI eligibility issues for adjudication. If career center staff become aware of a potential UI eligibility issues that are outside the Reemployment Service Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) process (notification of potential UI eligibility issues on RESEA claimants is conducted through a database system interface) DUA is notified immediately.

Assisting individuals filing claims at MassHire Career Centers

Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through MassHire Career Centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.

The Commonwealth has ensured that there has been on-site assistance at MassHire Career Centers to assist individuals who are filing a UI claim since 2000 with the inception of Career Centers. Since the launch of UI Online in 2013, DUA/MDCS have collaborated to better streamline and improve on that service delivery within the career center system.

Career centers have a dedicated bank of computers and telephone lines available which are accessible to any career center customer that needs assistance filing a claim for unemployment compensation. Along with the telephone banks, DUA instituted a MDCS consultation line. This line is a direct connection from the career centers to DUA call center staff for additional assistance relating to all UI issues.

Specialized training was and continues to be conducted at career centers so that staff can confidently assist individuals filing UI claims.

Strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants

Describe the State's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals.

The Commonwealth revitalized its reemployment efforts to assist UI claimants and other unemployed individuals in 2009 to ensure a "holistic" approach to reemployment services that included designing a solid program that would be viable across all funding sources; flexibility in the design and implementation to allow each career center the ability to customize the re-design to meet the needs of their local customer population; and on-going partner and customer feedback to continually improve programs and services offered to our customers.

The revitalization was focused in two areas: Re-designing our Career Center Seminar - Orientation (CCS); and also a re-designed customer flow. This has assisted the Commonwealth in quickly adapting this approach to meeting the reemployment service needs to shared/common customers across all core partner programs, services and activities.

The premise is that the CCS is the main portal into the career center. This orientation provides customers information on, and access to, the full array of services, programs and activities available at or accessible from the career center. As part of the orientation the customer will complete a self-assessment of their work search strategies, if appropriate, complete the Career Readiness 101 assessment, complete a job profile, and with a career counselor review their approach to work search, their work search efforts, all their assessment results and establish the next appropriate step in their career plan. In short, the career center can assist all customers to prepare to find their next job; explore options to upgrade their skills; access specialized services including core partner services; and/or connect to other community resources. As stated above, it is essential to include flexibility within the design to allow for customization at the local level that would directly meet the needs of local job seekers and employers.

Attendance at a CCS is mandated, as well as participation in all these reemployment service activities for UI claimants who have been deemed permanently separated (not work attached and most likely to exhaust) however, it is not mandated for all career center customers. Although all customers may not attend this specifically designed CCS, it is the regular practice of the career center to schedule all customers for a similar orientation that leads to the rest of the services, activities and programs offered by the career centers.

W-P funds to support UI claimants

Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate including the following:

Described below.

Labor exchange for UI claimants

Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act:

Described below.

Registration of UI claimants

Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;

Described below.

Administration of the work test

Administration of the work test work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

Described below.

Referrals and applications for education and training

Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

This section includes a response to items number 1, 2 and 3, above. MDCS/DUA have been joint managing a successful Reemployment Service and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program since 2009. The Massachusetts model has always required all Permanently Separated (not work attached) UI Claimants to participate in upfront delivery of Reemployment Services (RES) which was followed by a reemployment eligibility assessment determination upon another visit to the career center.

The Commonwealth was well positioned with the inception of Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) to expand and improve upon its model to provide an even more robust delivery of Reemployment Services for UI claimants.

UI claimants who are selected for this program must attend a CCS, receive defined reemployment services, and attend a follow up review. If they fail to do so, they will be indefinitely disqualified for UI benefits.

All permanently separated UI claimants (not work attached and most likely to exhaust) are enrolled in the RESEA program. The RESEA claimant is mandated to attend a CCS. As stated above, the CCS is the main point of entry into the career center where the claimant is introduced to the full array of services available to them through the Massachusetts workforce system. The goal is to immediately engage the job seeker and provide a “value added” experience for the UI customer. During the CCS, UI claimants complete a job search inventory, a skills assessment, and a Career Action Plan (CAP) with a job counselor.

A career center staff member then reviews work search activity, individually with the UI claimant. They discuss the number of jobs, types of jobs, industry of choice, labor market trends impacting the job market and the customer’s methods of follow-up. Prior to leaving on this first visit, the RESEA customer is scheduled for additional career center services, as well as, a follow-up RESEA review.

The follow-up RESEA is another work test point where again career center staff ensure that the customer is on the right track in their work search efforts. Throughout RESEA participation the counselor provides guidance, (i.e. if the claimant is only applying to one industry the counselor will work with the claimant and prepare a job profile through the TORQ program to demonstrate to the claimant how his/her skills may be more broadly applicable).

All career center customers, including UI claimants are introduced to the myriad of labor market, career awareness and assessment tools available to assist them in their work search efforts, including but not limited to TORQ, Mass CIS, and WorkKeys.

After reviewing the customers’ assessment, the determination is made by the customer and counselor that the customer is in need of additional education and/or training to upgrade skills to meet the knowledge, skills and abilities that are in demand to improve the prospect for employment, they will begin that process together.

As stated above, if at any time during a UI claimant’s journey through the Massachusetts workforce system it becomes evident that the claimant has a potential UI eligibility issue, DUA is notified immediately. If a RESEA customer does not attend or fully participate in required services, the Career Center staff record the non-attainment within the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) database and that the information is electronically transferred to UI Online database and triggers a disqualification for benefits until the customer fully participates.

UI Online and the MOSES database have several points of automated integration. As examples, information regarding profiled claimants and RESEA participants is seamlessly passed between the agencies. Upon successfully filing a claim, claimants receive a link to the Massachusetts job bank system known as JobQuest. This webpage also provides a number of resources, such as a listing of the career centers around Massachusetts and a link to start an assessment of their skills through TORQ. DUA and MDSC are committed to continuously improve on creating linkages both through technology and programming to connect the claimant to reemployment services.

Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP)

Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP). Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include—

(1) Assessment of Need

Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to employment, training, and housing. The assessment of need must include: an assessment of the agriculture activity in the State: 1) identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.

An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing MSFW characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain counties, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Labor (US DOL) Employment and Training Administration.

For Assessment of Need - Please refer to the Plan (Section 1) below.

(2) Outreach Activities

- (2) *Outreach Activities*. The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of the MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through, normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:
- (A) Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.
 - (B) Providing technical assistance to outreach workers. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as One-Stop Career Center services (i.e. availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services. as well as specific employment opportunities), the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System ("Complaint System" described at 20 CFR 658 Subpart E), information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the

terms and conditions of employment.

- (C) Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.
- (D) Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high quality services to both job seekers and employers.
- (E) [REDACTED] and private community service agencies and MSFW groups. If an NFJP grantee is the State Workforce Agency's (SWA) subrecipient conducting outreach, provide: (i) a description of that relationship; (ii) A description of any other MSFW service providers the NFJP is coordinating with; and (iii) the NFJP grantee's outreach plan to be included in the State Plan.

For Outreach Activities - Please see Section 2 in Plan below.

The plan

The plan for the proposed outreach activities must include:

- The goals for the number of farmworkers who will be contacted each program year by W-P staff.
- The number of farmworkers who will be contacted each program year by other agencies under cooperative arrangements. These numerical goals must be based on the number of farmworkers estimated to be in the State in the coming year, taking into account the varying concentration of farmworkers during the seasons in each geographic area, the range of services needed in each area and the number of W-P and/or cooperating agency staff who will conduct outreach.⁸
- The State's plans to conduct outreach to as many farm workers as possible.
- The number of outreach workers dedicated to outreach to farmworkers by service areas.

⁸ The numerical goals that must be included in the agricultural outreach plan are in reference only to the proposed outreach activities and are not negotiated performance targets.

2019 Agricultural Outreach Plan

INTRODUCTION

The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) is responsible under the Wagner-Peyser grant to prepare an annual Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) as required by U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) regulations. This plan aligns with questions established by U.S. DOL for MDCS and extends to the MassHire Career Centers system in the provision of employment and training services to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW).

The plan covers Federal Program Year 2020 (July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2024) and will remain in effect until updated. The plan was prepared in large part with the active participation of the State MSFW Outreach Specialist.

1 ASSESSMENT OF NEED

According to the USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture, Massachusetts has 7,241 farms on 491,653 acres. The agricultural industry directly provides employment to 25,920 individuals and produces an annual market value of over \$475 million in agricultural goods. The average farm produces \$65,624 worth of agricultural products on 68 acres.

Direct market sales are a key feature of Massachusetts agriculture. Massachusetts ranks 5th in the nation for direct market sales with over \$100 million and ranks 3rd in the nation for direct market sales per farm at \$55,384. Direct market sales account for 21.1% of the state's total sales of agricultural products; that is the highest proportion in the country. Additionally, Massachusetts ranks 8th in the nation for direct sales per capita.

Small and family orientated farm culture is prevalent in Massachusetts agriculture. The USDA defines small farms as farms with agricultural sales below \$250,000. Small farms account for 94.2% of farms in Massachusetts while family or individually owned farms account for 79.7% of Massachusetts farms.

The average age of a Massachusetts principal operator is 59.1 years old. Female farmers represent 38.5% of all principal operators. For the state's agricultural profile see Appendix I.

Massachusetts principal crops include Greenhouse (potted plants, herbs, vegetables, etc.); Nursery operations are another sector of agricultural activity that continues to thrive, mainly for the production of ornamental shrubs and trees. There are approximately 900 Greenhouse and Nursery operators in the state. Massachusetts ranks 2nd nationwide in the production of Cranberry, the production output represents +/- 20% of the total agricultural production in the state. The production of vegetables and fruits accounts for a significant account of total agricultural output with 102 million. There are approximately 1,402 vegetable growers and +/- 500 fruit growers across the state. Poultry with 1,264 farms has seen an increase in the state share of agricultural production. Finally, there are other smaller sectors of agriculture that contribute to the vitality of the industry in the state; these are: dairy, livestock, aquaculture, etc. See Appendix II for full details about the agricultural economy in the state.

According to the USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture there were 2367 agricultural operations that reported the hiring of 13,142 agricultural workers. However, the reports show that the farm labor workforce declined by approximately 13% between 2012 and 2017. Based on the most recent statistics available (2018 projections) it is projected that there will be a slight increase of about 500 to 800 jobs in the coming years.

The Agricultural Outreach Plan for July 2020 through June 2024 lays out the strategy MDCS will follow for conducting outreach to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers and employers, offering to them the full range of services as required by 20 CFR Subpart B, Part 653.

1.1 Review of Previous Year's Agricultural Activity

Major crop activities in the state for PY 2018-19 were: Greenhouse/Nursery, Cranberries, Apples, Vegetables, and poultry and to a lesser extent tobacco. According to the most recent publication from the National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA, NASS)

In Massachusetts, some growers reported above average yields due to good pollination, excellent weather, and very little rot. Other growers reported lower production due to factors such as heat stress. Cranberry production went slightly down from previous year's production levels, Apples activities occur from late July - mid October for the harvest and early in the year for the pruning crews. Most of the apple activities are concentrated in the northern part of the state in the following counties: Middlesex, Worcester and Franklin. However, NASS reports indicate that Massachusetts's production went up 9 percent from the previous year. Vegetable production continues to be an important part of agriculture in Massachusetts. Vegetables activities occur from late May/early June through November and are concentrated mostly in the following counties: Hampshire, Worcester, Middlesex, Hampden, Bristol and Essex. Vegetable production estimates remains unchanged for 2019.

While the last few years have been tough, due to a severe drought (2016 - 17), the number of farms and acreage utilized for farming has dropped and increasing expenses, agriculture in the state continues to be an important part of the state economy.

1.2 Review of Previous Year's MSFW Activity

According to the USDA Farm Labor report, for the November 2018 reference period, there were 34,000 workers hired directly by farms during the week of July 8-14, 2018. All hired workers worked an average of 39.2 hours during the survey week. The average wage rate for all hired workers was \$13.74 per hour. Field workers earned an average of \$13.14 per hour and livestock workers averaged \$12.92 per hour, and field and livestock workers combined earned an average of \$13.05 per hour.

There were 36,000 workers hired directly by farms during the week of October 7-13, 2018. All hired workers worked an average of 41.8 hours during the survey week. The average wage rate for all hired workers was \$13.95 per hour. Field workers averaged \$13.58 per hour, livestock workers averaged \$12.81 and field and livestock combined earned an average of \$13.30 per hour.

Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), November 27, 2018

Figure 73: Estimate of Workers Employed in All Crop Activities by County

County	Ag. Workers 2012	Ag. Workers 2017	% Change	Labor Shortage
Barnstable	773	512	-33.77	Yes
Berkshire	661	582	-12.00%	Yes
Bristol	1133	928	-16.77	Yes
Dukes	243	263	7.61%	Yes
Essex	1438	1187	-17.46	Yes
Franklin	1893	1457	-23.04	Yes
Hampden	1040	902	-13.27	Yes
Hampshire	1370	1267	-7.2	Yes
Middlesex	2324	1873	-19.41	Yes
Nantucket	30	51	41.2	No
Norfolk	626	368	-41.3	Yes
Plymouth	1612	1467	-9	Yes
Suffolk	39	23	-41.03	No
Worcester	2407	2262	-6.03	Yes

Source: USDA, NASS 2012/2017 Census of Agriculture

The table above represents the best estimate MDCS can provide with the limited data available from sources such as 2012 and 2017 Census of Agriculture, Agricultural Review (USDA, NASS Publications), statistical data from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and our historical data records. The determination regarding labor shortage is based on the best estimate of workers reported by employers and the total number of requests filed for H-2A workers during 2019.

1.3 Projected Level of Agricultural Activity PY' 2020

Massachusetts agricultural employers face many challenges, among them, the lack of a reliable pool of workers, competition from abroad (trade), cost of doing business and the impact of regulatory changes (enhanced E-Verify/Food Safety, public and business demands for food safety, H-2A Program, etc.). With the pressure from overseas production where labor and regulatory impact are significantly lower and the options for mechanization are impractical or expensive the diversification of crop activities at local farms continues. To remain a viable agricultural operation in the state many growers are harvesting crops activities that keep the farm in operation for longer periods of time than in the past. In fact, many operators remain open year-round providing all sorts of local produce or imports from other states to satisfy consumers' demands.

Massachusetts employers continue to pursue alternative ways to compete and to stay in business. Many employers have diversified their operations to include non-traditional crop activities, direct sales, mechanization, the development of new strategies for marketing their products (CSA shares) and the use of the internet. In addition, the new economic model includes agro-tourism, wineries, etc.

The implementation of new technologies and expanding immigrant population has opened up market conditions to sustain a viable agricultural sector. However, many other external factors continue to affect agriculture in MA, such as market fluctuations, consumer demands, immigration policies, outdated recruitment methods, lack of training programs to enhance the skills of existing or new agricultural

workers, etc. As a result, we are estimating that agricultural activities in the state will show minimal gains increase.

The only exception anticipated is the harvesting of tobacco; although reports indicate that production shifted down from levels our records show significant drops in the number of employers seeking foreign labor to tend their crops. In fact, there are currently only 3 employers seeking workers for this crop activity, this represents 100% of activity for a second consecutive year.

1.4 Projected Number of MSFWs in the State PY' 2020

The number of Migrant or Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) in the state continues to be a moving target. There are no concrete numbers quantifying the number of workers engaged in agriculture other than the Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [National Agricultural Statistics Service](#) (NASS), the Census collects data on every aspect of U.S. agriculture. The most recent data from the Census places the number of workers employed in crop activities at 13,142 which represents a drop of 16.03% from the 2012 survey. While the MA DAR statistical data list between +/- 60,000 direct or indirect jobs created as a result of the agriculture activity in the State. So, our best MSFW estimate will be based on data collected from the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Factors such as the transient nature of the MSFW population, the legal status and the underground economy make it difficult to enumerate this sector of the workforce. Taking into consideration all the factors affecting our ability to properly account for the MSFW population in the state, we estimate that the number MSFWs in the state will remain at current levels or increase at a slower pace than the rest of the U.S. over the next few years.

According to recent statistical data from the USDA and MA DAR, it is projected that at least 5,000 MSFWs and an additional 5,000 uncommitted MSFWs will be traveling to or through the Commonwealth over the plan period. As in the past, crop activities, geographical areas, time frames, weather conditions and level of wages will dictate how up or down our estimate will be. However, regardless of all considerations the projected numbers of farmworkers are expected to increase slightly over the next few years.

2 OUTREACH TO MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKERS

The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) will conduct outreach activities to locate, register and to inform migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFW) about the basic, individualized and follow-up services available through the MassHire Career Center system (MCCs).

2.1 Goals and Proposed Outreach Activities

MDCS goal is to contact a significant number of MSFWs during the peak of the agricultural activity in the State. Our initial goal for PY 2020 is to make a minimum of 304 initial contacts in 38 days. For the following years MDCS intends to increase the number of contacts and days outreach is conducted by 10%.

Local offices that have MSFW activity in their service areas will be required to conduct outreach to agricultural employers and market the services available at the local MassHire Career Center in the service

area. They will also be asked to assist MDCS obtain and update the employer’s labor force projections for the upcoming season.

In addition to the above-mentioned goals, the State Outreach Specialist will be coordinating efforts with each local area that shows a significant number of agricultural workers as reported by the 2017 Census of Agriculture. This new approach should significantly increase MDCS outreach efforts to agricultural employers and may also lead to an increase in the number of agricultural workers receiving services at the Career Centers. More importantly, by combining efforts, agricultural employers and farm workers will benefit alike.

We plan to continue coordinating our efforts with MSFW partners to meet our outreach goals.

MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) outreach staff will make an estimated 304 MSFW outreach contacts during PY 2020. We estimate that 15 to 25 of those contacts will be made by local office staff with the remaining 284 contacts made by MDCS outreach staff.

The total number of staff days to be used by MDCS outreach staff will be +/- 38 days. This represents an increase of 82% from the level of staff days devoted to outreach during the last program year.

The number of MSFWs contacts and staff days devoted to outreach activities by the NFJP WIOA Sec. 167 Grantee (New England Farm Workers’ Council NEFWC) will be determined once they have filed their report. Based on historical data, it is expected that they will be identifying approximately 250 workers and that they will cumulatively spend 50 days conducting outreach activities.

Figure 74: Outreach Numerical Goals for 2020

Agency/Organization	Contacts	Days Spent
OSCC/AJC	20	0
DCS Central Office	304	38
WIOA NFJP Grantee (3 outreach staff)	420	28 (3)
Totals	744	66

The MDCS will make an estimated 100 outreach contacts during PY 2020. We estimate that at least 50 contacts will be made by the SMA with the remaining contacts made by outreach staff and the cooperating agency. The total number of staff days to be expended by MDCS outreach staff will be 15. This will represent 100% increase in the number of staff days devoted to outreach during the last program year.

2.2 Assessment of Available Resources

The MassHire Department of Career Services has designated one full-time outreach position for Program Year 2020-2024. The number of staff positions assigned to outreach activities represents a 100% increase from last year. Staff providing outreach services consist of one (1) bilingual Central Office employee. The geographic area covered by the outreach staff is much larger than the jurisdiction of the local offices that they assist. To ensure equity of service, the efforts of the Central Office outreach worker may be supplemented by local office Business Service Representatives (BSRs), in areas of the state where significant migrant outreach workloads warrant additional assistance. BSRs are based at local MassHire Career Center

sites and bring to the customer the full array of WIOA basic/individualized and training services, as well as MassHire Career Center service information relevant to the needs of the agricultural employer community to include, but not be limited to Title I, WIOA 167 and other appropriate program services. This is accomplished in large part through conducting employer-coordinated visits to fields and food processing facilities to meet with migrant workers and employers and provide service information at minimum, at the beginning and close of the agricultural employment seasons. The same information will be shared with the Workforce Development Boards. In-office services are continuously available, with evening hours at several locations.

We are continuing to have conversations with the New England Farm Workers Council (NFJP WIOA Grantee) to update the cooperative agreement and we are looking forward to establishing new connections with other organizations that serve the MSFW population. Most recently, we have coordinated efforts with Migrant Education, Migrant Health and the U.S. DOL, WHD Community Outreach and Resource Planning Specialist to start targeting employers and other organizations that could help improve our chances of reaching our goals.

2.3 Tools and Resources

Self-service registration is available electronically; via the internet and the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) our current database system. These instruments will be the primary tools or methods of registration, in office or during outreach. MOSES provides web-based self-service and staff managed intake and case management to support a virtual workforce center environment. Individual applications may be taken during outreach, when necessary or appropriate. Where necessary, an explanation of the purpose and completion of the process shall be given preceding the actual registration. Applicants who visit the MassHire Career Centers for services can register and self-refer themselves to job opportunities and other needed services in an electronic supported environment. The Outreach and office staff may also assist MSFWs who are unable to complete the process.

Other tools to be used are:

- Previous year outreach planning documents and employer estimates of the number of MSFWs needed during the upcoming session;
- Joint outreach planned visits with NEFWC staff;
- Provide presentations at agricultural meeting, to other state agencies or community organizations;
- Printed pamphlets in English/Spanish (or other languages as needed) which will be distributed to MSFWs and/or posted in gathering areas; and
- Packets of informational materials, in English/Spanish, will be provided to MSFW households and individuals, that explain services such as the range of supportive services available to them, community-based organizations that can assist them, filing/utilizing the complaint system, information about Massachusetts Laws, UI information, farmworker rights, and Federal Wage and Hour laws.

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We are continuing to have conversations with the New England Farm Workers Council (NEFWC WIOA Grantee) to finalize the cooperative agreement and we are looking forward to establishing new connections with other organizations that serve the MSFW population. Most recently, we have coordinated efforts with (Migrant Education, Migrant Health) the U.S. DOL, WHD Community Outreach and Resource Planning Specialist to start targeting employers and other organizations that could help improve our chances of reaching our goals.

2.3 Tools and Resources

Self-service registration are available electronically; via the internet and the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) our current database system. These instruments will be the primary tools or methods of registration, in office or during outreach. MOSES provides web-based self-service and staff managed intake and case management to support a virtual workforce center environment. Individual applications may be taken during outreach, when necessary or appropriate. Where necessary, an explanation of the purpose and completion of the process shall be given preceding the actual registration. Applicants who visit the MassHire Career Centers for services can register and self-refer themselves to job opportunities and other needed services in an electronic supported environment. The outreach and office staff may also assist MSFWs who are unable to complete the process.

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- Packets of informational materials, in English/Spanish, will be provided to MSFW households and individuals, that explain services such as the range of supportive services available to them, community-based organizations that can assist them, filing/utilizing the complaint system, information about Massachusetts Laws, UI information, farmworker rights, and Federal Wage and Hour laws.

3 SERVICES PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE MASSHIRE CAREER CENTERS

3.1 Overview

An extraordinary variety of employment-related services for job seekers and businesses are available at the Commonwealth's network of MassHire Career Centers (MCCs).

Services for job seekers include:

- Job search assistance and access to online job listings
- Career counseling
- Coaching on job search skills
- Workshops on a variety of job search strategies
- Access to resources including PCs, reference materials, resume building software, and economic data
- Networking groups
- Unemployment insurance walk-in services

Always, job seekers can access career planning assistance services, including working with experienced career counselors, attending workshops and short-term training, develop your resume, write cover letters, and more.

In many MCCs, services are available in languages in addition to English. Depending on location, these languages may include Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, Vietnamese, etc.

4 SERVICES PROVIDED TO EMPLOYERS THROUGH MASSHIRE CAREER CENTERS

4.1 Overview

Employers can take advantage of employment and training resources such as assistance with recruitment and hiring, job matching with potential hires, workforce training grants and tax credit programs, etc.

Services for employers include:

- Access to qualified applicants
- Applicant pre-screening
- Posting of jobs
- Assistance with small and large-scale recruitment activities
- Help planning job fairs
- Testing and assessment of job candidates
- Targeted mailings

- Rental of conference rooms
- Labor market information
- Information on training grants and tax credits

Some Career Centers provide training - PC, word processing, for example - on-site at the center. Not all services are available at all career centers.

5 REVIEW AND COMMENTS

5.1 Public Comments

In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107(d)(1), (2), and (3), MDCS has given the opportunity to the New England Farm Workers’ Council (NEFWC), WIOA Section 167 grantee, to comment on the State Agricultural Outreach Plan. Any comments received after the submission date will be forwarded to the region, under separate cover.

6 APPENDICES

Facts and Statistics

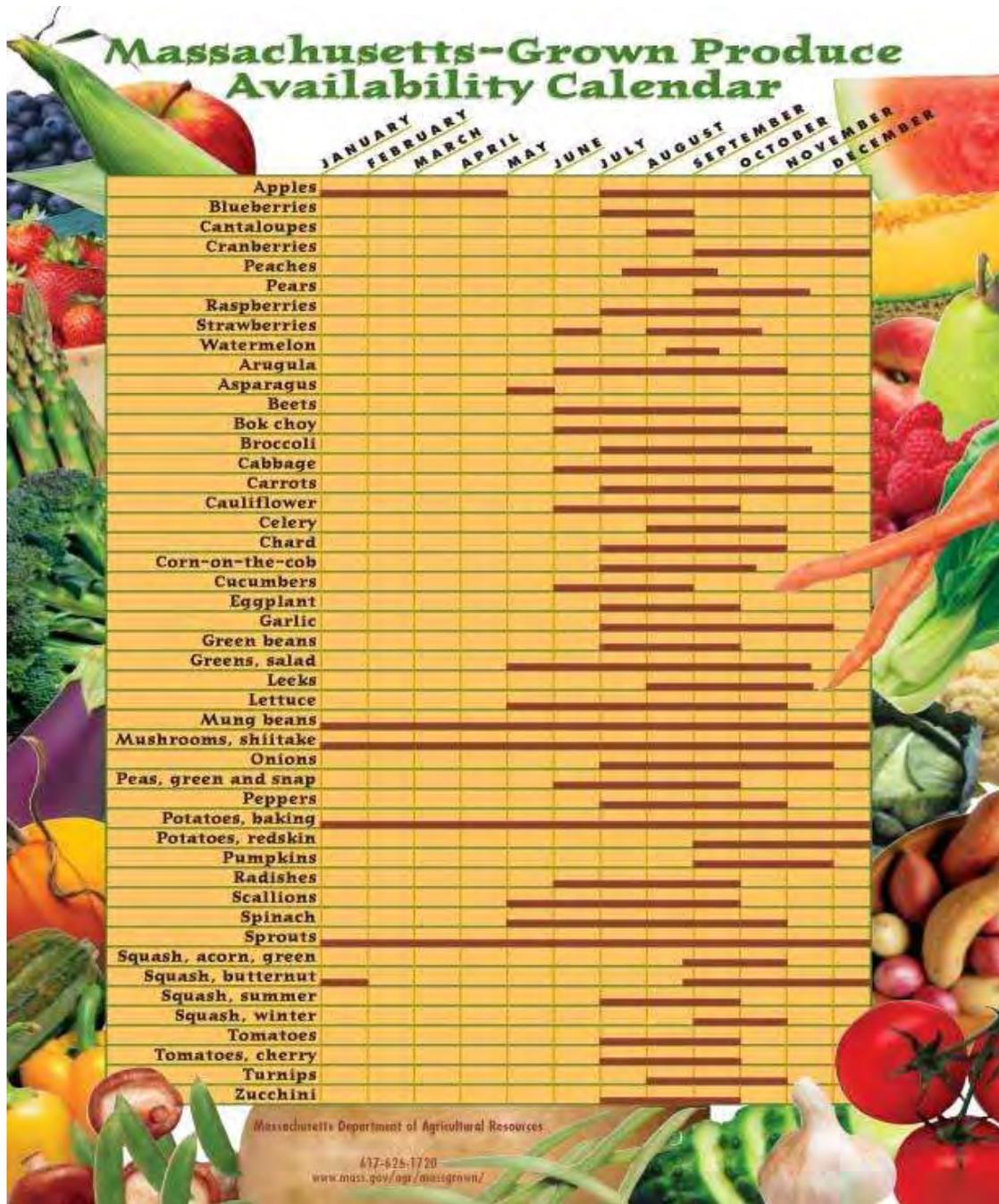
Figure 75: Principal Agricultural Products by County

Principal Agricultural -Products by County *	
County	Products
Norfolk	Nursery and Greenhouse
Plymouth	Fruits, Nuts, and Berries
Middlesex	Nursery and Greenhouse
Essex	Nursery and Greenhouse
Dukes	Nursery and Greenhouse
Bristol	Nursery and Greenhouse
Berkshire	Livestock and Vegetables
Hampden	Nursery and Greenhouse
Barnstable	Aquaculture and Livestock
Worcester	Nursery and Greenhouse
Franklin	Nursery, Greenhouse, and Livestock
Hampshire	Vegetables and Livestock

Figure 76: Major Agricultural Products in Each County

Major Agricultural Products by County *	
Barnstable	Hampden
1. Livestock, poultry, and their products	1. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture
2. Aquaculture	2. Tobacco
3. Fruits, tree nuts, berries	3. Livestock, poultry, and their products
4. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture	4. Vegetables, melons, potatoes
5. Vegetables, melons, potatoes	5. Dairy
Berkshire	Hampshire
1. Livestock, poultry, and their products	1. Vegetables, melons, potatoes
2. Dairy	2. Livestock, poultry, and their products
3. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture	3. Dairy
4. Vegetables, melons, potatoes	4. Tobacco
5. Cattle and calves	5. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture
Bristol	Middlesex
1. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture	1. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture
2. Livestock, poultry, and their products	2. Livestock, poultry, and their products
3. Fruits, tree nuts, berries	3. Other animals and other animal products
4. Vegetables, melons, potatoes	4. Vegetables, melons, potatoes
5. Dairy	5. Fruits, tree nuts, berries
Dukes	Norfolk
1. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture	1. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture
2. Livestock, poultry, and their products	2. Livestock, poultry, and their products
3. Vegetables, melons, potatoes	3. Horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys
4. Cattle and calves	4. Other crops and hay
5. Poultry and eggs	5. Sheep, goats, and their products
Essex	Plymouth
1. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture	1. Fruits, tree nuts, berries
2. Livestock, poultry, and their products	2. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture
3. Vegetables, melons, potatoes	3. Livestock, poultry, and their products
4. Fruits, tree nuts, berries	4. Aquaculture
5. Dairy	5. Vegetables, melons, potatoes
Franklin	Worcester
1. Livestock, poultry, and their products	1. Livestock, poultry, and their products
2. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture	2. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture
3. Dairy	3. Fruits, tree nuts, berries
4. Vegetables, melons, potatoes	4. Dairy
5. Aquaculture	5. Poultry and eggs

Figure 77: Massachusetts Grown Produce Availability Calendar *



* MA Department of Agricultural Resources

State strategy

(3) Services provided through OSCC system

Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the MassHire delivery system.

Describe the activities planned for providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the MassHire delivery system. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

- (A) Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the MassHire delivery system. This includes:
 - i. How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the MassHire Career Centers;
 - ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.
- (B) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.
- (C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

For Services provided - Please see Section 3 in the Plan above.

Other Requirements.

State Monitor Advocate.

State Monitor Advocate. The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107 and as prescribed by Region I, the State Monitor Advocate participated in the preparation of the agricultural outreach plan and has been afforded the opportunity to approve and comment on the plan. Such review indicates that the plan has been prepared properly, omitting none of the prescribed requirements and properly describing the activities planned for providing services to both agricultural employers and migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs).

Review and Public Comment

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received and responses to those comments.

For review and public comment - Please see Section 5 in the Plan above.

Collaboration. Describe any collaborative agreements the SWA has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) will continue to coordinate activities and services with the WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee, the New England Farm Workers Council (NEFWC), to identify MSFW needs, and to facilitate or provide intensive and training services. This will be facilitated by a Memorandum of Understanding. Currently, MDCS and NEFWC are in the process of updating the existing MOU. Other cooperative agreements with the Mass Migrant Education Program and the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program (CRVHP) are anticipated to be in place within the next year. MDCS welcomes engagement among other community based and/or private groups for the purpose of identifying, servicing and assisting MSFWs.

MassHire Career Centers offer integrated and universally accessible employment services that efficiently meet the needs of all customers including Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) and Limited English Proficient (LEP) customers. Through existing partnerships in the MassHire Career Centers, MSFWs have access to the following services through a single service delivery system: labor exchange services such as career counseling, vocational testing, Veteran's employment and training services, resume writing, job search assistance workshops, reemployment workshops, referrals to ESL classes and job referrals. Other MassHire services include adult, dislocated worker and youth services under WIOA, adult education, apprenticeship training, Unemployment Insurance and referral to supportive services. This approach facilitates access to core services and reduces the number of barriers otherwise faced by MSFWs and LEP customers and individuals with disabilities. Some of the partners working under the MassHire Workforce System are co-located or have access to information through existing MOUs.

Currently MassHire Career Center (MCC) staff encourage MSFWs and LEP customers to take advantage of the free ESL classes offered through Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline, Migrant Education (EDCO) or through the WIOA Section 167 Grantee. This is a critical component for developing the basic skills needed to secure sustainable employment and pursue career growth. Building on the existing infrastructure and with the development of new collaborative efforts we expect to reduce the barriers to accessing services by this targeted population.

The SMA will continue to reinforce positive relationships with farm workers, farmers, Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Legal Services and other non-profit organizations while conducting outreach activities. During the next four years, Massachusetts' MDCS will strive to continue to build new and better relationships with MSFW/LEP service providers and plans to continue outreach to local farms to contract local workers and employers and promote the full range of services offered through the MassHire Career Center system.

Other activities being developed to attract new partners and retain existing service providers, include:

- Develop and implement strategies which incorporate goals and objectives consistent with the WIOA requirements.

- Establish and maintain communication through meetings and social media with stakeholders to keep them informed of the work and progress made.
- Advocate for the inclusion of the WIOA 167 grantee at MCCs locations across the state, per the direction established by the WIOA statutory requirements.
- Continue to foster good working relationships and collaborative efforts with stakeholders to help achieve the MDCS and AOP goals.

In addition, the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) is committed to building stronger partnerships and collaborations to better align services available at local workforce areas to the needs of MSFWs and agricultural employers. As part of this effort, the State Monitor Advocate links with the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program (CRVFHP) and became a member of the CRVFHP Advisory Council. The CRVFHP Advisory Council provides insight and guidance on issues affecting the accessibility of healthcare for agricultural workers and their dependents, along with identifying population shifts, changes to the regulatory framework, and other concerns affecting the agricultural community.

MDCS and the SMA will continue to promote stronger collaborative efforts with other State Agencies, such as the Massachusetts Department of Education, ORI, Agriculture, Public Health, USDA Rural Development and non-for profit organizations such as CRVFHP, Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, etc. to address and discuss issues regarding employment, literacy, health, and wellbeing of Massachusetts agricultural workers.

Assessment of progress. The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

Please see Sections 1.1 - 1.4 in the Plan above.

Data Assessment. Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Please see Sections 1.1 - 1.4 in the Plan above.

Please see the 2017 Census of Agriculture State Profile for Massachusetts (Attachment K)

Figure 78: Wagner-Peyser Assurances

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

ASSURANCES	
1	<p>The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with MassHire centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3));</p> <p>The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Wagner Peyser Employment Service has been co-located within a One-Stop Career Center since the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 effective July 1, 2000.</p>
2	<p>If the state has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW One-Stop centers.</p> <p>MSFW activity in the Commonwealth accounts for less than 20% nationally, Therefore, Massachusetts is not subject to the requirements at 20 CFR 653.111. However, the Outreach Specialist and the State Monitor Advocate are from a background representative of the MSFW population in the state.</p>
3	<p>If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and</p> <p>The Commonwealth assures that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, which administer State Laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities have cooperated in full and are a Core Partner with the MassHire Department of Career Service who is responsible for the administration of Wagner Peyser and WIOA Title I Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker Programs.</p>
4	<p>If a state chooses to provide certain ES activities without merit staff, it remains incumbent upon SWA officials to carry out the following activities if they arise:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Initiate the discontinuation of service; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued; 3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued; 4) Approve corrective action plans; 5) Approve the removal of an employer’s clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days; 6) Enter into agreements with state and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWA’s behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and 7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing. <p>The Commonwealth agrees.</p>

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

A. Aligning of Content Standards

For the last six years, Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) has taken actions in three major areas (i.e., expectations, curriculum and instruction, and assessment) to develop the capacity of state and program staff to align curriculum content for adult education (AE) with state adopted challenging academic content standards and will continue to do so in the coming years. The sections below detail what has been achieved to date and action steps for the future.

1. A Unified Approach to Communicate Expectations for 33 High-quality Services

a. State of the State

For the last two years, ACLS has been implementing a new theory of action focused on quality. As per this new theory of action, students will make educational progress and be prepared to access college and careers as documented by the WIOA performance measures *if* ACLS aligns its [Indicators of Program Quality \(IPQ\)](#) and policies with WIOA, gives programs quality feedback, and provides high-quality professional development (PD).

As part of this new theory of action, ACLS revised its IPQ and revamped its [program monitoring and site visit process](#) with a focus on the quality of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and instructional leadership by:

- developing rubrics to rate providers in four essential elements of effective instruction: *student engagement, scaffolding, differentiated instruction, and checking for understanding*; and
- training program specialists (PSs) to conduct effective classroom observations and provide formative feedback. See section F - Assessing Quality for more details.

Further, ACLS developed and piloted the [Educator Growth and Evaluation \(EGE\)](#) system, a six-step continuous learning cycle that supports directors in supervising teachers, leading the development of quality standards-aligned curriculum, and ensuring high-quality instruction. Providers have the option to use [TeachPoint](#), a customized, cloud-based software database to efficiently and effectively manage and support the EGE model.

In February 2018, ACLS re-envisioned and rebid the statewide AE PD system, the System for Adult Basic Education Support ([SABES](#)), to focus on [high-quality professional development \(HQPD\)](#). The system was reorganized into three curriculum and instruction centers (i.e., for English language arts/literacy (ELA),

mathematics, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), a program support center, and a communication center. The centers contract with national experts, giving programs access to a wide variety of intensive HQPD offerings in multiple forms including on-site coaching, a user-friendly website, and high-quality resources.

In May 2019, ACLS contracted with the [University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute](#) (UMDI) to conduct an evaluation of the AE system to understand whether and how activities carried out under the new theory of action contribute to improvements in the quality of and access to PD, quality of education provided, and student outcomes. UMDI will provide recommendations to improve the quality of services, the SABES PD system, and ACLS supports for the field in time to guide decisions related to different facets of the next round of funding (e.g., documents and resources).

b. Future Direction

In line with the ACLS values of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), ACLS will keep equity at the front and center of its mission and will continue to communicate the importance of high expectations for all students.

The work of the [Program Support PD Center](#) will continue to be particularly critical to this work and to the adoption of standards-based curriculum and instruction through the DEI lens. This center will provide PD to develop the educational leadership of directors to effectively lead staff in implementing standards-aligned curriculum and instruction and of teachers to develop their potential for coaching colleagues as practitioner leaders. See point I2 - Standards-aligned Curriculum and Instruction below for more details.

ACLS will further develop and strengthen the EGE model by providing online and face-to-face trainings focused on supporting teacher effectiveness and developing scenarios for how programs might implement the EGE model in order to coach and supervise staff to support standards-aligned curriculum and instruction.

Some of the desired outcomes of the UMDI system evaluation are identifying ways in which programs determine the educational needs of students; the quality of instruction; students' progress; and the need for additional student supports. ACLS will use these evaluation findings, among other things, to inform its next rebid of the AE system.

2. Standards-aligned Curriculum and Instruction

a. State of the State

To support alignment to the [College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education](#) (CCRS_{AE}) and increase instructional rigor, ACLS has required programs to implement curriculum aligned to the CCRS_{AE} to guide ELA and mathematics instruction since October 2013. ABE curriculum and instruction are required to reflect the instructional shifts and align at all levels with the CCRS_{AE}, levels A through D-E.

Since the release of the [Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education \(MA ELPS\)](#)[1] in February 2019, ACLS has required programs to implement curriculum aligned to the MA ELPS.

These standards incorporate the *CCRS*AE for ELA/literacy and the instructional shifts for ELA and context them within the lens of English language learning.

Further, to support AE program directors of ESOL services, the [SABES ESOL Curriculum and Instruction PD Center](#) provided trainings on the [Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Speakers of Other Languages](#). These standards reflect the content standards for students by outlining what is essential for teachers to know and be able to do in order to support students' college and career readiness.

ACLS also requires that ESOL programs integrate civics education and workforce preparation at all levels. Programs providing mathematics instruction to English language learners (ELLs) are required to align instruction to the *CCRS*AE for mathematics and the Standards for Mathematical Practice, as needed, so that instruction is reflective of the *CCRS*AE for mathematics instructional shifts. The [SABES Mathematics and Adult Numeracy Curriculum and Instruction PD Center](#) offered PD workshops such as *Mathematizing ESOL I, II, and III* as well as *Mathematics Packets* for ESOL on topics such as health and employment for ESOL teachers.

In collaboration with the SABES Mathematics and Adult Numeracy Curriculum and Instruction PD Center, ACLS developed the [Curriculum for Adults Learning Math \(CALM\)](#). *CALM* is a high-quality, *CCRS*AE-aligned mathematics curriculum for all adult education levels. *CALM* instructional units include complete lesson plans, formative assessments for each lesson, and a performance-based assessment. *CALM* prepares students for earning a high school equivalency (HSE) credential and lays the foundation for college and career readiness.

The [Massachusetts Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Education](#), recently revised, were used as the foundation for the development of the recently released [ELA and Mathematics Proficiency Guides for Teachers of Adult Education](#). These guides contain essential concepts teachers need to know and observable teacher and student behaviors. While not exhaustive, they indicate the key knowledge and skills that effective teachers need to know and be able to do within the specific context they teach.

Additionally, SABES curriculum coaches provided programs with feedback on curricular alignment to standards to help providers with curriculum development and ACLS trained its PSs to offer technical assistance (TA) and guidance on curriculum through site visits and program quality reviews. See section F - Assessing Quality for more details.

Lastly, ACLS has an internal curriculum, instruction, and assessment team whose mission is to ensure that all AE students in Massachusetts have equitable access to an excellent education. This team works closely with the curriculum, instruction, and assessment PD centers to ensure that educators have strong content knowledge and access to high-quality instructional materials and PD that promote inclusive practices for all students and that support authentic, engaging student learning that puts students on a career path leading to family-sustaining wages.

The curriculum, instruction, and assessment team collaborate with the program quality review (PQR) team to ensure a unified approach to the evaluation of curriculum and instruction during PQRs and site visits. See section F - Assessing Quality for more details.

b. Future Direction

ACLS has three top priorities for future work related to standards-aligned curriculum and instruction and will approach these priorities in a collaborative manner with the field.

- Diverse Curriculum and Inclusive Instruction

ACLS will ensure that all students have access to a curriculum representative of students' races, genders, ethnicities, and linguistic backgrounds, and that instruction is inclusive of all students' learning needs and levels of readiness.

ACLS and the SABES curriculum and instruction PD centers will develop a bank of curated resources of diverse texts for each of the three content areas: ESOL, ELA and mathematics. To ensure that instruction is inclusive of all students, a strong focus will be placed on ELLs in adult basic education (ABE) classes, learners with disabilities, and students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). PD offerings will include:

- supporting adult education teachers' understanding of the needs of ELLs in the ABE classroom and providing them with strategies and resources to meet those needs
- multi-session study circles to explore current relevant research on teaching low-literate ELLs
- in-depth PD on learning disabilities in adults
- PD focusing on the three key areas of *Universal Design for Learning* for differentiated instruction (i.e., engagement, presentation, and expression)

- Stronger Alignment Between Curriculum and Classroom Practice

Students learn best when curriculum is coherent. ACLS will enhance support for teachers and program directors with PD related to vertical and horizontal curricular alignment and expanded access to high-quality and standards-aligned curricular materials that can significantly improve student outcomes. To this end, ACLS plans to create and provide training videos on three short reference guides: curriculum coherence guide, curriculum assessment guide, and curriculum alignment guide. An additional curriculum rubric will be developed for practitioners to determine the quality, rigor, and alignment of their lessons to the *CCRSAE* and *MA ELPS*.

The SABES ESOL Curriculum and Instruction PD Center will develop and provide trainings to support programs in implementation of the *MA ELPS*. The *MA ELPS* PD trainings will include four parts:

- 1) a self-paced online overview of the standards;
- 2) a two-day, face-to-face workshop on using the *MA ELPS* and backward design to foster learner success;
- 3) an in-depth, hands-on workshop on using the *MA ELPS* to inform teaching practice; and
- 4) a blended workshop on using the *MA ELPS* to teach advanced ELLs. Additionally, five ESOL model *MA ELPS*-aligned curriculum units will be developed with videos showcasing excerpts from a lesson in one of the model units being implemented in an adult ESOL classroom.

The *CALM* will be revised to include better alignment to the state's federally approved standardized assessment, the Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Test (MAPT) and provide additional supplemental digital curricular resources.

Further, ACLS in collaboration with the SABES Mathematics and Adult Numeracy Curriculum and Instruction PD Center will support expanding access to high-quality curricular materials by implementing the CURATE (**C**URriculum **R**atings by **T**Eachers) project. CURATE will rate the quality and CCRSAE alignment of specific mathematics curricular materials and will provide practitioners access to the rubrics used in the evaluation of these materials. ACLS plans to expand the CURATE approach to include a bank of CURATE-ed digital resources for ESOL and ELA as well.

ACLS will continue to build its internal capacity to support the TA PSs provide in the areas of standards-aligned curriculum and instruction. The ACLS internal curriculum, instruction, and assessment team will conduct a TA needs analysis with its PSs and plan future internal trainings based on the results of this needs analysis. Future ACLS dedicated team meetings for PSs and the leadership team will also include a regular problem of practice related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

The curriculum, instruction, assessment, and educational leadership findings identified as AE providers' weakness areas in the Program Quality Review Fiscal FY19 Summative Report as well as the TA identified through site visits will also inform the PD offerings of the three curriculum and instruction centers and future ACLS internal trainings. See section F - Assessing Quality for more details.

In keeping with the DESE goal of State as Partner [2], ACLS will use a collaborative approach to implement these future action steps. For example, a new section entitled *Voices from the Field* will be included in [ACLS monthly mailings](#). This section will spotlight evidence-based teaching strategies, rigorous instructional materials, collaborative instructional leadership activities or anything else pertaining to standards-aligned curriculum and instruction that supports positive student outcomes. Additionally, ACLS will convene a working group of AE program directors, curriculum coordinators, and lead teachers to strengthen the implementation of standards-aligned curriculum and instruction and offer field providers a voice in decisions that affect their staff and students directly.

- Strengthen Instructional Leadership

Strong and consistently implemented standards-aligned curriculum and instruction are not possible without strong instructional leadership. Data collected from PQRs and site visits ACLS conducted in FY19 shows that programs where teachers are not provided with feedback or specific recommendations for improvement in classroom instruction and programs that do not use instructional data to inform future curriculum development and instructional decisions show weak student outcomes.

Building on the recently released mathematics and ELA proficiency guides (as referenced earlier in this section), ACLS and the SABES Program Support PD Center will provide further trainings for program directors and instructional leaders on how to use these guides to implement standards-aligned instruction. Further, over the next three years, ACLS will develop and release a set of *What to Look For Guides* (i.e., look-fors) to describe what observers can expect to see in a standards-aligned adult education class for ELA, ESOL, and mathematics. ACLS envisions these quick look-for guides to be accompanied by instructional videos showing best practices and what not to do in an effective classroom. The look-fors will also include evidence-based strategies for students with disabilities or SLIFE.

3. Instructional Improvement with Standards-aligned Assessment

a. State of the State

In 2018, ACLS and the [Center for Educational Assessment \(CEA\)](#) at UMass Amherst School of Education began the process of aligning the Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Test (MAPT), the state assessment for measuring ABE learner gains in mathematics and reading, with the *CCRS&E*. In May 2019, the new MAPT-CCR received full, seven-year approval from OCT&E for reading and mathematics.

In addition, the CEA developed and piloted 300 new math and reading test items; developed and led item writing workshops for ABE teachers to be trained in item writing; revised the MAPT-CCR score reports; and published new score report interpretation guides to reflect alignment to the *CCRS&E*. Currently, ACLS and CEA are working to pilot the use of the online MAPT-CCR in those correctional institutions that allow online testing.

ACLS and CEA launched the [ACLS Test Help Blog](#) to share training resources, information about assessment trainings, and a constantly updated FAQ section with AE practitioners in Massachusetts. ACLS and CEA conducted survey research to evaluate the efficacy of online assessment and face-to-face trainings and analyzed practitioners' item-level/domain-level performance on standardized initial certification and recertification tests to identify areas of strength and weakness.

b. Future Direction

Data collected through site visits and PQRs shows that assessment is generally considered in isolation from curriculum and instruction and assessment data is rarely used for making instructional decisions. To address this gap, ACLS and CEA will develop customized resources for each of the NRS approved assessments used in Massachusetts and will provide training to support teachers and program directors in using assessment data to support and modify instruction. To this end, ACLS and CEA will develop a set of two-page guides for each assessment in student-accessible language with general test-taking tips and one to two-minute video counterparts for each guide. QR codes will be added to the guides for easier learner access via cell phone. The same guides will be developed for a teacher audience but with additional content and test specification information, details about test item types, and links to resources. The teacher guides will be accompanied by a webinar to be launched in FY20. A longer guide with best practices and resources/links to resources designated to facilitate discussion with staff and accompanied by a webinar will be created for program directors.

PD offerings of the three curriculum and instruction centers will include a strong focus on formative assessment, with discussions of both student videos and written student work in order to learn how to create and use parallel tasks for both differentiated instruction and formative assessment.

B. Local Activities

1. State of the State

Massachusetts AE and literacy activities under Title II are provided by a network of service providers, PD providers, and others collectively referred to as the AE system. Service providers include school districts, community colleges, community based organizations, faith based organizations, libraries, and correctional institutions serving adults who are low skilled, basic skills deficient (i.e., whose reading or computing skills are at grade level equivalent (GLE) 0-12), lack English proficiency, lack a high school diploma or its equivalent, or have not achieved an equivalent level of education. Under WIOA, ACLS remains committed to serving disadvantaged adults and recognizes that students enroll for a variety of reasons (e.g., supporting children in school, pursuing a high school credential, improving English language skills for citizenship, or advancing in the workforce) including advancing their workforce and postsecondary education needs.

a. State as Partner

WIOA at its core prioritizes collaboration across partners so that we can better mobilize cross-functional support to make progress. ACLS (i.e., “the state”) can help build local capacity and incentivize programs to adopt and accelerate best practices and support for students. The goal of this is to ensure that the system as a whole is fulfilling our mission:

To provide each and every adult with opportunities to develop literacy skills needed to qualify for further education, job training, and better employment, and to reach his/her full potential as a family member, productive worker, and citizen.

Programs, school leaders, directors, and teachers need a state partner to problem-solve with them through complex issues identified in implementing WIOA priorities. Such partnerships between state and local providers can provide tangible solutions to these challenges. In order to build this State as Partner dynamic, ACLS is committed to transparent communication, increasing feedback channels, and intentional mission centered leadership that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusive practices to provide effective education and career programming for students most in need across the state.

ACLS will continue to work with the [Adult Education Advisory Council](#) to align priorities for the AE field annually and consult with the chairs of the Directors’ Council, an elected body of AE representatives that voice needs and challenges from the local providers related to implementing high quality programming. In addition, the state will coordinate additional communication opportunities with the field. Other feedback channels will include: State as Partner webinars to share data and information regarding student enrollments, outcomes and fiscal updates, surveying the field seeking critical questions that need to be addressed, and establishing field focus groups to advise the state on proposed policies and initiatives.

The AE system provides academic instruction and educational services below the postsecondary level to these adults in order to:

- assist them to become literate and obtain knowledge and skills for employment and economic self-sufficiency;

- support the educational and skill achievement of parents and family members to participate in the educational development of their children and improve economic opportunities for families;
- assist immigrants and ELLs in improving their English and mathematics proficiency and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and
- assist incarcerated individuals in strengthening their knowledge and skills to promote successful re-entry into society.

For those competing in the labor market, the AE system serves as an on-ramp to the workforce development system, enabling individuals not yet ready to participate in that system with opportunities that would otherwise be out of reach.

b. Open and Competitive Request for Proposals

On July 18, 2017, ACLS issued an Open and Competitive (O&C) Request for Proposals (RFP) for implementation of the new AE system starting July 1, 2018. The RFP was broadly disseminated to ensure direct and equitable access to eligible providers. The state trained proposal review teams comprised of state adult education staff, regional local workforce development board [3] (LWDB) staff, and consultants as needed. In collaboration with the LWDB directors, ACLS developed a separate process for LWDB review of proposals for alignment with local plans.

The O&C process marked a new funding model which shifted from a rate-based model to a cost per student seat model. Applicants could propose a cost per seat range from \$2,300 to \$3,300 per seat. Programs could also propose a higher cost per seat with supporting rationale for consideration. Programs would be held accountable for maintaining the enrollment for the funded seats. The goal of this shift was to allow programs greater flexibility.

As a result of the RFP, ACLS funded 70 Community Adult Learning Centers (CALCs), eight Adult Education in Correctional Institutions (AECIs), ten Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs, 14 Integrated English Language and Civic Education (IELCE) programs, one distance learning hub, one primary instruction by volunteer program, and eight workplace education programs. AE programs are located in all 16 local workforce areas.

Proposals that scored under 90 points out of a total of 205 points were placed on conditional funding for FY19 and required to submit corrective action plans and/or meet with ACLS leadership. Funding beyond FY19 was contingent upon the successful execution of the approved improvement plan. DESE conducted fiscal audits on three programs that received FY19 conditional funding due to fiscal findings based on audit reviews. Eight formerly funded AE programs did not submit competitive applications but received one-year transitional grants of up to \$120,000 for FY19 only.

Figure 79: Number of students served by the Adult Education System in FY19

In FY19, using federal and state funds, the AE system served:

Category	Number of students
ESOL/ABE (GED/HiSet)	12,322/5,758
Men/Women	6,443/11,637
Employed/Unemployed	9,959/8,121
Out of School Youth	3,013
In correctional institutions	927
Receiving public assistance	6,689
Parents with dependents <18	1,341

c. Continuation Grant Funding

In March 2019, program enrollment was assessed for each program by averaging enrollment over a five-month period (i.e., September to January) relative to target for which they were funded. The following funding methodology was applied to the FY19 base funding award to determine program grant awards for FY20.

Figure 80: FY19 base funding award to determine program grant awards for FY20.

ESOL FY19 average monthly enrollment relative to target	Applies only to ESOL seats	ABE FY19 average monthly enrollment relative to target	Applies only to ABE seats
>100	3% increase	>100	5% increase
90-100	Level funded	75-100	Level funded
89 -80	1% decrease	74-70	1% decrease
79-75	2% decrease	69-65	2% decrease
74-70	3% decrease	64-60	3% decrease
69-60	4% decrease	59-55	4% decrease
59-50	5% decrease	54-50	5% decrease
49-40	10% decrease	49-40	10% decrease
0-39	20% decrease	0-39	20% decrease

In April 2019, notices for continuation funding were posted to DESE’s Current Grant Funding Opportunities and ACLS websites. Each continuation application was assessed on the merits of its proposed program design, budget, and narrative responses related to activities aligned with WIOA. Awards were contingent upon the provider demonstrating satisfactory performance and average monthly enrollment relative to target.

As of July 1, 2019, these CALC activities are funded with federal and/or state funds:

- Literacy, ELA, and mathematics instruction for ABE students by offering a continuum of services from grade level equivalent (GLE) 0-8.9 and high school equivalency preparation at GLE 9-12 using curricula aligned with the standards and benchmarks of the CCRSAE;
- ESOL for ELLs lacking communication skills (i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking), including basic literacy using curricula aligned with the standards and benchmarks of the MA ELPS with integrated civics education and mathematics instruction as needed; or
- Both ABE and ESOL services.

Additional activities and services include but are not limited to the activities and services described below.

- ACLS engaged in activities with WIOA partners and other interested stakeholders:
 - ACLS collaborates at the state level with core partners and has played a significant role in the development of the combined state plan. The ABE State Director is a member of the WIOA Steering Committee and several ACLS staff participate in WIOA workgroups. ACLS staff will continue cross-agency collaborations to ensure a successful implementation of the state plan and with other core programs and one-stop partners.

- Participated in Massachusetts WIOA stakeholder activities (e.g., WIOA Steering Committee, WIOA work groups) to establish and maintain collaborations among core partners and advance the state plan.
- Participated in national WIOA activities organized by the U. S. Department of Education’s Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTAE).
- Provided opportunities for programs to learn about WIOA (e.g., regional meetings across the state, WIOA content at annual Directors’ Meeting and ACLS sponsored events, information shared through monthly communications with the field, AE local representation on WIOA workgroups and task forces).
- In FY19, ACLS issued an RFP (including eligible providers not currently funded) to fund Integrated Education and Training pilot models.
 - To ensure successful implementation of policies and initiatives, ACLS holds a required annual statewide Directors’ Meeting for programs. Regular communication with the field is ensured through monthly mailings that include announcements, resources, reminders, and updates on a wide variety of topics ranging from curriculum and assessment to data collection to leadership opportunities.
 - Educational and career advising supports students with the development of individual education and career plans as they pursue their college and career goals.
 - Programs integrate level appropriate employability skills for students (e.g., workforce preparation, contextualized curricula, integration of job readiness skills).
 - Programs integrate digital literacy in curriculum and instruction and provide:
 - distance learning (DL) to increase student access to educational services, instructional intensity, and technology skill development; and
 - expanded use of Career Ready 101, as part of the Massachusetts Career Readiness Initiative (CRI), a statewide, multi-agency effort to increase the educational attainment of Massachusetts residents and assist them in securing a desirable career. CALCs may use ACT Career Ready 101, an online remediation tool for improving hard and soft skills, building resumes, and exploring careers with the capacity to assess and pair competencies, interests, and skill level and suggest appropriate jobs. In FY20, the CRI entered into a new, two-year contract with ACT for the WorkKeys Curriculum. ACLS provides funds for 21 AE programs to receive licenses. ACLS intends to continue making this resource available to agencies that have integrated it into their programming.
 - Program staff and directors collaborate on multiple levels and for multiple purposes. AE is represented on each statewide WIOA working group led by the workforce system. In each workforce region, one AE director is selected to represent AE on the local workforce board and AE directors are encouraged to participate in WIOA working groups and discussions of regional employment needs. ACLS continues to convene the MassHire Workforce Board AE representatives on a quarterly basis. Career center operations, adult education messaging, and local area collaborations are typical meeting agenda items.
 - ACLS intends to continue convening the MassHire Workforce Board AE representatives on a quarterly basis. ACLS staff will also be available to meet with workforce board and career center directors to discuss issues related to AE operations. In addition, ACLS will continue to provide orientations to new representatives to help familiarize them with the role and responsibilities of the position. ACLS also intends to attend a sampling of local area workforce board and local WIOA partner meetings each year.

- Additionally, ACLS funds programs to provide direct service to MassHire Career Centers in the form of outstationed staff who help with intake, assessment, and referral of customers who need AE classes. ACLS outstationing funds are used to support programs in connecting career center customers with AE programs in the region. The outstationing model was revised to ensure that outstationed AE staff also connects eligible AE students with partner services to ensure that eligible AE students become “shared customers” with the workforce system and get the workforce services they need.
- ACLS supports the provision of family literacy and family engagement activities to help adult learners who are parents and caregivers achieve their goals as learners, workers, and community members as well as their goals as parents and caregivers. Data consistently shows that approximately 40% of enrolled students are parents of school age children. Programs use multiple tools to integrate family literacy in programming including family centered contextualized curriculum, family action plans, and family engagement activities, often in collaboration with early childhood programs and/or schools.
- Workforce preparation activities provided include but are not limited to:
 - integration of college and career readiness culture in all programs;
 - development of Individual Education and Career Plans for students at all levels to promote college and career awareness;
 - integration of job readiness skills (i.e., level appropriate foundation skills) at all levels;
 - integration of digital literacy at all levels to prepare adult learners for employment and further education and/or training;
 - when applicable, for students in higher levels, curriculum contextualized to in-demand industries as identified in local plans; and
 - in collaboration with workforce partners, further development and promotion of concurrent education and training opportunities through ITAs, participation in MassHire Career Center (MCC) training programs, and other integrated education and training models.
- AE providers are required to integrate workforce preparation activities into all levels of AE programming. To assist programs with this task, ACLS offered a workshop at an annual directors’ meeting, Workforce Preparation and Employability Skills. The workshop was presented by Sandy Goodman, Co-Director, SABES Program Support PD Center. Participants learned about resources and strategies that can be used to teach interpersonal, intrapersonal, cognitive workforce preparation, and lifelong learning skills.
- Workplace education partnerships continue to be funded in two phases: (1) planning and (2) implementation grants for applicants that conduct a successful planning process. During implementation, workplace education programs include AE and literacy activities concurrently with workforce preparation activities so that low-skilled incumbent workers can improve their skills and more easily advance to more high demand occupations with their current employers. ACLS made expanding the number of workplace education programs a goal in FY20. Targeted outreach was done to all 16 MassHire Workforce Boards and adult education providers. In June 2019, ACLS received nine proposals in response to a Workplace Education Planning RFP. The previous year, ACLS only received three proposals in response to its Workplace Education Planning RFP. This outreach tripled the number of proposals received from one year to the next (i.e., from three to nine).

- ACLS also issued a separate O&C RFP for Distance Learning Hub(s) for FY19-20 and Primary Instruction by Volunteers (FY19-22) to provide services statewide.
 - The purpose of the DL Hub RFP is to establish and support DL instructional Hubs in order to increase access to and the intensity of educational services for eligible adult learners in order to strengthen their technology skills in preparation for college and careers.
 - The purpose of the FY19-22 Primary Instruction by Volunteers RFP is to provide eligible adults who cannot or will not enroll in class-based instructional services at a CALC with access to highly effective AE services. The priority is to support one statewide standalone program that offers volunteer tutoring services annually to approximately 1,000 eligible adult students in cities and towns in the Commonwealth including [Gateway Cities](#).

2. Future Direction

ACLS will issue an open and competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) and Request for Responses (RFR) in FY22 for the implementation of Title II services in FY23. Massachusetts will distribute AEFLA funds to provide adult education and literacy services in all 16 workforce regions of the Commonwealth.

The projected timeline for implementing the FY23 Open and Competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) follows:

Step	Timeframe
Post RFP Announcement	March 2021
Draft RFP	April 2021
Final Draft	May 2021 – June 2021
Post RFP	July – August 2021
Bidders Conference	August – September 2021
Proposals Submitted	December 2021 – January 2022
Announce Awards/Letters	April – May 2022
1st year FY23-4th year FY26 funding	July 2022 – June 2026
(Optional) 5th year FY27 funding	July 2026 – June 2027

The Open and Competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process will consist of two separate competitive processes.

A regional competition will make funding available for Community Adult Learning Centers (CALCs) offering ABE and/or ESOL services, which may also include Adult Career Pathways or bridge programs, Integrated Education and Training, and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education grant programs, etc. The *regional* allocations will be determined using a formula that takes into account data from the American Community Survey. Successful applicants will be awarded funding based on the quality of their responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA. They will also be awarded points based on past performance. The regional competition will be reviewed for alignment with local plans by local boards.

A statewide competition will make funding available for programs that may include Adult Education in Correctional Institutions (AECI), Transition to Community College, Primary Instruction by Volunteers, Workplace Education, and Distance Learning Instructional Hubs, etc. Applicants will compete for funds based on a statewide allocation and be awarded funding based on the quality of their responses to the 13

considerations in Title II of WIOA without regard to the workforce regions in which they are located. The statewide competition will also be reviewed for alignment with local plans by local boards.

C. Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals

1. State of the State

ACLS supports the operation of ABE programs in six Massachusetts' county houses of corrections (CHCs) and five prisons operated by the Department of Correction (DOC). As in prior years, these WIOA funded programs offer AE and literacy and numeracy activities with emphasis on preparation for the HSE exam. In the current funding cycle, greater emphasis is being placed on career pathway development with the goal of supporting a seamless transition for incarcerated individuals upon re-entry into society. Given the maximum sentencing duration of two years in all CHCs, the need to prioritize service to CHC students scheduled for release within five years is moot. However, DOC has provided written assurance that they prioritize student enrollment as required.

Both the FY19 and FY20 grant proposals approved for corrections education demonstrate a commitment to innovation in program design with nearly all incorporating digital literacy. In addition, as verified in program monitoring and site visits, all eleven funded ABE programs in correctional institutions have curriculum aligned to the CCRSAE and provide contextualized instruction as needed to support career pathways.

At the state level, ACLS has made progress in its collaboration efforts with appropriate state agencies and relevant DESE offices to provide support to grantees in providing special education and transition services to meet the needs of this priority population.

2. Future Direction

As a result of the implementation of criminal justice reform in Massachusetts, incarceration rates are declining, especially in CHCs, because more youth are being diverted and fewer people are being detained while awaiting trial. Some of our CHC grantees are struggling to meet their enrollment targets and ACLS will likely respond by adjusting AECL grant awards downward. We anticipate this will free up funding that will be used, building on interest and success in the most recent competition for CHCs, to increase the number of integrated education and training models in correctional institutions.

Another indication of future direction is evidenced by increases in the delivery of web-based MAPT assessments in a growing number of correctional facilities and the administration of computer-based high school equivalency testing. Finally, the use of instructional software for corrections such as Edovo is on the rise. These developments will provide flexibility, efficiency in instruction, and exposure to technology that will increase students' post-release familiarity with technology.

D. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program

1. State of the State

In FY18 (i.e., July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018), the state supported 15 IELCE programs. In FY19 (i.e., July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019), ACLS included funds for IET/IELCE programming as an option in its four-year Open and Competitive Request for Proposals. As a result of this, the state was able to award 12 IELCE grants.

In the summer of 2018, in order to expand the number of IELCE programs, ACLS offered two webinars on IELCE programs. The presenters included a MassHire Workforce Board Executive Director who spoke about how workforce boards provide labor market information and connect AE providers with employers. One or more directors of IELCE programs also spoke about partnering with the state's career/vocational technical education programs on the workforce training component of the program. The state subsequently released an IELCE RFP and was able to award two additional IELCE grants, bringing the total to 14. These programs contextualize their IELCE programming to the following industries: accounting, advanced manufacturing, culinary arts, healthcare, and information technology.

Each AE agency that has IELCE funding has an ACLS PS who provides technical assistance. ACLS supports career pathways (which includes IELCE) professional development through its SABES Program Support PD Center. The center provides workshops, resources, and guidance on IELCE service delivery, promising models, and identifying on-ramps to high-demand industry sectors, among other topics.

ACLS also developed an IET/IELCE site visit protocol which will be incorporated into its *Site Visit Protocol for Community Adult Learning Centers and Correctional Institutions*. The protocol includes a review of required IET/IELCE components, interview questions, and classroom observations. The interview questions are organized by IPQ and staff role (i.e., director, teacher, and advisor).

ACLS also released *Guidelines for Effective Integrated Education and Training and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education*. The intent of the guidelines is to provide guidance in the areas of program design, contextualized adult education, workforce preparation activities, workforce training, and advising.

In order to help improve recognition and provide our field with a common language, ACLS is branding its career pathways initiatives including IELCE. ACLS landed on the name and acronym, Massachusetts Adult Skills Training (MAAST). The branding will eventually include content, images, logos, and other resources.

2. Future Direction

(1) Massachusetts will continue to operate IELCE programs under Section 243 of WIOA for ELLs who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

ACLS will also develop IPQs for its IET/IELCE programs. The IPQs will follow the same format as the ACLS *Indicators of Program Quality for Community Adult Learning Centers and Correctional Institutions*. The intent of the IPQs is to guide the planning, delivery, and evaluation of IET/IELCE programming. The IPQs will

be used to guide development of future RFPs, provide agencies with a program self-assessment tool, and guide site visits.

(2) In order to receive Massachusetts IELCE funding, agencies must describe how they will provide contextualized and concurrent ESOL instruction, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training. Providers must submit to the state a schedule and description of how the instruction will be contextualized and run concurrently. In addition, providers need to partner with an in-demand industry employer that has job openings for positions leading to self-sufficiency. Programs must also end in students earning one or more industry-recognized credentials. ACLS posted [IELCE abstracts](#) which provide specific information on each IELCE program.

(3) All IELCE programming must be contextualized to high-demand occupations as identified by the local area's MassHire Workforce Board. Providers must establish that they have qualified AE and workforce training instructors. Providers are encouraged to collaborate with local job training, postsecondary, and/or career/vocational technical education programs on the workforce training component. These workforce training providers not only have the technical expertise but are often industry experts themselves who are well-positioned to provide career guidance in addition to instruction. Advising is also a central component of all IELCE programs. Advisors guide students through the program of study and assist with employment assistance by connecting with local employers and career centers.

(4) The state encourages programs to seek program guidance from local workforce boards. The state requires applicants to provide evidence from their workforce partners that the industry they have chosen for programming is in-demand and has positions that lead to economic self-sufficiency. Priority funding is given to programs with strong relationships with local career centers, chambers of commerce, and workforce boards.

E. State Leadership

1. State of the State

a. System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES)

State leadership activities are conducted by ACLS staff and the [SABES PD centers](#). In FY19, ACLS successfully launched a redesigned system to increase alignment with WIOA considerations and other DESE/ACLS priorities. SABES now consists of five statewide PD centers, functioning as one coordinated PD system:

[Mathematics and Adult Numeracy Curriculum and Instruction PD Center](#)

[English Language Arts Curriculum and Instruction PD Center](#)

[English for Speakers of Other Languages Curriculum and Instruction PD Center](#)

[Program Support PD Center](#)

[PD System Communication Center](#)

Priority work areas for the three curriculum and instruction (C&I) PD Centers have included CCRSAE implementation; educator effectiveness and teacher induction support; addressing the needs of adults with learning disabilities; digital literacy integration; and formative assessment and use of assessment results to inform practice.

Priority work areas for the Program Support PD Center (PSPDC) have included AE program management and planning for continuous program improvement; educational leadership and educator growth and evaluation; career pathways initiatives; digital literacy and distance learning; education and career advising; and professional licensure support.

Priority work areas for the PD System Communication Center have included revision and maintenance of a high-quality, statewide SABES website, including an online calendar and registration system; promoting SABES PD and support; and convening online and face-to-face PD system meetings.

Other PD system priorities have included alignment of PD with the Massachusetts AE high-quality PD standards; PD and support for educators at all levels of expertise; a demonstrable commitment to diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence; increasing practitioner participation in PD; increasing practitioner access to SABES and other PD resources (e.g., LINCS, NELRC); and collaboration between and among PD Centers.

In FY20, in addition to continuing with the delivery of numerous FY19 PD offerings, there will be many new SABES PD system priority initiatives and activities, a number of which follow:

- Engaging more AE programs in the Educator Growth and Evaluation (EGE) model using the PSPDC's online EGE modules—some newly-completed, others soon-to-be-completed—and the regional AE Directors' Sharing and Learning Group sessions.
- ELA and Math C&I PD Centers' PD, resources, and support related to the ELA and Math Proficiency Guides, companion tools for the EGE model that are designed to help teachers engage in the work of improving teacher practice.

- PD from the ESOL C&I PD Center focused on the recently released Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Standards (MA ELPS), including workshops on using the MA ELPS to increase academic rigor in the adult ESOL classroom, and integrating civics into instruction using the MA ELPS civics strand.
- The PSPDC’s PD offering entitled “Case Studies in WIOA Collaboration” featuring examples of how local WIOA collaborations have successfully leveraged services to support AE students on their education and career pathways.
- The Math C&I PD Center’s Integrating Math into ESOL Units: Health workshop, and subsequent creation of an Integrating Math into ESOL Units: Transportation packet and workshop.
- ELA C&I PD Center reviews of commonly used GED and HiSET workbooks and preparation books from major publishers, with alignment to the CCRSAE for ELA; reviews to be posted on the SABES website.
- The ESOL C&I PD Center’s two-day Training of Trainers, with follow-up support, to increase the number of qualified ESOL instructional coaches, including those who will deliver on-site instructional coaching at local AE programs.
- The PSPDC’s year-long Tech 'n Tell series based on the Texas model, enabling educators to effectively integrate digital literacy into instruction.
- Math C&I PD Center development of teaching math how-to videos.
- ELA and ESOL C&I PD Centers’ collaborative PD focused on increasing non-ESOL AE teachers’ understanding of the needs of ELLs in the classroom.
- The PSPDC’s practitioner tours of the Assistive Technology Resource Centers in Boston and Worcester during which ADA Coordinators, advisors, and others will explore high- and low-tech solutions and devices to meet needs for learning, work, and daily life.

b. Annual New Directors’ Orientation

ACLS staff provide a phone orientation for newly hired directors within two weeks of notification to ACLS of the hiring of a new director. The phone orientation guides directors on how to find the materials they need and how to navigate the ACLS website for more specific information. Components of the phone orientation include policy manual, HQPD, unique seat definition (which programs are held accountable for), monthly mailings, ACLS special mailings, and other questions a new director has at the time of the call. Additionally, newly hired directors are introduced to a document “Recommended Practices for Educational Leaders” which includes ongoing recommendations as well as specific recommendations during each month of the year with due dates for items such as recertifications that help new directors run an AE program in Massachusetts.

In November 2018, ACLS provided a two-part webinar to fourteen participants, all of whom were staff new in their director roles. The webinar was an opportunity for new directors to hear from key ACLS staff related to specific content areas: ACLS priorities, career pathways and high school equivalency (HSE), curriculum, instruction, assessment, and information about SABES, the state’s PD provider.

The second part of the new director’s orientation was a face-to-face meeting held at DESE on January 25, 2019. Topics included an introduction from the state director on the ACLS Theory of Action, building system capacity, and a multi-year evaluation of the AE system including the PD component, focus on outcomes, performance accountability system, PD support, overview of WIOA, [the data reporting system](#), IPQ, and pertinent information regarding the system to draw down funding.

c. Program Quality Reviews (PQRs)

The primary purpose of the new [program quality review process/protocol](#) is to drive program improvement. To accomplish this, PQRs identify areas for improvement in four of the ACLS IPQ: Career Pathways Collaboration, Curriculum and Instruction, Organizational Support, and Educational Leadership.

During a four-year funding cycle, every program receives one review according to the cohort they are placed in for the funding cycle:

- Thirty-three percent of programs received a review in Year 1 (FY19)
- Thirty-five percent of programs will receive a review in Year 2 (FY20)
- Thirty-two percent of programs will receive a review in Year 3 (FY21)
- There are no visits scheduled in Year 4 (FY22) due to the next open and competitive rebid

To accelerate outcomes, PQR schedules factor in the performance of programs. Performance in this case refers to a program's open and competitive proposal score and any funding conditions. Other factors may include previous fiscal year Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) target completion, educational functioning level (EFL) completion rates when full MSG data is not available, and/or recommendations from PSs.

A PQR team conducts the full-day PQRs. Review teams are comprised of anywhere between a minimum of two members to a maximum of nine members depending on team members' availability and program size.

Approximately four to eight weeks prior to the review, a member of the PQR team schedules an orientation phone call with the program director. This call may include other directors who are receiving a PQR around the same time. This orientation call marks the official beginning of the PQR preparation process, and its purpose is to communicate expectations for what needs to be done before, during, and after the visit.

The review team lead drafts the agenda for the day, which includes a number of components. The program director also has the opportunity to provide input on the agenda. Once a schedule is finalized, the program director shares it with all staff and students participating in the PQR.

Prior to the visit, the review team collects a set of required documents that include the program curriculum, lesson plans, resumes for the program's leadership team, and samples of staff evaluations.

During the PQR, the review team conducts a series of interviews to gather evidence related to the four ACLS IPQ that are under review: Career Pathways Collaboration, Curriculum and Instruction, Organizational Support, and Educational Leadership.

During a review, team members also observe classes for no more than 30 minutes each conducting observations in such a way as to not disrupt classroom activities. Review team members visit several classes and use a classroom observation form and rubric to gather qualitative evidence on activities and practices related to four essential elements of high-quality instruction [4]:

1. **Scaffolding:** Instruction is rigorous, grade-level/SPL appropriate and provides deliberate and appropriate scaffolds.
2. **Differentiated instruction:** Instruction is highly intentional about the use of differentiated instruction so that students experience rigor and struggle productively.

3. **Checking for understanding:** On-the-spot formative assessments are used to check for understanding and to inform instruction.
4. **Student engagement:** Instruction fosters student engagement.

At the end of the day, the review team conducts a brief report-out with the program leadership team. The goal of the report-out is to share some initial observations and feedback but no ratings. The review team still needs time to organize and analyze all the evidence before issuing ratings. The preliminary feedback given during the report-out may change once the review team further analyzes all the evidence.

The review team uses a set of four color-coded ratings to rate the quality of the evidence in the four IPQ under review:

1. **Exemplary:** The program demonstrates consistent evidence; potential exemplar.
2. **Proficient:** The program demonstrates consistent evidence; minor concerns are noted.
3. **Developing:** The program demonstrates inconsistent evidence; moderate concerns are noted.
4. **Limited Evidence:** The program demonstrates little to no evidence; significant concerns are noted.

For each indicator, the team uses a specific rubric with specific elements for each standard.

Approximately nine to twelve weeks after the PQR, the review team lead sends the program director a draft of the PQR report. The report includes ratings and supporting evidence for each of the indicators reviewed and reflects the collective thinking and consensus agreement of review team members.

After receiving the report, the program director shares it with program staff, discusses it at staff meetings, and uses it to inform the program's continuous improvement planning process, especially in the areas rated *Limited Evidence* and/or *Developing*. Often, programs seek PD and other assistance from [SABES](#), the statewide PD system, to help them address these areas.

ACLS uses PQR reports to look for trends in the data and to compile a list of identified promising practices to share with the field in an end-of-year summative report. PSs use the reports to follow-up on non-compliance issues, address areas rated *Limited Evidence* and/or *Developing*, and provide TA during subsequent site visits. See section F - Assessing Quality for more details.

To support the transition to this process, ACLS provided:

- Opportunity to comment on the new PQR protocol via an open comment period and input from the [Massachusetts Adult Basic Education Advisory Council](#).
- Overview of the protocol at the 2018 Adult Education Directors' Meeting.
- Individual phone orientations with each program receiving a review in FY19 on what to expect and how to prepare for a review.
- Ongoing communication between review team leads and program directors prior to the reviews.
- Opportunity to comment on the draft PQR reports that were sent upon completion of the review.

Opportunity for programs that received a review to complete a survey at the end of the year.

d. Site Visits

There are two primary goals for conducting site visits:

- to provide ACLS a deeper understanding of programs in order to identify promising practices and areas in need of further development; and
- to provide programs with TA guided by the ACLS IPQ.

TA is the process of providing targeted support to programs and can be identified as a result of:

- self-assessment conducted by the program;
- a desk review conducted by a PS;
- *Limited Evidence* or *Developing* ratings from a program quality review; or
- following up on a program's corrective action plan, conditions of funding, or a continuous improvement plan.

PSs collaborate with program directors to identify challenge areas and solutions. The type of assistance provided varies according to individual program needs and can include recommendations about program design, student enrollment, data collection and reporting, curriculum and instruction, and educational leadership, among other topics.

Site visits are not to be confused with PQRs. Unlike PQRs, site visits are flexible and negotiable in terms of the agenda to be set and topics covered. Also, in contrast to PQRs, site visits are not evaluative. For example, although they often include classroom observations or walkthroughs, these observations are not rated. As just mentioned, one of the primary goals of site visits, unlike PQRs, is to provide TA.

Programs receive one site visit per year from their PS, unless they are receiving a program quality review during the fiscal year, in which case they do not receive a site visit. Site visits typically last about four hours and have a clear focus to help both PSs and program directors use their time effectively.

PSs contact the program directors in their caseload at the beginning of each fiscal year to identify potential dates for site visits. Once the date has been confirmed, the PS works with the director to create the agenda for the visit. The agenda is based on the focus areas identified by both PS and program director as well as on information gleaned from multiple sources of data. Agenda topics are grounded in the IPQ, especially those that have a *Limited Evidence* or *Developing* rating from a PQR.

At the end of the site visit, the PS will share some brief observations with the director on the main discussion points of the visit. This is an opportunity for both parties to come to agreement on next steps and determine if and when follow-up is needed.

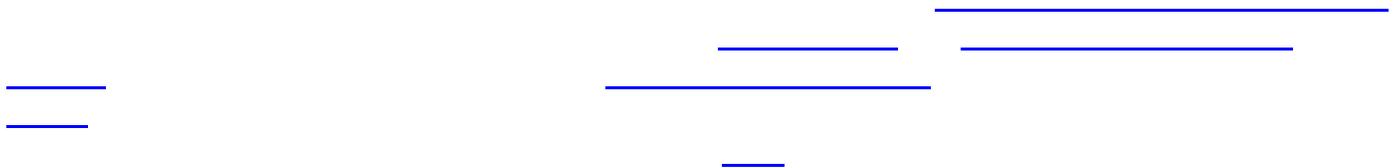
After the visit, the PS sends a report to the program director. The report restates the purpose of the visit, explains how the focus areas were selected, and describes what took place during the visit. In addition, the report includes any promising practices that were observed, concerns that arose, and recommendations that were made.

PSs often utilize the ACLS-developed resource bank when making recommendations to programs. The resources found in the bank are organized around the Indicators of Program Quality and include links to various reports, books, and websites that are relevant to each indicator.

2. Future Direction

a. Statewide Evaluation

In May 2019, ACLS entered into a contract with the [UMass Donahue Institute](#) (UMDI) to undertake an evaluation of the AE system in Massachusetts. UMDI was founded almost a half-century ago and provides a range of services including applied research and program evaluation. (Note: This evaluation will not be assessing individuals or programs.)



[Indicators of Program Quality](#) § [IPQ-aligned Policies](#) § [IPQ-aligned Open and Competitive Bid](#) § [Program Quality Reviews \(feedback\)](#) § [High-quality Professional Development \(SABES\)](#)

= Educational Progress and Access to College and Careers as

Documented by Outcomes: [Measurable Skills Gain \(MSG\)](#)

Key stakeholders in this work will include:

- ACLS staff, including those conducting the PQRs and those staff that will be responsible for creating the RFPs to administer the next round of AE and SABES funding
- SABES staff and consultants
- Directors, teachers, and advisors in CALCs and correctional facilities
- Students receiving services

Sample questions to be addressed through the evaluation include:

- What are adult learners' educational and workforce needs?
- What are the professional learning needs of educators of adult learners?
- Do SABES services reflect the needs of adult education programs? If not, what changes are needed?
- What changes could improve the adult education system?

Evaluation activities, representing a significant investment designed to help improve AE in Massachusetts, will include input/feedback at all levels of the system:

- 1) Focus groups (sample of directors, teachers, advisors, and students) – Fall 2019
- 2) Interviews (sample of directors, teachers, and advisors) – Spring 2020

- 3) Interviews with ACLS and SABES PD center staff – Spring 2020
- 4) Surveys (all directors, teachers, advisors, and students) – Spring 2020

A final report that integrates all research data collected along with a full analysis and recommendations for improvement will be submitted by the end of December 2020.

F. Assessing Quality

1. State of the State

a. Conceptual Clarity Around Accountability

To date, ACLS has implemented several actions designed to assess and improve the quality of AE services, thus strengthening the accountability system as a whole. At the FY19 annual Directors' Meeting, ACLS presented an overview of how programs are reviewed and evaluated within a performance accountability system that is grounded in a set of core values including integrity, teamwork, learner-centeredness, racial equity, stewardship, and kaizen.[5]

In addition, ACLS clarified that the accountability system is comprised of three distinct but interrelated components that, taken together, provide a holistic view of a program's overall performance:

Student outcomes: Refers to outcomes derived from the National Reporting System's (NRS) performance measures, the state Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) standard including the following outcomes: Educational Functioning Level (EFL) completion, HSE credential attainment, and Postsecondary Education or Training (PSE/T) enrollment after a student's exit from a program;

Program quality: Refers to the ACLS IPQ which include standards in Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Leadership, Career Pathways Collaborations, and Organizational Support; and

Compliance: Refers to a provider's ability to meet the rules and regulations required by both the Federal government and the state of Massachusetts.

In further regard to conceptual clarity, ACLS clarified that to measure performance, it relies on six tools or processes of accountability: 1) grant approvals, 2) desk reviews, 3) program quality reviews, 4) site visits, 5) fiscal and data audits, and 6) MSG student performance data.

b. Student Outcomes

In FY18, 37 of 68 ABE programs met or exceeded their target and 40 of 71 ESOL programs met or exceeded their target. In FY19, 29 of 61 ABE programs met or exceeded their target and 35 of 75 ESOL programs met or exceeded their target.

c. Program Quality

ACLS completed its first full cycle of PQRs under the revised accountability system in FY19. Review teams visited 25 programs across the state to measure them against the following four IPQ: Career Pathways Collaboration, Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Leadership, and Organizational Support. Assessments were based on applying standardized rubrics to the evidence collected through interviews with program directors, teachers, and students, and through classroom observations and the submission of required documents such as curriculum scope and sequence and lesson plans. Within nine weeks of participating in a PQR, programs received detailed reports that included ratings of *Limited Evidence*, *Developing*, *Proficient*, or *Exemplary* in each of the indicators being assessed.

At the end of the first cycle of reviews, ACLS published the *Program Quality Review Summative Report* that aggregated the ratings from all 25 visits into informative user-friendly graphs so the AE system as a whole could get a glimpse of strengths and weaknesses. Also included in the report were promising practices listed under each indicator that were observed by review team members on their various visits. For example, some promising practices for instruction that were listed under Indicator 4: Curriculum and Instruction are as follows:

- Teachers and program leaders are knowledgeable about the CCRSAE shifts and lesson plans and observed instruction reflect implementation of the shifts.
- Lesson planning is guided by the backward design model and is rooted in second language acquisition theories.
- Rigor is incorporated into both the curriculum and classroom instruction and is heavily focused on academic writing.
- Higher levels focus on using Google documents, complex texts, citing sources, Modern Language Association (MLA) style, research projects, and use of job search tools.
- Instruction is primarily focused on next steps.
- Questions typically asked in job interviews are incorporated into daily lessons at all levels.
- Higher-level classes use actual college textbooks to help students prepare for college.

In conjunction with PQRS, ACLS PSs conducted site visits of nearly all the programs within their caseloads. These visits allowed PSs to take a deeper look at and better understand the strengths and challenges of the programs in their caseloads to inform the TA they provide.

d. Compliance

One compliance measure that ACLS added in FY19 directly relates to program quality and student outcomes, namely, “active enrollments [6].” To ensure that programs serve the number of students agreed to during contract negotiations, ACLS introduced this measure as both a financial incentive that rewarded programs that met or exceeded enrollment targets with increased funds for the following fiscal year, and simultaneous decreases in funding for programs that didn’t meet their enrollment targets.

2. Future Direction

a. Research and Data-driven TA and PD

A top priority for ACLS over the next several years is to make site visits more impactful in terms of improving quality, by being more research- and data-driven when referring programs to the System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES) for TA and/or PD opportunities.

Beginning in FY20, ACLS intends to use the findings from the *Program Quality Review Summative Report* as the starting point when strategizing how to make future site visits more impactful regarding improving program quality. For example, according to the report, 100 percent of providers who received a PQR in FY19 received ratings of *Developing* for Indicator of Program Quality 4-Curriculum and Instruction, while 56 percent received a *Proficient* rating in Indicator of Program Quality 7-Organizational Capacity and 44 percent received *Developing*. This suggests that PSs who conduct site visits will want to focus more of their attention, especially their TA and PD recommendations, on topics related to curriculum and instruction. This would especially be the case when PSs are visiting programs that received a review the previous year and scored *Limited Evidence* in Curriculum and Instruction.

However, by diving deeper into the data of the *Summative Report*, PSs will discover that although 100 percent of the programs who received a PQR rated *Developing* for Indicator 4, this does not tell the whole story. Indicator 4 includes four standards which are also rated; thus the *Developing* rating is an aggregate rating of the four standards. Looking at the standard level, the data reveals that while 92 percent of programs were rated *Developing* or *Proficient* in the standard of Digital Literacy, 96 percent were rated *Developing* or *Limited Evidence* in the standard of Instruction. The data indicates that for site visits to have maximum impact, in general they should not only focus on curriculum and instruction but focus even more specifically on instruction. Furthermore, when focusing on Instruction, PSs would do well to highlight promising practices for instruction that are also in the report, practices such as:

- Lesson planning is guided by the Backward Design model and rooted in second language acquisition theories.
- Higher-level classes use actual college textbooks to help students prepare for college.
- Teachers use open-ended questions that probe and extend students' thinking.

In addition to the *Summative Report*, another key piece of data that will be used to better inform TA and PD comes from regular desk reviews. Over the next several years, ACLS is implementing and fine-tuning a shared desk-review process, in which programs will submit data pulled from the data management system (i.e., LACES) and PSs will check that data at regular intervals in order to identify patterns and potential causes for concern. By monitoring attendance and enrollment, pre- and post-test rates, and Educational Functioning Level (EFL) completions to name a few data points, PSs will have the information they need to engage programs in conversations about program quality and student outcomes in a timely fashion.

b. Accountability Components

A second major goal for ACLS is to integrate the three components of accountability into one overall performance score or rating for each program. One way to achieve this is to assign point values to each performance component-student outcomes, program quality, and compliance and weigh the number of possible points assigned to each component to reflect the relative importance of each component in

relation to the others. For example, under current thinking, student outcomes would be weighted more heavily than compliance. Within each component, it is likely that programs would have to meet some minimum point threshold to ensure that no component can be completely ignored.

Student Outcome Points: For this component, the number of points assigned to a program would depend on how close they came to meet their MSG target or by how far they exceeded their MSG target.

Program Quality Points: Like the point system described for student outcomes, a certain number of points can be given for each IPQ that received a Proficient rating on the report. For example, using a four-point scale, programs would receive three points for each indicator rated Proficient, four points for Exemplary, two points for Developing, and one point for Limited Evidence.

Compliance Points: ACLS uses a risk analysis tool to keep track of compliance issues such as the percentage of late attendance entries, total amount of funds returned, pre- and post-test completion rates, and a host of other indicators. Using this tool as a starting point, ACLS intends to assign points according to the number of “warning indicators” assigned to a program. In this case, the more “warning indicators” a program has, the less points it receives.

c. Past Performance Points and Pay for Performance

Weaving together the points received within each component of performance, ACLS will then assign one aggregate score or rating to each program. In turn that rating will be used to determine the number of “past performance points” to give each program for their written proposal during the next open and competitive competition. By giving more points to strong past performers, i.e. those programs that performed well in student outcomes, program quality, and compliance, ACLS ensures that programs have an incentive to achieve or maintain a high level of quality in the services they provide to students. Programs that compete for the first time, would have the “past performance points” removed from the denominator of total possible points in order to maintain a fair process.

Finally, continuing the theme of incentivizing outcomes, in FY20 ACLS plans to pilot one or more “pay for performance” grants. Unlike typical grants which award all the funding up front, “pay for performance” grant award programs are based on how well grantees deliver on proposed outcomes. In this model, service delivery comes first, and payment comes later, or not at all.

[1] The MA ELPS combine college and career readiness skills and language skills into a single set of standards in one document. ACLS developed these new standards based on three principal sources: [The 2005 Massachusetts Adult Basic Education Curriculum Framework for English for Speakers of Other Languages](#); The College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCRSAE); and [The English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education](#).

[2] For more information on State as Partner, see [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Riley’s Our Way Forward report](#).

[3] For purposes of this document, LWDB applies to representatives of all 16 workforce regions in Massachusetts including Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) and Regional Employment Boards (REBs).

[4] Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013.

[5] Kaizen comes from the Japanese “kai”, meaning improvement or change, and “zen”, meaning good change or change for the better.

[6] In FY19, “active enrollment” was defined as any student who attended at least one class session during any given month of service.

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

Massachusetts has designated the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to administer the funds designated for Adult Basic Education and Literacy Programs, WIOA Title II, AEFLA. DESE agrees to administer the State Plan in accordance with applicable federal laws and regulations, including the following certifications and assurances:

Figure 81: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Assurances

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The plan is submitted on behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the State agency eligible to submit the plan;
2.	DESE has authority under Massachusetts law to perform the functions of the State under the program;
3.	Massachusetts may legally carry out each provision of the plan;
4.	All provisions of the plan are consistent with Massachusetts State law;
5.	A State officer, the Massachusetts Commissioner of ESE, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;
6.	Massachusetts Governor has authority to submit the plan;
7.	The Massachusetts Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) Unit at DESE was part of the writing team. The plan has been approved by the Massachusetts DESE; and
8.	The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;
The State Plan must include assurances that:	

1.	DESE will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions);
2.	DESE will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;
3.	DESE will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;
4.	The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out activities of the program;
5.	The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities; and
6.	Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, DESE will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

1. SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
2. Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying
(www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)
3. SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable)
(www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

VR PORTION OF WIOA STATE PLAN FOR MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION FY-2020

Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (General)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has an active and productive State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) through the monthly SRC committee meetings, quarterly meetings, and consumer conference. With MRC, the SRC has conducted satisfaction and needs assessments surveys that have gathered consumer input to more effectively address the needs of individuals seeking the support of MRC to find employment.

The SRC, through the SRC State Plan and Executive committees, made the following recommendations to the Commission:

1. Increase and improve the quality of employment outcomes for MRC consumers by:

- a) Developing a self-employment curriculum for those consumers whose interests and/or disabilities are better suited for working independently. For example, MCB has a Small Business Enterprise Program that may serve as a model. The SRC is also requesting data on self-employment outcomes, i.e., what percentage of consumers with IPEs with self-employment goals exited with self-employment and maintained that self-employment in the second quarter after exit.
- b) Ensuring CIES vendors are complying with their MRC contracts and the MRC/EOHHS RFR (e.g., vendors are conducting outreach and developing relationships with prospective employers). To understand MRC's CIES quality control process and data.
- c) Restoring MRC's Individual Consumer Consultant program (ICC) and providing the SRC with the percentage of participants employed upon completing the program during ICC's last two years of existence
- d) The SRC Business & Employment Opportunity Committee working with the Job Placement Unit to understand the team's goals, processes, and barriers to accomplishing those goals, and, where possible, assist with addressing those barriers.

2. Continue to increase consumer awareness of transportation options and explore efforts to assist consumers with transportation.

- a) Needs Assessment Committee determined that transportation remains a significant need for many MRC consumers.
- b) MRC should refine and update its transportation fact sheets on MRC's website as needed and incorporate these into trainings and informational materials based upon its research
- c) Development of other informational materials and training should be considered to assist consumers in learning about other available resources including:
 - a. Local Councils on Aging
 - b. EOHHS Human Service Transportation (HST) Office

- c. MBTA pilot project with Uber and Lyft
 - i. MRC should request for more information
- d) MRC should continue to research collaboration with MassRides, MassMobility, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Career Centers, the HST office, local and regional planning boards, and other organizations on projects or programs that might be able to assist consumers with transportation, given that transportation is a systemic issue requiring collaboration on multiple levels.
 - a. open a discussion on ideas to address the transportation issues facing MRC consumers and individuals with disabilities and how MRC can work together
- e) MRC should also do a survey of its offices to find out more about how its local staff are connected to the local transportation regional coordinating councils.
- f) A plan should be formed to initiate a group of volunteers across the state to drive people to work and back.
- g) This task has many roadblocks, but it may be feasible with a co-coordinated effort on the part of many agencies. Regional data should be compiled to possibly have alternative choices based on the demographics of the people and area.
- h) Improve transportation access to consumers by one or more of the following options:
 - a. Establishing a petty cash/revolving fund at each area office for immediate transportation needs (e.g., cash for gas or a cab is cheaper than paying a vendor; North Carolina and South Carolina VR use such funds);
 - b. Putting a local registered taxi company on the state contract (Indiana VR does this);
 - c. Partnering with Uber/Lyft/other ride-share companies (Georgia VR does this);
 - d. Partnering with the entities that fill gas for state vehicles (that entity should already be on the state contract) to allow consumers to get gas from those entities (New Hampshire welfare does something similar);
 - e. Obtaining a credit card from a local gas station (or a state credit card) for each area office tied to a state account that can be used by staff to get gas to a consumer.

3. Increase the quantity and quality (i.e., wage outcomes) of on-the-job trainings (OJTs), on-the-job evaluations (OJEs), job driven trainings (JDTs), and apprenticeships by targeting employers who offer higher wages and targeting in-demand skill sets (e.g., Salesforce).

In addition to the annual Office of Federal Contract Compliance program (OFCCP) hiring event, MRC should also consider developing regionalized hiring events in collaboration with the regional employment advisory boards.

- 4. **Given the increasing number of individuals diagnosed on the Autism Spectrum, MRC should identify and utilize resources that will expand staff and CIES vendor knowledge and understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders and practical strategies for supporting vocational rehabilitation (VR) consumers as they learn to live and work independently.** Examples of resources include: the Asperger/Autism Network (AANE), Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), the Autism Commission, and Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC).
- 5. **Procure other important services on the state contract (e.g., math tutors at each area office, standardized test registration) to avoid having consumers pay upfront for these services (or not**

receive them at all), especially when many consumers (e.g., clients on SSI and/or SSDI) are not obligated to contribute to the cost of their VR services. The SRC Policy Committee is requesting a list of MRC services that are currently on the state contract to understand what MRC can already write purchase orders (POs) for and thereby also know what services MRC cannot pay via PO.

Meanwhile, the SRC Policy Committee would coordinate with the SRC Consumer Needs/ Satisfaction Committee to determine whether survey responses can also identify services needed on the state contract and will share its findings with MRC. The SRC recommends MRC conduct a survey of area offices asking counselors what services they believe are needed on the state contract and share survey results with the SRC Policy Committee.

Lastly, the SRC requests the following to better inform members on the procurement process: a) the job title and department of MRC staff who handle procuring services on the state contract, b) how MRC makes decisions on what services to procure including how often a review of needed services occurs, c) a brief description of the key steps and barriers to procuring services on the state contract including the approximate duration of the procurement process, and d) what the current remedy is for services needed by a consumer that are not on the state contract.

6. **Continue outreach to communities of ethnic and diverse backgrounds on vocational rehabilitation and other MRC service offerings, especially in the Asian community:**
 - a) The MRC has made a commitment to reach out to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are also ethnic and cultural minorities through its Diversity/Bilingual Committee and through its Language Access Plan.
 - b) The MRC should continue these outreach efforts to ethnic and cultural minorities, especially to the Asian community, which has been identified as slightly underserved by the VR program in Massachusetts.
 - c) As growth in the Asian community continues to be seen in the state's general population, it is recommended that MRC continues its outreach efforts to Asian communities in particular.
 - a. There was growth in the number of Asian consumers served by MRC during FY2018 but it still remains below the proportion in the overall state population.
 - d) MRC conducted a focus group of Asian consumers in the Lowell office during Fall 2018.
 - a. Information from this focus group and additional consultation with MRC's Diversity/Bilingual Committee yielded a wealth of information and suggestions on additional steps MRC can take in this area to further engage with the Asian community
 - b. It is recommended MRC use the findings from this focus group to assist in developing strategies for outreach to this community.
 - c. Several focus groups will be scheduled in the coming year.
 - e) It was suggested that the first focus group be held in the Braintree office. Possible other sites are Boston and Cape Cod
 - f) MRC should continue to focus on how to reach out effectively to these communities, including conducting outreach to local community agencies and organizations that serve ethnic and cultural minorities, among other methods.
 - g) MRC should continue to consult its Bilingual Committee for recommendations on how to reach out more to minority communities

- h) MRC has been successfully increasing its numbers in terms of Hispanic community and best practices in this area may also assist with outreach to the Asian community.
 - i) Possible other outreach areas, are local public cable TV shows, targeting the underserved communities.
 - j) Radio programs can also be included. Many in the languages of the particular group, we are trying to serve. Also reaching out to local non-profit organizations in the community.
 - k) Having a presence at various functions such as conferences or community gatherings, with perhaps a booth distributing literature.
 - l) The SRC Unserved/Underserved Committee should add reaching out to the Asian community to their agenda.
 - m) Furthermore, it is recommended that the MRC's Diversity/Bilingual Committee, the SRC Needs Assessment Committee and Unserved/Underserved committee consider meeting jointly to come up with ideas for enhanced outreach to minority communities, including the Asian community.
7. **Increasing post-secondary training outcomes by adding dedicated college liaisons to MRC staff who encourage VR consumers to seek postsecondary training, ensure consumer connections to college disability services, and research grants/scholarships.** In addition, the SRC is recommending MRC counselors refer consumers, as appropriate, to the American Student Assistance program for help finding grants/scholarships and navigating higher education.

2. the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has responded to the Statewide Rehabilitation Council's input and recommendations as follows:

1. MRC is committed to continuing to improve the quality of employment outcomes for its consumers. MRC places consumers into a wide variety of jobs based on each individual's interests, needs, skills, and choices. MRC has an existing process that counselors can utilize to develop a self-employment business plan in collaboration with the consumer. MRC can provide data on the number of individuals who have self-employment as an employment goal and outcome data for consumers successfully exiting with self-employment. Self-employment information at 2nd quarter after exit is not available as it is not included in the UI wage data provided to MRC.

MRC has a quality assurance monitoring process for CIES contracts to ensure that CIES vendors comply with the RFR and MRC requirements and to evaluate the quality of services provided under the RFR. Providers report key performance indicator results to MRC on a monthly basis including both performance data and individual progress reports on consumers. Providers also meet with MRC staff to discuss performance on a quarterly basis. MRC will have three program monitoring staff in place to provide oversight on CIES, specifically dedicated to managing vendor relationships. Additionally, the Research, Development, and Performance Management department will provide regular performance reports and conduct a performance evaluation.

MRC recommends that consumers be placed into permanent competitive integrated employment. The ICC program does not currently exist and past outcome data is not available. MRC is developing a new consumer engagement office/program to outreach to consumers. This program is currently under development.

MRC will continue to closely work with the SRC Business and Employment Opportunity Committee to discuss goals, processes, and work on solutions to overcome barriers to employment for people with disabilities. MRC's Job Placement Director will continue to meet with the SRC committee as part of this process.

2. MRC recognizes that transportation continues to be a significant need for some of our consumer population and can present a barrier to employment for individuals with disabilities. This need has been established through the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. This is a complex issue that goes beyond MRC and VR in general and requires collaboration on the local, state, and federal levels.

MRC would like to work with the SRC to determine if any marketing priorities exist in terms of transportation. MRC will update its transportation fact sheets, and MRC can research additional information that we can make available on our website for consumers, including information on councils of aging, the MBTA Ride Uber/Lyft pilot, and others. MRC will also reach out to the Independent Living Centers to discuss collaboration on transportation. MRC has also worked to obtain automatic eligibility for the Transportation Access Pass discount program for MRC consumers.

MRC would like to work with the SRC to open a discussion on collaboration with entities such as MassMobility, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Career Centers, and other organizations on potential projects or programs to assist consumers with transportation. The SRC's assistance in this process would be appreciated.

MRC's Transportation Options Grant evaluated the strategy of volunteer rides and discovered a significant obstacle as volunteers would need commercial insurance to transport people in their vehicles and participate in ongoing training programs which would be cost prohibitive

MRC can provide funds to consumers for short-term transportation needs through an existing maintenance resources working with their counselor. EOHHS Human Service Transportation which MRC utilizes has an array of vendors for transportation including taxi companies. MRC can reach out to Georgia VR to find out about their partnership with ride share companies and check with the MBTA on their Uber/Lyft pilot. MRC will continue to utilize its maintenance process which allows for monitoring of costs and internal controls

3. The MRC Job Placement Unit has developed a wide variety of employer partnerships. MRC has and will continue to utilize OJTs, OJEs, and Job Driven Trainings such as Home Depot, Human Service Worker, CVS, and other employers, and is developing a new JDT with Cisco. For the annual OFCCP hiring event, this is a statewide event, which includes local components across the state, and MRC will continue to work with employer advisory boards on job placement efforts. MRC will develop key performance indicators and will measure outcomes including wages for these efforts.
4. MRC is committed to supporting vocational rehabilitation consumers with Autism Spectrum Disorders in their efforts to live and work independently. The MRC Commissioner is a co-chair of the Autism Commission, and MRC works closely with the Department of Developmental Services, which is the designated agency to provide services for individuals on the Autism Spectrum. MRC will continue to

collaborate with AANE, FSCN, and other entities to improve services for individuals on the Autism Spectrum. MRC's training department in collaboration with AANE will continue to develop and provide staff trainings related to assisting consumers on the Autism Spectrum.

5. MRC will make available a list of services utilizing contracts to the SRC. MRC can provide information from the Needs Assessment in terms of services identified by consumers as important and needed. MRC can utilize its counselor satisfaction survey to ask counselors about what services could be procured on a statewide basis. MRC is in the process of enhancing our Contracts Department including staffing, and will provide an update to the SRC on progress. MRC conducts an annual review of contracts that involves program and fiscal staff, and MRC follows applicable state procurement rules and processes to procure services. MRC can have a fiscal staff person attend a SRC meeting to review the procurement process upon completion of MRC's revamp of procurement process after March 2020.
6. MRC is committed to serve communities of ethnic and diverse backgrounds across Massachusetts to assist consumers in obtaining competitive employment. MRC has identified through the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment that Asian/Pacific Islanders are slightly underserved by the MRC VR program in comparison to their proportion in the statewide population.

MRC conducted a focus group of Asian consumers and community members in the Lowell office during Fall 2018. MRC is planning an additional focus group in the Braintree/Quincy area. The Lowell Focus Group revealed a number of possible strategies for outreach to the Asian community. A work plan was developed with Local Area Office staff to follow up on the recommendations made in the focus group. These efforts could be replicated in other area offices as a strategy.

MRC is in the process of establishing a consumer engagement office/program to outreach to consumers. MRC will work with the new manager of this program and the Diversity/Bilingual Committee, and the SRC Unserved/Underserved Committee to develop a community outreach model and strategy for the Asian community, including a work plan to conduct outreach to local community agencies and organizations that serve ethnic and cultural minorities. The Commissioner is meeting with the bilingual committee in September and outreach to minorities will be discussed.

7. MRC counselors serve as liaisons, and work closely with colleges and universities to refer consumers to college disability service offices. MRC staff and vendors work closely with post-secondary institutions on assisting consumers in obtaining post-secondary training. MRC will research information on the American Student Assistance program and can make available to its counseling staff.
8. MRC will work closely with the SRC to establish a work plan to track progress on the recommendations and associated steps related to the recommendations. MRC will work with the SRC to use electronic methods, such as Survey Monkey, to collect recommendations from the SRC. MRC will also connect the SRC with SRC's in other states to acquire best practices.\

3. the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission reviewed and responded to all recommendations provided by the Statewide Rehabilitation Council.

b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;

Not Applicable - MRC has not requested a waiver of Statewideness.

2. The designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and

Not Applicable - MRC has not requested a waiver of Statewideness.

3. All State plan requirements will apply requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Not Applicable - MRC has not requested a waiver of Statewideness.

c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;

MRC does not have any formal cooperative agreements in place with State and Federal agencies outside of the statewide workforce development system.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission considers cooperation and collaboration with other agencies to be essential and beneficial to most effectively serving people with disabilities and to assist individuals with opportunities for employment based on their choices, needs, interests and preferences. Other agencies provide critical supports, necessary resources, and dedicated human service professionals all of which amplify and enhance the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. For many years, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has worked closely and cooperatively with the staff of other agencies in serving mutual consumers. Collaboration often extends well beyond services to particular individuals. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission works with other agencies to:

- Affect system change
- Increase resources, funding and service options
- Improve communication and mutual understanding among staff

- Change public attitude toward issues of disability
- Achieve common goals on behalf of those whom the agencies serve
- Enhance services for mutually served consumers to assist them in achieving their employment and independent living goals.

Agencies with which such collaboration has occurred and has remained active locally and at the Statewide level include, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Developmental Services, the Social Security Administration, the Massachusetts Autism Commission Medicaid/Mass Health, Department of Public Health, the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Adult and Community Learning Services, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, as well as the Department of Correction and Department of Youth Services through MRC's Supported Employment Programs.

With the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), MRC, and DTA have established a program called Empower to Employ. The goal of this program is to establish an integrated employment model for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF benefits. This joint partnership provides resources to assist shared participants living with disabilities to be independent through employment. The partner agencies use a jointly-funded model of client engagement and intensive co-case management to provide individualized and meaningful services. Through this collaborative effort, DTA and MRC are utilizing an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach to facilitate recruitment (pre-engagement), engagement, service delivery and placement. The IRT informed approach includes:

Individual and group outreach to recruit and refer participants who are a strong match for Empower to Employ and MRC VR services;

Client-centered assessments that identify goals that are most meaningful to the participant, focus on the whole family, and tap into what motivates participants to achieve their goals;

Flexibility to meet participants where they are and creativity in addressing challenges as they arise;

Enrollment into specified training or vocational rehabilitation services to support the goals set with the participant during assessment; and

Continuous co-case management between MRC and DTA teams that bolsters participant engagement and re-engagement, when necessary, and empowers them to navigate their pathway to economic stability.

2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is the state operator of the programs funded under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act. The MRC VR program and MRC area offices have excellent relationships with these programs operated by the agency. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology, the Assistive Technology Program, and the Assistive Technology Loan Program that provides low—interest loans to

consumers when other resources are not available to purchase needed adaptive technology. These programs are available to and are used by MRC VR consumers.

3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;

There are no programs in Massachusetts carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and

MRC does not have any formal cooperative agreements in place with noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission further collaborates with organizations that provide services, in whole or in part, to specific constituencies, including out of school youth. Among such organizations are the Massachusetts Association of Financial Aid Administrators, the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council, the Arthritis Foundation, the Massachusetts Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Massachusetts Easter Seals, United Cerebral Palsy, the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts, and the Epilepsy Association. These collaborations may be informal or may include service contracts. The purpose, goals, and actions established in these contracts are very similar to the agendas set forth in interagency collaboration.

5. State use contracting programs.

The Commonwealth operates a Supplier Diversity Program including the following categories: Minority (MBE), Women (WBE), Service-Disabled Veteran (SDVOBE), Veteran (VBE), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Business Enterprises (LGBTBE); and Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (DOBE). MRC participates in this program as part of statewide contracting as an equal opportunity initiative.

d. Coordination with Education Officials

Describe:

1. DSU's plans

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has established interagency cooperation between public education and public vocational rehabilitation agency regarding vocational rehabilitation services pursuant to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) to provide individualized transition services for students with disabilities that lead to successful post-school outcomes in competitive integrated employment, postsecondary education and training, independent living and community participation.

MRC continues to work to increase collaboration with educational officials, and has worked with DESE to outline interagency cooperation in a formal agreement entitled “Administrative Advisory on Pre-Employment Transition Services and Transition Services”. MRC has a procedure to review this agreement with DESE and make changes as required. MRC has also updated its Pre-ETS policies and procedures as of mid-2019 and will make further edits to its policies and procedures as needed going forward.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) have developed this advisory to Local Educational Authorities (LEAs) as described below and in other sections of this document to:

1. Define and describe Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) offered through MRC for students with disabilities, including which students may be appropriate for these services;
2. Establish collaborative practices between MRC vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors and Local Educational Agency (LEA) personnel for the provision of Pre-ETS.

MRC provides two types of services for students with disabilities, Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), and transition services through an Individualized Plan for Employment. Services may be provided directly by MRC or through a contracted service provider.

- All students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday) may receive Pre-ETS, including but not limited to those receiving services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 plan, and are either eligible for MRC VR services or potentially eligible for MRC VR services. Pre-ETS are provided as generalized services to groups of students, or as individualized services.

MRC provides the five Pre-ETS services required under WIOA:

- Job exploration counseling.
- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school, after-school, or community-based opportunities such as internships. Work-based learning experiences must be provided in an integrated setting in the community to the maximum extent possible.
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs.
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living.
- Instruction in self-advocacy, including peer mentoring.

MRC makes Pre-ETS available to all students with disabilities statewide who are eligible or potentially eligible for MRC services. MRC will make every effort to provide or coordinate Pre-ETS services to ensure statewide availability.

MRC has counselors assigned to secondary institutions across the state. These counselors will review and discuss Pre-ETS service options with students and their families (if needed) to determine which services are most appropriate to meet to meet the student's transition needs. MRC will provide and coordinate Pre-ETS services in collaboration with local educational agencies. MRC's contracted Pre-ETS service providers also work with MRC and schools across the state to obtain referrals for MRC Pre-ETS services.

1. Students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday) who are determined eligible for MRC Vocational Rehabilitation services can receive additional transition services that are not considered Pre-ETS (beyond the scope of the five Pre-ETS services) through an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) while they are still in high school and receiving special education services, and also afterwards when seeking employment, in employment, or in postsecondary education or training. Transition services delivered through an IPE might consist of vocational guidance, work evaluation, skills training at a college or community rehabilitation program, assistive technology, adaptive equipment, and/or benefits counseling.
2. The IPE must be developed within 90 days or with an extension that is documented in the MRCIS case management system and approved by the MRC counselor and the student or Parent/Guardian. The IPE goal and appropriate services should be coordinated with a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan and include the provision of Pre-ETS. High school attendance and completion should be listed as a service on the IPE. The IPE should be completed prior to high school exit for a student determined eligible for MRC services and not under an order of selection wait list.

The Administrative Advisory outlines the procedures in which MRC partners with LEAs to Provide Pre-ETS as follows:

- MRC and LEA's are expected to maintain open and frequent communication between each other. High schools designate staff to facilitate sharing of information between MRC and the LEA.
- LEAs seek consultation and technical assistance from MRC VR counselors for LEA staff, students, and families. Consultation and assistance may be provided in-person or by using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls).
- LEAs will provide MRC staff with resources necessary for MRC's work, such as access to meeting space, workspace, and Internet connection as needed.
- LEAs will collaborate with VR counselors to identify students with IEPs or 504 plans who may be appropriate for Pre-ETS. MRC will cooperate with LEAs to reach out to identified students as early as possible during the transition planning process and will provide the student and family with information about MRC Pre-ETS services, the purpose of the VR program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided.
- LEAs will inform the student, parent/guardian, and other IEP Team members of the availability of Pre-ETS provided by MRC and connect the student and family with the VR counselor.
- LEAs will invite VR counselors to participate in IEP and 504 planning meetings, as appropriate, and with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority. When invited to participate in these planning meetings, MRC counselors will make every effort to participate.
- LEAs will share information e.g., student and family contact and information, student assessment data, Transition Planning Forms, IEPs, and 504 plans, with MRC counselor, with the prior consent of the family or student who has reached the age of majority, and as consistent with applicable student records laws.

- LEAs and MRC are expected to collaborate to plan Pre-ETS for students with IEPs that are coordinated with each student’s individualized secondary transition services provided by the LEA. IEP Teams are asked document any agreed-upon VR services in the Action Plan of the Transition Planning Form, and may also document VR services in the Additional Information section of the IEP. LEAs and MRCs will collaborate to coordinate and deliver training activities and opportunities for students and families, where needed and appropriate. IEP documentation practices may vary among LEAs. See 34 CFR 300.154 and 34 CFR 300.324 regarding the relative responsibilities of LEAs and VR agencies to provide transition services.

2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:

A. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

The Administrative Advisory outlines ongoing communication and collaboration and technical assistance between the DESE and the MRC at the state and local level. Designated staff from the DESE and the MRC will communicate on a regular basis, to share information about legislative and regulatory changes and to review agency policy initiatives, resources, and other issues related to transition.

The following initiatives will foster local collaboration between the MRC’s staff and LEAs:

Training and Guidance:

DESE and MRC staff will collaborate on transition training activities for students, families, educators, rehabilitation counselors, and other involved staff, where needed and appropriate. DESE and MRC staff at the state level will collaborate, as needed and appropriate, to produce joint guidance on WIOA, and local collaboration.

MRC and DESE have encouraged LEAs through the administrative advisory to provide MRC staff with resources necessary for MRC’s work, such as access to meeting space, workspace, and Internet connection as needed.

LEAs are asked to collaborate with VR counselors and contracted MRC Pre-ETS providers to identify all students with disabilities, including but not limited to those with IEPs or 504 plans who may be appropriate for Pre-ETS. MRC will cooperate with LEAs to identify students as early as possible during the transition planning process and will provide the student and family with information about MRC Pre-ETS services, the VR program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided.

LEAs are asked to inform the student, parent/guardian, and other IEP Team members of the availability of Pre-ETS provided by MRC and connect the student and family with the VR counselor.

LEAs are asked to invite VR counselors to participate in IEP and 504 planning meetings, and with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority. When invited to participate in these planning meetings, MRC counselors will make every effort to participate.

LEAs are asked will share information e.g., student and family contact and information, student assessment data, Transition Planning Forms, IEPs, and 504 plans, with MRC counselor, with the prior consent of the family or student who has reached the age of majority, and as consistent with applicable student records laws.

LEAs and MRC are expected to collaborate to plan Pre-ETS for students with IEPs that are coordinated with each student's individualized secondary transition services provided by the LEA. IEP Teams are asked document any agreed-upon VR services in the Action Plan of the Transition Planning Form and may also document VR services in the Additional Information section of the IEP. LEAs and MRCs will collaborate to coordinate and deliver training activities and opportunities for students and families, where needed and appropriate. IEP documentation practices may vary among LEAs. Any conversation regarding MRC Pre-ETS at the IEP meeting needs to be individualized to meet the student's needs.

The MRC has designated staff in Area Offices to work cooperatively with LEAs to coordinate Pre-ETS and transition planning and services, and to disseminate information to parents/legal guardians and students about the MRC transition process as early as the student's 14th birthday.

The MRC will provide consultation and technical assistance to LEAs, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conference and conference calls), to assist LEAs in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities and to coordinate Pre-ETS and other transition services. Pre-ETS can be provided to students who are eligible or potentially eligible for MRC VR services. If a student is determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, this consultation and technical assistance should result in the MRC's development of an Individualized Plan for Employment ("IPE") before the student leaves the school setting.

This consultation and technical assistance might include but is not limited to informational sessions with students, families/legal guardians, and school personnel regarding MRC Pre-ETS and VR services, including referral and eligibility information; and assigning a counselor point-of contact for each high school to provide information, receive referrals for Pre-ETS and VR services, and develop IPEs with students who are determined eligible for VR services.

B. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

The administrative agreement covers compliance with state and federal laws and regulation for transition planning at the local level.

Under the agreement:

The DESE will provide ongoing guidance to LEAs regarding the responsibility to provide a free and appropriate public education ("FAPE") to students eligible for special education and Section 504 accommodation plans, as mandated by federal and state law. Guidance will include the requirements that IEPs specify needed transition services; that special education transition services be provided for each eligible student beginning at age 14; that representatives of participating agencies be invited to the IEP team meeting with the prior consent of the parent/legal guardian or student who has reached the age of majority; and that IEP Teams discuss the transfer of parental rights to the student at least one year before the student

turns 18. The DESE will also provide guidance to LEAs to facilitate referrals to the appropriate agency for eligible students who will require ongoing supports and services from the adult service system.

On a regular basis, the DESE will monitor LEAs' development and use of policies and procedures, including those regarding Section 504 and the transition requirements of IDEA. All monitoring reports will be made publicly available on the DESE's web site. The DESE has provided guidance to LEAs, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, entitled "Administrative Advisory SPED 2017-1: Guidance Regarding the WIOA Prohibition on Contracting with Entities for the Purpose of Operating a Program Under Which a Youth with a Disability is Engaged in Subminimum Wage Employment" to inform LEAs that WIOA prohibits LEAs from entering into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in subminimum wage employment. The DESE assures that it will not enter such a contract or other arrangement.

C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) are mutually committed to promoting individualized transition services for students with disabilities that lead to successful post-school outcomes in competitive integrated employment, postsecondary education and training, independent living, and community participation.

MRC will contribute at least 15% of its financial resources towards providing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday). The high schools will provide in-kind contributions of staff time, space, and transition services/resources. MRC will continue to work closely with DESE to ensure adequate financial resources are available in the schools for high school students.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), schools are responsible to provide secondary transition services in the areas of Postsecondary Education/Training, Competitive Employment, Independent Living, and Community Participation, as appropriate to the unique needs of each student. In many cases, schools provide employment skills development as part of secondary transition services. The goal of Pre-ETS is to prepare students with disabilities for successful competitive, integrated employment.

Pre-ETS planning does not relieve LEAs or MRC of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that LEAs or MRC would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who are appropriate for Pre-ETS. For example, if the LEA ordinarily provides job exploration counseling to its students, that does not mean that the school should cease providing the service.

In cases where a question arises as to financial responsibility for services, MRC and the LEAs will work together to establish financial responsibilities and have established a process for resolving disputes and for the coordination and timely delivery of services. MRC and LEAs will refer to state and federal laws, related regulations, and state and federal guidance to assist in resolving such issues in the best interest of the student.

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA, nothing in this agreement will be construed to reduce the obligation under the IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) of a local educational agency

(LEA) or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities. In accordance with IDEA, nothing in this agreement relieves the MRC of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet the MRC's eligibility criteria.

MRC has assigned qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to every public high school in the Commonwealth to coordinate the delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services for potentially eligible or eligible students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday) and transition services for students determined eligible for VR services delivered through an Individualized Plan for Employment. The LEAs assign qualified education staff to coordinate communication with MRC and to provide transition services under IDEA and 504. Applicable administrative staff are also involved in this process. MRC contracted Pre-ETS providers also work closely with schools and MRC staff as part of this process.

D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

The MRC Area Offices will provide outreach to high schools to assist in informing all students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday) of the availability of MRC Pre-ETS and Vocational Rehabilitation services. Outreach to these students occurs as early as possible in the transition process. MRC outreach information includes a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, applicable eligibility requirements, referral and application procedures, and the scope of services that may be provided to eligible and potentially eligible individuals. Contracted MRC Pre-ETS providers will also participate in this outreach process to identify students for MRC Pre-ETS services.

LEAs also collaborate with VR counselors to identify all students with disabilities who may be appropriate for Pre-ETS. MRC will cooperate with LEAs to identify students as early as possible during the transition planning process and will provide the student and family with information about the purpose of the VR and Pre-ETS programs, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided.

e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission does not have any formal cooperative agreements with private non-profit organizations. MRC does work closely with nonprofits across the Commonwealth.

MRC has for many years worked in partnership with private nonprofit Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) to develop a wide array of programs and services to assist people with disabilities to achieve suitable employment outcomes. The MRC and CRPs have collaborated to develop programs including: Vocational Services; Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES), contracted Pre-Employment Transition Service programs (Pre-ETS), and a wide array of support services essential in vocational rehabilitation. MRC is also working closely with CRPs on a new collaborative effort with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to provide contracted employment services under the CIES program for consumers participating in the Department of Mental Health's Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) model. This program began in July

2019. As part of MRC ACCS services through CIES, MRC has entered into Business Associate Agreements (BAAs) with CIES ACCS providers to assist with facilitating and coordinating services between MRC, DMH, and providers for participating consumers.

MRC's collaborative relationship with its CRP partners have been achieved through open communication, sharing of ideas and resources, mutual support and understanding and inclusiveness of all partners in the development of and implementation of service design.

The MRC develops programs and services with the participation of providers in several forums as described below:

1. Statewide Rehabilitation Council that meets quarterly.
2. Meetings with representatives of the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers.
3. Periodic district wide meetings with community rehabilitation programs.
4. Interagency and cross-disability agency councils.
5. Task specific work teams.

MRC contracts with Qualified Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) to deliver CIES service, including CIES-ACCS services. The MRC/CIES program provides employment services for participants and through State funding the availability for extended ongoing supports after closure. CIES comprises six components, each associated with a specific service outcome. Through the component-based service delivery system, consumers are able to receive the comprehensive individualized services and supports they need to achieve and maintain successful employment. CIES services may carry over from year to year, with approximately 30% of consumers completing their program each year.

MRC has recently completed a new procurement for CIES services which took effect on July 1, 2019. MRC made adjustments to the CIES model based on lessons learned and input from its staff, CRP partners, and other stakeholders. These adjustments are designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CIES services for MRC consumers. MRC also incorporated peer support and flexible supports into the CIES procurement and has developed key performance indicators for CIES and CIES-ACCS. The CIES procurement is set to be a rolling RFR which opens four times a year to allow recruitment of additional vendors providing flexibility and maximum access for services.

CIES Components include: Career Exploration and Engagement; Employment-Based Skills Training/Work Experiences; Job Development and Placement; Initial Employment Support services, Interim Flexible Supports (including peer support and job coaching), and Ongoing Employment Support services.

Providers are paid on a performance basis during the initiation and completion phases of services. Using a data management and billing system called EIM (Enterprise Invoice Management), and internal tracking, the CIES team tracks program enrollment, expenditure and outcomes. CIES is often used to assist

individuals with complex disabilities or situations into integrated employment opportunities with competitive wages paid by an employer.

MRC also works with CRPs and other nonprofits such as the Independent Living Centers through its Pre-Employment Transition Service (Pre-ETS) contracts. These contracts provide work-based learning experiences, workplace readiness training, job exploration counseling, instruction in self-advocacy/peer mentoring, and counseling on enrollment in post-secondary education. MRC recently completed a new procurement for contracted Pre-ETS services which took effect on July 1, 2019. This new procurement is designed in the long term to allow MRC to be able to serve more students and provide students with exposure to the world of work. This approach focuses on 1) increasing the student's awareness of the world of work and their own employment interests, skills, and needs; 2) providing exploration and exposure opportunities related to work experiences; and 3) better preparing students for employment and postsecondary success. This approach is tiered to ensure that students of all abilities can access and engage in Pre-ETS services based on their interests and needs.

f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

The MRC Supported Employment Program provides Supported Employment Services to consumers statewide through its Area Offices and through a network of qualified community rehabilitation providers. MRC has developed links with the local school system for transitioning youth, and other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health (DMH), through its clubhouse programs and through the new collaboration with DMH on Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS).

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission continues to promote the collaboration with stakeholders regarding supported employment services and extended services. This is also evidenced in the number of joint funded programs that have been established. Some examples of these collaborative programs are joint funding of services for individuals with intellectual disabilities between the MRC and the Developmental Disability Services (DDS); for individuals with mental health needs between MRC and the Department of Mental Health (DMH); for individuals who have traumatic brain injuries between the Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP) of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission; and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

MRC has Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) with DDS and the Department of Mental Health (DMH). These MOUs are designed to improve collaboration, coordination and utilization of joint agency resources in ensuring quality service delivery and long term supports that result in competitive/supported employment outcomes for mutual consumers. This collaboration is at the Regional and local levels. Through developing a process for conducting joint-service planning, local liaisons/training and joint service planning, all consumers and specifically transition aged individuals be better served and able to achieve successful employment outcomes.

Evidence of Collaboration regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services:

MRC provides supported employment services through its Area Offices across the commonwealth. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has developed a process to provide extended support services to assist individuals with disabilities in maintaining and advancing in their careers utilizing state funding, comparable benefits, and natural supports for long-term extended support services after federal funds can no longer be used. Paid extended supports are provided through a network of qualified community rehabilitation providers as well as partnering with other state agencies such as the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Developmental services.

Funding for extended long-term support services is available from several sources depending on the nature of the consumer's disability and the resources available. Sources include:

1. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission State Ongoing Support Funding
2. IRS Section 44
3. Department of Mental Health
4. Department of Developmental Services
5. Private Sector Business Natural Supports
6. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Statewide Head Injury Program
7. Social Security Work Incentives/PASS Plan
8. Impairment-Related Work Expenses
9. Natural Supports or supports from an employer
10. Other Comparable Benefits
11. Medicaid Waiver Supported Employment Services
12. Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

g. Coordination with Employers

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR services; and

MRC's Job Placement Unit operates a robust account management system that is designed for MRC to hear first from employers regarding their specific labor market needs. This gives MRC staff access to job openings that we can assist individuals with disabilities in meeting their employment goals as well as assisting our employer partners by providing them with access to qualified individuals to help fulfill their staffing needs. As part of this system, MRC has several employer advisory boards strategically located across the Commonwealth through which we receive labor market information and to collaborate on strategies for hiring of people with disabilities. MRC's account management system involves numerous employers across the Commonwealth in a variety of different sectors. There are statewide employer partners as well as local employer partners we work with, including those in STEM occupations such as Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital, Partners Health Care, among others. Many of these partners participate in MRC's employer advisory board meetings.

MRC produces a labor market summary for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and analyzes placement and employment trends on an annual basis by Standard Occupational Code. MRC also tracks information on labor force participation and unemployment for people with disabilities in comparison to those without disabilities. MRC continues its efforts to strengthen agency use of labor market information and continues to strive to reduce the gap in labor force participation between people with and without disabilities. Going forward, MRC plans to continue working with its workforce partners, including the MassHire Career Centers and Workforce Boards to analyze labor market trends and statistics to identify job sectors to focus outreach efforts on. MRC also uses its Employer Advisory Board network and other marketing efforts to promote MRC's employer services and the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

Employer feedback has led MRC to operate an annual statewide hiring event to help connect a talent pool with the needs of our employer partners. MRC also holds regular local office briefings with employers on local labor needs. All of these enhance the agency's knowledge on local and statewide labor market needs. MRC utilizes job matching tools such as ResuMate to assist with job matching efforts to accommodate the needs of our consumers and employer partners.

MRC participates in a business strategy workgroup between key workforce partners as part of the Commonwealth's effort to coordinate services to employers amongst partner agencies. MRC subscribes to the established key principles to guide business services amongst key partner agencies and will continue to work closely with WIOA core partners to expand services to employers.

MRC is continuing to target new employers and expand its employer account management system. Examples include job driven training programs with multiple employers, such as the MRC Pharmacy Technician Training Program in direct partnership with CVS Health, and a job driven training program with Home Depot, among others. MRC also is an active member of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)'s National Employment Team network, which strives to create a coordinated approach to serving business customers through a national VR team that specialized in employer development, business consulting and corporate relations. The National Employment Network team also comprises the Talent Acquisition Portal providing access to jobs across the country and connects with national employers

MRC's Placement Team also has a very active and vibrant partnership with the Mass PCA Program, with over 38 hires and growing. This program also offers CNA training and other career options and trainings. These trainings are free to consumers. MRC also works with registered Apprenticeship Programs in the state to secure apprenticeships for consumers.

MRC's Job Placement Unit operates an annual Federal Hiring Event in partnership with MCB, and other workforce partners, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) in their Boston and Hartford offices to assist consumers with securing competitive employment comparable with their interests and abilities. MRC prepares consumers to interview for available jobs with employers participating in the event. This is a hiring event that focuses on direct job placement with participating employers. It differs from a career fair because consumers must apply for at least one job for which they are qualified to be eligible to participate. Employers are motivated to hire because they are presented with a set of diverse, qualified individuals from whom they can select to fill vacancies. In 2019, MRC completed its 7th annual Hiring Event. Since 2013, Over 480 individuals have been successfully employed across the Commonwealth through participating in this annual one-day event. The aggregate annual wages of all successfully

employed consumers through the hiring event since 2013 is approximately \$10.31 million. Consumers have been employed in a variety of occupations ranging from office and administrative support, health care, protective service, human services, and management occupations, amongst others.

Job-Driven Trainings:

MRC is committed to the use of industry-based training to assist its consumers in finding competitive employment opportunities through employer engagement. Over the past 8 years, MRC has conducted over 1,000 OJTs with employers and approximately 500 consumers have completed Job-Driven trainings with MRC employer partners. MRC continues to develop and utilize Job-Driven Trainings (JDT) and on-the-job (OJT) training and evaluations. MRC has created job driven training programs to date with the Home Depot, CVS Health, Lowes, G4S Security Solutions, the Kraft Group, MAPFRE Insurance, Advance Auto Parts, and Enterprise Holdings, and Allied Universal Security Services, amongst other employers. In addition, MRC holds job-driven trainings for human service jobs and has started to offer a job-driven training for IT jobs. MRC is also exploring a cyber security job-driven training program partnership with CISCO Academy, and is working on developing new job-driven training programs with Travelers Insurance, and BJ's Wholesale Club, and developing new partnerships with UPS and Fed Ex. MRC has found that many consumers who participate in an OJT or Job-Driven training obtain employment with the OJT or JDT. Other participants are able to obtain employment elsewhere as a result of their participation in the OJT or JDT because they gained a recent work experience and/or developed job-specific skills.

MRC also holds annual employer trainings to strengthen relationships with existing employers and to develop new ones. The intent of these trainings includes promoting MRC's employment services to employers, encouraging employer partners of MRC to promote the hiring of people with disabilities to other employers and reducing stigmas related to employment of people with disabilities.

As part of MRC's Empower to Employ Program in partnership with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), MRC has hired dedicated Employment Service Specialist staff for this project and MRC is developing an employer summit for jointly served consumers between MRC and DTA. The goal is to develop options for individuals who may have limited work experiences. One strategy would be to work with employers and staffing agencies to develop short term work options and experiences.

2. Transition services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services, for students and youth with disabilities.

MRC continues to work with employers to coordinate transition services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students and youths with disabilities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

MRC has created internship opportunities for high school students with disabilities in partnership with employers across the Commonwealth as part of its Pre-ETS programming.

In addition, MRC staff coordinate with MRC Pre-ETS providers and with employers to provide work experiences such as internships and job tours for students and youths with disabilities receiving VR and/or Pre-Employment Transition Services through MRC. These services provide paid work-based learning experiences and workplace readiness training. It also provides valuable work experience and mentorship

opportunities for participants. Employers are involved as part of identifying work-based learning experiences for Pre-ETS and as part of MRC's Transition Pathway Services federal demonstration grant. MRC is in the final two years of this grant; as part of this demonstration grant, MRC is working closely with the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston to evaluate progress and to develop and promote best practices for Pre-ETS and Work-Based learning. MRC is also collaborating with Work Without Limits at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center to coordinate with employers to provide work-based learning experiences for TPS grant students. MRC will use lessons from this grant to incorporate best practices for coordinating Pre-Employment Transition Services and transition services to students and youths with disabilities.

h. Interagency Cooperation

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

MRC and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Office of Medicaid, the state agency responsible for administering the state's Medicaid program have a well-established and long-standing relationship. MRC and the EOHHS' Office of Medicaid are committed to the promotion of independence and self-sufficiency through access to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) services for individuals with disabilities.

MRC and the Office of Medicaid have developed and signed a Cooperative Agreement to work collaboratively to promote the provision of services and long-term supports for individuals with disabilities who require such services to obtain and maintain competitive employment in accordance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA). The Cooperative Agreement will be revised as needed in the future.

This Cooperative Agreement is in accordance with Section 412(a)(7)(H) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, which requires a state's VR agency to have a formal cooperative agreement with the state's Medicaid agency with respect to the delivery of VR services for individuals who have been determined to be eligible for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) under a Medicaid HCBS waiver.

MRC and EOHHS' Office of Medicaid, through joint planning and sharing of information, will collaborate to promote access to competitive integrated employment and will work to increase the number of successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities needing, and eligible to receive, long-term supports in order to find and keep a job.

MRC provides the following services to individuals who apply for and are determined eligible for VR services, based on individual needs:

- a. vocational assessment, b. vocational counseling and guidance, c. funds for training/education, job placement, d. follow-up supports after training.

EOHHS through its Office of Medicaid administers, and MRC serves as the Operating Agency for, certain HCBS Waivers through which individuals with disabilities may receive long term services and supports in the community. The availability of such supports works to enable individuals with disabilities to achieve independence and economic self-sufficiency in the community. Many individuals receiving VR services from MRC are also enrolled in Mass Health (the state Medicaid program) and through Mass Health are supported in their efforts to live and work as independently as possible in the community.

Through participation in one of MassHealth's HCBS waivers and/or utilization of MassHealth State Plan services, disabled MassHealth members may receive services that support their efforts to obtain competitive integrated employment. These services may include, as appropriate:

1. Community Living Supports: A range of MassHealth state plan and HCBS waiver services that enable an individual to live in the community as an alternative to institutional care and which may include such services as home health aide, homemaker services, individualized home supports, independent living supports, home/environmental accessibility modifications, and personal care.
2. Pre-vocational Services: A range of learning and experiential type activities that prepare an individual for paid or unpaid employment in an integrated, community setting. Services may include teaching such concepts as attendance, task completion, problem solving and safety as well as social skills training, improving attention span and developing or improving motor skills.

Additionally, the following services may be available to eligible individuals receiving VR services from MRC or who are enrolled in a MassHealth HCBS waiver, subject to the rules and regulations governing each program:

1. Vehicle Modification
2. Transportation
3. Home/environmental accessibility modification
4. Supported Employment Services

Designated MRC and EOHHS Office of Medicaid staff will communicate on an ongoing basis to share information about legislative and regulatory changes and to review agency policy initiatives, resources, and other issues related to long term supports for mutual consumers under a MassHealth HCBS waiver program.

2. the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

MRC and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) work collaboratively to assist individuals with developmental disabilities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MRC and DDS have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to work collaboratively through joint planning and sharing of resources to expand access to integrated employment services to increase the number of successful job placements for individuals with intellectual disabilities, especially those of transition age who have a goal of competitive employment. The MOA will be reviewed annually by the leadership of both agencies to identify areas for clarification, improvement, or additions to further promote collaboration and successful employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities eligible for services from both agencies.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Department of Developmental Services through joint planning, and sharing of resources, are working to expand access to integrated employment services and increase the number of successful job placements for individuals with intellectual disabilities, in particular those individuals of transition age, who have a goal of competitive employment and are eligible for services from both agencies.

MRC and DDS are working to achieve the following outcomes through collaboration:

1. Increase the number of transition age individuals with intellectual disabilities who obtain and maintain competitive employment.
2. Improved collaboration, coordination and utilization of joint agency resources in ensuring quality service delivery and long term supports that result in competitive employment outcomes for our mutual consumers. This will include funding from MRC for the up front employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long-term, ongoing employment support services to help individuals successfully maintain competitive job placements.
3. Adherence to the DDS Home and Community Based Waiver Program requirements for the delivery of supported employment services.
4. Improved outreach, communication and coordination with local schools, individuals with developmental disabilities, families, employers and other stake holders in serving our mutual consumers.
5. Enhanced communication between DDS and MRC.

Criteria for mutual MRC/DDS consumers:

- a. Individuals who have been determined eligible for MRC Vocational Rehabilitation services by an MRC counselor who are also receiving services from the Department of Developmental Services
- b. Individuals who have a goal of employment in an individual, competitive, integrated job working full-time or part-time. (Individuals would be hired by the business/employer, earning at least minimum wage and eligible for the benefits other employees in similar positions receive.)
- c. Individuals who can benefit from the employment services provided by MRC to reach their employment goal. This includes individuals who may need long-term, ongoing, job supports from DDS to enable them to successfully maintain employment.

MRC and DDS are targeting individuals aged 18 to 22, who are moving from school to adult life, and individuals up to age 24. With a focus on assisting students/young adults who have had work experience while in school, MRC and DDS assist them in directly entering a job upon completion of school and/or to maintain a job obtained during their last year of school. With adults who are over the age of 24, who are eligible for services from both DDS and MRC and have a goal of working in competitive employment, the agencies provide similar services.

Referral Process from DDS to MRC:

- a. For students, the DDS Area Office/Transition Coordinator will make a referral to the local MRC office at least one year before the student is scheduled to leave school.
- b. MRC counselors may also identify individuals who have been referred to their agency for services to determine if they are also DDS eligible and will contact the local DDS Area Office to confirm eligibility.

Services Provided:

- a. Both the DDS Transition/Service Coordinator and MRC Counselor will be participating members of relevant individual planning team processes, (including IEP-Individual Education Plan; ITP-Individual Transition Plan; IPE-Individual Plan for Employment; ISP-Individual Support Plan).
- b. Individuals may be eligible for the full array of services available through MRC based on MRC policy and their needs.
- c. Based on an individual's needs, it is expected that MRC will fund the upfront employment services which may include assessment, skills training, job placement, and initial job coaching and on-the-job supports.
- d. For individuals who will require ongoing job coaching and employment supports to successfully maintain employment, DDS will provide funding for these long-term, ongoing employment services. These services will be provided by DDS after the individuals exits MRC services, which will not occur before the 90-day job retention period.

Communication and Coordination of Services between Agencies:

- a. There will be regular communication between MRC and DDS local area staff to facilitate collaboration, joint planning for service delivery, cross-agency information sharing and training to ensure all parties have current information about agency policies and practices including those related to referrals, eligibility requirements, and other pertinent information.
- b. Area Directors and/or other lead designated staff will identify a process for identifying referrals and for regular communication to monitor services and other collaborative initiatives.
- c. MRC and DDS have worked to clarify the expected responsibilities and roles of staff in each agency to support local service planning and service delivery. This will be determined by DDS and MRC managers at the local level. It is expected that both the MRC counselor and DDS Service Coordinator will work closely together with individuals when joint services are being provided, communicating regularly, participating in planning meetings, etc., to ensure an integrated and responsive approach when working with individuals and their families/guardians. This will promote a strong partnership to assist in addressing problems or concerns that might arise both on-the-job and outside of work that may have an impact on performance, as well as facilitate planning for ongoing employment support.
- d. MRC counselors and DDS staff will abide by agency practices regarding regular communication, participation in planning meetings and collaboration in ensuring an integrated and responsive approach to working with consumers, their families/guardians and other community resources.

Reporting/Data Collection:

A system for tracking the services provided to individuals jointly eligible for MRC and DDS services has been developed and implemented in order to assess the referrals, outcomes, impact and effectiveness of services provided to individuals who receive services as part of the MOA. Each MRC and DDS Area Office will be required to provide documentation on a regular basis.

2. the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) both recognize that employment is essential to the independence, dignity, and recovery of persons with serious mental illness, continue to work collaboratively to increase employment opportunities and positive employment outcomes for the individuals they mutually serve. Through enhanced interagency communications throughout their organizational structure, engaging in joint service planning at the individual and program levels, and formalizing a plan for ongoing collaboration, MRC and DMH are working collaboratively to coordinate and improve services to shared consumers to assist them in their efforts to obtain employment and live independently in the community.

MRC and DMH have developed a Memorandum of Understanding to guide efforts to work collaboratively to identify the individuals that they mutually serve through implementing an ongoing data collection system, to foster joint service planning and interagency training to increase employment opportunities and positive employment outcomes for individuals with severe mental illness. The MOU will be revised as needed. In addition, MRC and DMH have undertaken a new initiative as of July 2019 where MRC coordinates employment services for individuals with mental health needs served by the Department of Mental Health's Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) program in collaboration with DMH and its vendors. MRC entered an Interagency Service Agreement (ISA) and a Business Associate Agreement (BAA) with DMH to provide funding for MRC ACCS services.

The new MRC/DMH Employment Initiative is designed to build an integrated employment framework that inspires and engages innovation to ensure full employment for people with mental health needs at the same rate of employment as the general population. The focus of this initiative is on individuals served by DMH through Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS). These individuals are being referred to MRC for Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services. To serve these individuals, MRC is using an Integrated Resource Team approach, where partner agencies and supports come together to craft and jointly own a job seeker's employment goal, to coordinate wrap-around services and ongoing collaboration and communication. MRC has hired dedicated staff with funding through the ISA to work with ACCS referrals. These counselors will have smaller caseloads and will work with CIES providers, DMH providers, DMH, and other MRC staff to rapidly engage with consumers, develop a plan for employment, and coordinate services designed to assist these consumers in achieving successful employment outcomes.

The MOU and ISA outline collaboration between MRC and DMH as follows:

1. Through the MOU and through the ACCS initiative, MRC and DMH have developed a system for ongoing collaboration and communication at the local and state level.

2. MRC and DMH continue to work on ways to enhance systems to regularly identify the individuals they mutually serve, in general and for the ACCS initiative.
3. MRC and DMH continue to implement processes that will facilitate DMH and MRC timely referring to each other individual who could benefit from receiving both MRC and DMH services, including consumers to be referred to MRC for MRC ACCS services.
4. MRC and DMH continue to develop and implement a process for conducting joint-service planning for individuals mutually served by both agencies to enhance the individuals' employment opportunities. For consumers participating in the ACCS initiative, the Integrated Resource Team approach will be used to develop and coordinate services, including wrap around services.
5. To promote referrals, consultations regarding referrals and joint-service planning when appropriate, MRC and DMH will continue to ensure all staff at both agencies and service provider staff are informed and trained on the services of the respective agencies provide.
6. MRC and DMH have implemented an ongoing data sharing agreement to track employment service delivery and the outcomes associated with mutually served individuals and to help the Agencies assess the effectiveness of their collaboration. Additionally, the ISA for the ACCS initiative outlines key performance indicators and data collection areas to track services and outcomes for the new MRC-DMH Employment Initiative. These indicators will be used to track outcomes and improve services.
7. Continue to explore, develop, and implement further joint initiatives beneficial to the individuals mutually served by the Agencies, including but not limited to the pursuit of new resources.
8. Consumer Input. MRC and DMH acknowledge the importance of consumer input and will incorporate such input in the evaluation of their collaborative efforts.

Local Liaisons/Training/Joint Service Planning:

1. Local Liaisons. Each DMH Site Office, DMH facility, and MRC Area Office will designate a liaison(s) to serve as a central point of contact and resource for the other Agency.

The liaison will:

- A. provide their counterparts with information about and answer questions regarding their Agency's eligibility or referral process and the services they provide.
- B. Provide guidance to and/or confer with their counterparts, or designees, about the appropriateness of referring a specific individual served by one of the Agencies to the other for additional services; and when appropriate, helping to facilitate the filing and processing of the required application or referral forms.

Referrals between agencies:

MRC and DMH have agreed:

Referrals to MRC from DMH shall be made in good faith with the reasonable expectation that the person referred is interested in competitive, integrated employment, has the potential to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services, including supported employment services, in order to achieve competitive employment.

Referrals to DMH from MRC shall be made in good faith with the reasonable expectation that the person referred is interested in, and in need of the services DMH offers, and is likely to meet criteria for DMH services.

MRC and DMH have agreed to mutually facilitate the coordination of employment related services provided by DMH, MRC or contracted providers to individuals mutually served by the Agencies; assist in resolving issues that may arise regarding an application for services, a referral for services and/or the coordination of care; notify or ensure notification to their counterpart/and/or the referral source as to the outcome of an application or referral filed on behalf of an individual being served by the other agency; and ensure that the agencies MOU contact persons have updated contact information for them.

Training:

DMH and MRC, subject to available funding, have sponsored a statewide MRC/DMH Training and Collaboration Forum for employees of DMH and will hold further trainings as needed. The purpose of the forum is to further the goals of the MOU. DMH will provide a representative for planning and consultative purposes for MRC's Annual Mental Health Liaison Forum. MRC and DMH will continue to conduct ongoing training on the ACCS employment initiative as it evolves.

Joint Service Planning:

At the State Level: DMH and MRC operate a workgroup staffed by both agencies and contracted providers, as applicable, to establish protocols for the Agencies that will ensure that the care of mutually served individuals in need of enhanced support to obtain or retain competitive employment will be coordinated to the extent practical and feasible. MRC and DMH also work closely together on the state level on the MRC-DMH ACCS Employment Initiative. At the Regional Level. Each DMH Area Director and MRC District Director or their designee, meet with their counterparts regularly to discuss the new MRC-DMH Employment Initiative, any communication or collaboration issues and to address opportunities for additional collaborations.

At the Local Level: DMH Site Directors and MRC Area Directors, Supervisors, and MRC ACCS counselor ensure that regular and as needed communications occur between MRC and DMH to facilitate collaboration on the MRC-DMH Employment Initiative and other efforts, joint planning for service delivery, and cross agency information sharing.

i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

A. Qualified Personnel Needs.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

The MRC tracks and maintains staffing information by classification, vacancy rate and information to determine its staffing level based on the distribution of new referrals and active clients. This information is updated regularly.

The Commission currently employs 422 individuals in the VR Program. Of this number, 261 are VR counselors and first line supervisors, 28 are managers and 133 are program, technical, or administrative staff. All numbers represent full and part-time staff, not FTE. 24% of MRC staff are from minority backgrounds, 74% are women, 15% are persons with disabilities, and 3% are Veterans.

Most counselors carry “general caseloads” consisting of consumers representing all disability populations; a smaller number of counselors carry “specialty” caseloads consisting primarily of consumers with the same/similar disabilities (i.e., severe mobility impairments, psychiatric disabilities), including dedicated counselors for the deaf and hard of hearing and for particular language groups. MRC actively served 24,991 consumers in SFY2019/PY2018.

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

MRC monitors the number of active consumers and its available resources on an ongoing basis and sets its staffing pattern based on these factors. The MRC will act as needed to ensure sufficient staff to serve the caseload based on the projected number of consumers with active individualized employment plans (IPEs) based on available resources and review from the leadership team.

MRC projects it will need to maintain a staffing level of 442 individuals (427.5 FTEs in the VR Program. Of this number, 264 (259.5 FTEs) are VR counselor, first line supervisors and placement unit staff, 42 (41.4 FTEs) are managers and 133 (126.6 FTEs) are program, technical, or administrative staff, and 3 benefits specialists funded through VR.

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be

served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Over the next 5 years, MRC will continue to monitor the number of active consumers and its available resources and will set its staffing pattern based on these factors. The MRC will act as needed to ensure sufficient staff to serve the caseload based on the projected number of consumers with active individualized employment plans (IPEs) based on available resources and review from the leadership team.

MRC continues to experience turnover as a result of retirements of counselors, supervisors, and managers. It appears this trend will begin to decrease as we move into the mid-2020s. MRC is expecting approximately 40-50 counselors, supervisors, and administrative staff in the VR program to retire or leave the agency over the next five years. MRC has developed a workforce plan with strategies to backfill critical positions across the VR program and is working on strategies to develop a more mobile workforce with new technology to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our staff and the employment experience of consumers.

MRC projects it will need to maintain a staffing level of 442 individuals in the VR Program. Of this number, 264 (259.5 FTEs), are VR counselor, first line supervisors and placement unit staff, 42 (41.4 FTEs) are managers and 133 (126.6 FTEs) are program, technical, or administrative staff, and 3 benefits specialists funded through VR.

B. Personnel Development

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

Universities in Massachusetts that have Rehabilitation Counseling programs at the bachelor and masters' level are: University of Massachusetts at Boston, Springfield College and Assumption College. Salve Regina is located in Rhode Island.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

In a given academic year, upwards of 100 undergraduate students and 125 graduate students are enrolled in degree programs either full-time or part-time as rehabilitation "majors" at the colleges and universities referenced.

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Each year, upwards of 50 undergraduate students are awarded the Bachelor's degree and upwards of 60 graduate-level students graduate with credentials to qualify for certification by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification and/or licensure by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the institutions.

2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

The MRC's plan for recruitment includes meeting with representatives from the Commission's Staff Development Department. It will continue to communicate on a quarterly basis with officials of the CORE accredited rehabilitation departments and officials responsible for minority outreach at Assumption College, Springfield College, Salve Regina, and the University of Massachusetts at Boston regarding pertinent information on the preparation of rehabilitation professionals and for the specific purpose of recruiting graduates for employment in the federal/state VR Program. Special emphasis will be given to students with disabilities and students from minority backgrounds. Additionally, Commission staff also regularly addresses rehabilitation students in the classroom setting providing them with an overview of the agency and the public rehabilitation program. Internal job postings are automatically sent to these institutions informing them of job openings and procedures to apply. A number of rehabilitation students have completed their field placement and practicum experience within the Commission affording them a realistic view of work in the Commission.

MRC has also sent a letter of support to Springfield College as part of their application to provide long term training support to Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals and will collaborate with Springfield College if they are awarded funding in this area.

The Commission also maintains relationships with nearly 40 minority referral sources and routinely forwards all job postings to them thereby encouraging application for employment at all job levels from persons from minority backgrounds. Position openings can be advertised in newspapers (i.e. Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Worcester Telegram and Gazette) and posted internally and externally on the Internet (MASSCareers, Indeed, Monster, SimplyHired, and LinkedIn). Indeed in particular would pull our jobs from a variety of posted locations and sources.

3. Personnel Standards

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is utilizing a state approved certified Human Resource Division classification standard, to recruit and employ qualified counseling staff as required by WIOA. There are three levels of classifications in the Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (QVRC) series. Incumbents of classifications in this series administer functional, skills analysis and other vocational assessment tests; review and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews and

observations; develop, implement and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs); and provide job placement assistance and job development skills.

The basic purpose of this work is to evaluate individuals with physical, emotional or other impairments or multi-impairments to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. QVRC- I is an entry-level position. QVRC- II is the fully competent level classification in the series and QVRC III is a supervisory level position. The following is the state certified Human Resource Division classification standard to recruit and employ qualified counseling staff as required by WIOA. MRC also has slightly different postings for QVRC IIs for Job Placement Specialists and for Mental Health Specialty QVRC for the MRC-DMH Employment Initiative.

1. QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR I:

Distinguishing Characteristics: This is the entry-level classification in this series. Incumbents perform work under guidance and within a framework of defined policies, procedures and standards. Incumbents seek guidance and advice from more experienced colleagues and focus on gaining the knowledge and experience to perform more independently and participate in work of a higher complexity.

Supervision Received: Incumbents receive close supervision from employees of a higher grade who provide direction, training, instruction, work assignments and frequent reviews of performance through formal and informal verbal and written reports for effectiveness and conformance to laws, rules, regulations and agency policies.

Incumbents may receive general direction from other work units to ensure accuracy and compliance with funding requirements.

Supervision Exercised: Incumbents may provide functional guidance to new employees. **Functions Performed:** At this level, Incumbents are expected to perform one or more of the following:

Conduct intake interviews with consumers who have physical, emotional, psychiatric or other disabilities to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services. Determine eligibility through review and analysis of records, tests, observations and interviews, to identify consumers' needs and occupational interests and abilities, and to assist with securing competitive employment. Make recommendations on appropriate programs and treatment interventions based on evaluation of needs. Coordinate vocational rehabilitation services for consumers, including rehabilitation teaching, social rehabilitation orientation, physical and mental restoration, vocational and on-the-job training, educational services, and pre- and post-employment services. Maintain accurate records using information technology resources. Develop and maintain working relationships with public and private organizations, including employers, service providers, career centers and community groups to exchange information and resolve problems, to promote agency services and to evaluate the suitability of educational programs and employment and other consumer placement resources. Represent the agency in dealing with community groups, public and private organizations, vendors and other public agencies. Conduct individual skills training sessions based on the IPE to ensure that the needs of the consumers are being met. Conduct group workshops for consumers to prepare for job opportunities, and coordinate the methods, materials and equipment used in training sessions. Monitor and evaluate consumer progress through individual meetings and on-site visits to ensure that the needs of the consumers are being met. Prepare and maintain case and progress

notes for general information and to document and monitor changes to an individual's overall progress. Explain and answer inquiries made by consumers and/or their families and other interested parties relating to agency programs, objectives and services. Monitor and evaluate the consumer's progress through individual meetings, on-site visits and review of reports to assist consumer adjustment to new situations and determine whether services, programs or job placement is meeting the needs of the consumer.

Key Accountabilities: Incumbents at this level have the decision-making authority to:

Recommend how to proceed with the job referral process. Determine accommodation and training needs that may be required in the workplace and determine if training or other employer intervention strategies are needed post- placement in order to maintain consumer placement. Recommend purchase of equipment and materials including Assistive Technology for job placement. Recommend consumers to employers for employment opportunities. Prioritize cases/workflow. Develop, implement and monitor IPE with the consumer.

Relationships with Others: Key contacts and relationships for incumbents include consumers and their families/legal guardians; supervisors and agency managers and staff; medical professionals; legal officials; vendors and contractors; and community members and/or organizations involved with consumers and/or their families/legal guardians.

Working Environment: While performing the duties of this classification, incumbents work both in an office and at employer sites. Incumbents may be exposed to moving mechanical parts, vibration causing tools or equipment, fumes, airborne particles or toxic or caustic chemicals, outside weather conditions and loud noises when visiting sites. Incumbents may also be exposed to verbal and/or physical confrontations. Incumbents are required to travel in the state and may be exposed to traffic and other road-way hazards.

Physical Abilities: While performing the duties of this classification in an office setting, incumbents are regularly required to sit for long periods of time, communicate effectively and use information technology resources to process work assignments. Incumbents may be required to transport, move or install 25 pounds of office supplies or equipment (for example paper or case files) with or without assistance and with or without the use of devices or equipment to assist with the effort. Work assignments may be performed with or without reasonable accommodation to a known disability.

Knowledge, Education and Experience: Applicants must have a (A) Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor or (B) the substitution listed below.

Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

I. A Master's degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full- time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

Incumbents are required to have the following at the time of hire:

1. Knowledge of evaluation methods and techniques to determine individual interests, aptitudes, skills and occupational preferences. 2. Knowledge of the principles and practices of assisting people in coping with physical and/or mental disabilities to meet their vocational, social and independent living needs. 3. Ability to gather information through questioning and observing individuals and by examining records and documents to assess consumer needs. 4. Ability to use a computer to conduct research, manage databases and produce written documents. 5. Ability to communicate information and ideas so others will understand; ability to appropriately document case activities and represent the agency in a professional manner. 6. Ability to interact effectively and establish rapport with diverse teams and groups of people. 7. Ability to maintain a calm manner and interact appropriately with others in emotionally charged or stressful situations. 8. Ability to analyze and determine the applicability of data, draw conclusions and make appropriate recommendations. 9. Ability to exercise discretion in handling confidential information.

2. QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR II:

Distinguishing Characteristics: This is the fully competent professional level classification in this series. Incumbents have thorough knowledge of policies, practices, and techniques and have mastered the technical job content, perform work of greater complexity, exercise greater independence in making decisions and receive less supervision and review. At this level incumbents have sign off authority for individual caseloads and handle complex cases or transferred cases requiring exceptional mastery.

Supervision Received: Incumbents receive general supervision from employees of a higher grade who provide work assignments and facilitate performance reviews through formal and informal verbal and written reports for effectiveness and conformance to laws, rules, regulations and agency policies.

Supervision Exercised: Incumbents may provide functional direction to Qualified Vocational Counselor Level I or other employees of a lower grade through advice, guidance and assistance with tasks and participate in the training and mentoring of new employees and interns.

Additional Functions Performed: Incumbents perform the following: Consult with Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to ensure that the skills and abilities of the consumer are an effective employment match. Provide vocational rehabilitation counseling advice and to ensure provision of appropriate services to consumers deemed to present particularly difficult challenges, such as persons with multiple disabilities, persons who have been unsuccessful with other rehabilitation counselors and persons who have an extended history with the agency. Confer with agency staff, consumers' families, employers, professional specialists and others to exchange consumer information and determine the appropriateness of employment opportunities and resources for education, training and job placement

assistance. Assist in maintaining a relationship with the local Career Centers for the purpose of providing consumers with information about employment opportunities, job seeking and methods of applying for current employment opportunities.

Based on assignment, incumbents may perform one or more of the following: Participate in the development of at least at least one statewide or regional training program. Design, implement and conduct group workshops. Represent local offices at regional and statewide placement meetings and participate in local/regional/statewide initiatives. Monitor and evaluate employer satisfaction post-placement through on-site visits and telephone calls. Lead and organize office quality improvement projects. Provide technical assistance or act as an office liaison regarding specific populations to ensure outreach and appropriate service delivery to specific and underserved groups. Provide training and education to employers regarding the skills, abilities and limitations of consumers. Consult with employers to determine job expectations and market these employment expectations to Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level I and make specific recommendations to employers for hiring consumers.

Additional Key Accountabilities: Incumbents at this level have the decision-making authority to:

Determine content of training materials for group workshops. Independent management of and decision-making ability to sign off on individual caseloads.

Relationships with Others: Key contacts and relationships for incumbents include consumers and their families/legal guardians; supervisors and agency managers and staff; medical professionals; legal officials; vendors and contractors; and community members and/or organizations involved with consumers and/or their families/legal guardians.

Working Environment: While performing the duties of this classification, incumbents work both in an office setting and at employer sites. Incumbents may be exposed to moving mechanical parts, vibration causing tools or equipment, fumes, airborne particles or toxic or caustic chemicals, outside weather conditions and loud noises when visiting sites. Incumbents may also be exposed to verbal and/or physical confrontations. Incumbents are required to travel in the state and may be exposed to traffic and other road-way hazards.

Physical Ability: While performing the duties of this classification in an office setting, incumbents are regularly required to sit for long periods of time, communicate effectively and use information technology resources to process work assignments. Incumbents may be required to transport, move or install 25 pounds of office supplies or equipment (for example paper or case files) with or without assistance and with or without the use of devices or equipment to assist with the effort. Work assignments may be performed with or without reasonable accommodation to a known disability.

Knowledge, Education, and Experience: Applicants must have at least (A) Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) two (2) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers, or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff.

Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

I. A Master's degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full- time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

Incumbents must satisfy all the requirements of the Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I level plus the following at the time of hire:

1. Knowledge of the types and availability of public and private community-based organizations providing vocational rehabilitation services to consumers.
2. Knowledge of the characteristics and trends of the local labor market.
3. Knowledge of the principles and practices of vocational counseling.
4. Knowledge of agency rules, regulations, policies, procedures and guidelines governing assigned responsibilities.
5. Ability to act as a mentor and provide guidance to others.

3. QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR II (MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALITY)

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) are seeking to improve competitive employment outcomes for individuals who are shared consumers of DMH and MRC through the development of a robust vocational rehabilitation network of services, supports, counseling and guidance. The purpose of this program is for MRC to provide appropriate, individualized, vocational rehabilitation services and supports for DMH consumers enrolled in DMH's Adult Clinical Community Service (ACCS), with the goal of competitive, integrated employment.

MRC Mental Health Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) will work with job seekers to explore their interests, assess their needs, and determine the best pathway to ensure successful integrated competitive employment.

MRC will provide an array of comprehensive and coordinated employment supports, including procuring services from the provider community to assist job seekers with achieving their employment goals as part of an overall career pathway.

Employees in this position will lead and facilitate an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach to meet the needs of an individual job seeker. The IRT model utilizes a combined team approach, maximizing wrap around services to support the job seeker with ongoing partnerships and communication. The work of

VRCs is community-based. VRCs will meet with job seekers in a variety of settings that could include, but are not limited to, community programs, DMH offices, MRC offices, and other community settings.

Duties and Responsibilities (these duties are a general summary and not all inclusive):

- Fosters an “informed choice” model of professional vocational counseling for individuals with persistent mental health/behavioral health conditions and/or co-occurring disorders who are receiving services from DMH.
- Incorporates ongoing engagement strategies within the VR system while providing on-going supports to facilitate completion of activities outlined in the Individualized Plan for Employment.
- Determines eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014.
- Administers functional capacity assessments, interest tests, aptitude tests, transferable skills analysis and other vocational assessments and shares information with job seeker and others as authorized by the job seeker.
- Reviews and analyzes diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews, and observations.
- Leads and facilitates the collaborated team to develop, implement, and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment in a manner that allows eligible job seekers the opportunity to exercise informed choice in employment outcomes.
- Recommends the purchase of services, equipment, and materials including Assistive Technology.
- Facilitates services and skills training in individual and group settings.
- Provides opportunities for job seekers to select service providers or MRC placement team to deliver job development, placement, and retention assistance.
- Partners with public and private organizations including, but not limited to, other agency staff, employers, community rehabilitation providers, state agencies, workforce partners, and schools to promote and market agency programs, collaborate, and coordinate in the delivery of consumer supports and services.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Knowledge of counseling and job placement of persons with vocational/occupational barriers, including physical, emotional, psychological and intellectual disabilities;
- Familiarity with utilizing psychological tests and other evaluative techniques;
- Commitment to lifelong learning in relationship to their own professional development;

- Outstanding organizational, written and oral communications skills; attention to detail;
- Capacity to gather, analyze, and evaluate significant case information pertinent to rehabilitation of an individual;
- Ability to serve as a mentor and provide guidance to others;
- Proficient usage of Microsoft Office products including Word, Excel and Outlook; prior use of client database systems.

MINIMUM ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS:

Applicants must have at least (A) Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation

Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the

Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) two

(2) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers, or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff. Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

I. A Master's degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies,

Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education,

Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse

Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

4. JOB PLACEMENT SPECIALIST:

The Job Placement Specialist (JPS) will consult with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to assess and evaluate the job readiness of consumers, analyze skills and abilities for correct employment matches. Make recommendations to proceed with job referral process. Identify accommodations and training needed that may be required within the workplace.

Interpret residual functional capacities assessments, interest tests and aptitude tests. Assess transferable skills, review and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews and observations. Develop, implement and monitor placement services included in Individualized Plans for Employment through onsite visits and conferences in a manner that allows the eligible consumer the opportunity to exercise Informed Choice in employment outcomes. Educate employers regarding skills, abilities and limitations of consumers. Consult with employers to determine job expectations and market these employment expectations to Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. Make specific recommendations to employers for hiring consumers. Confers with agency staff, clients' families, employers, professional specialist and others to exchange client information and determine appropriateness of employment opportunities and resources for education, training, job placement assistance and employment for clients. Conduct group workshops for clients in interviewing skills, resume writing, introduction and assistance with using the area office's resource room, etc., to prepare them for job opportunities. Professionally explain and answer inquiries relating to rules, regulations, policies and procedures to inform clients, their families and other interested parties about agency programs, objectives and services.

Monitors and evaluates client progress through individual meetings with client, on-site visits, review of reports, etc., provide vocational counseling to assist client adjustment to new situations and determine whether services, programs or placement are meeting client needs. JPS may assist in maintaining a liaison with the local Career Centers for the purpose of providing consumers with information about employment opportunities, job seeking, and methods of applying for jobs.

Schedule: travel 25% of the time.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) promotes equality, empowerment and independence of individuals with disabilities. These goals are achieved through enhancing and encouraging personal choice and the right to succeed or fail in the pursuit of independence and employment in the community. The MRC provides comprehensive services to people with disabilities that maximize their quality of life and economic self-sufficiency in the community.

Applicants must have at least (A) Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation

Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the

Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) two (2) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and

services for employers, or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff. Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions

I. A Master's degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies,

Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education,

Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse

Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Females, minorities, veterans, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

5. QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR III:

Distinguishing Characteristics: This is the supervisory classification in this series and based on assignment may be a non-supervisory contract coordinator. Incumbents provide supervision and guidance on complex or specialized casework to Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level I and II's within their work unit. At this level, incumbents may perform the duties for Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Levels I and II, but the primary focus is to provide formal and informal supervision and act as the liaison between Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and agency management.

Supervision Received: Incumbents receive general supervision from employees of a higher grade who provide guidance, statistical review of unit and performance reviews through both formal and informal reports for effectiveness and conformance to laws, regulations and agency policies.

Supervision Exercised: Incumbents may exercise direct supervision over, assign work to and review the performance of Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level I and II or other employees of a lower grade.

Incumbents may provide functional direction to Qualified Vocational Counselor Level I and Level II or other employees of a lower grade through advice, guidance and delegation of tasks and participate in the training and mentoring of new employees.

Incumbents may participate in the interviewing process or may make recommendations for new hires.

Additional Functions Performed: Incumbents perform the following: Supervise and monitor unit activities such as consumer evaluations and case maintenance to ensure effective service delivery and compliance with agency policies and standards. Establish and maintain program and unit information systems. Prepare and monitor program and/or unit budget and allocation of funds. Develop and implement policies and procedures for assigned units and programs in accordance with agency regulations and applicable laws. Determine service delivery hours and caseloads to staff consistent with agency policies and consumer needs. Assist in the development and implementation of consumer needs assessment programs. Promote agency services to ensure appropriate referrals to the Vocational Rehabilitation Division. Coordinate state and federal compliance review audits; gather sample studies, conduct in-house reviews of cases for compliance and provide requested materials, information and evaluations to ensure agency compliance with federal, state and agency policies, procedures and regulations regarding vocational rehabilitation. Coordinate Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) referrals; act as office liaison on all matters related to SSI/SSDI consumers receiving benefits from the Social Security Administration. Act as liaison regarding specific disabilities or special populations by attending meetings and providing information to counselors to ensure that the agency is reaching the specific populations, and to discuss current information on the target groups. Based on assignment, develop and negotiate contracts and grants with appropriate vendors; develop, negotiate and manage contract service budgets in order to assure program effectiveness and compliance with state and federal guidelines, policies and procedures.

Additional Key Accountabilities: Incumbents at this level have the decision-making authority to:

Evaluate job performance of subordinates, participate in the hiring and promotional process; notify management when corrective action may be appropriate; and provide support to enhance employee performance. Determine service delivery hours and caseloads to staff consistent with agency policies and consumer needs. Recommends contract and budget control actions by analyzing spending patterns and monthly and quarterly reports in order to maximize funds available for consumer services and to anticipate financial needs and assure appropriate transfer of funds. Review and sign off on case load for Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors I and QVRCs II as appropriate.

Relationships with Others: In addition to the contacts listed for Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level I and II, key contacts and relationships for Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level III incumbents include regional directors, peers and advocates.

Working Environment: While performing the duties of this classification, incumbents work both in an office setting and at employer sites. Incumbents may be exposed to moving mechanical parts, vibration causing tools or equipment, fumes, airborne particles or toxic or caustic chemicals, outside weather conditions and loud noises when visiting sites. Incumbents may also be exposed to verbal and/or physical confrontations. Incumbents are required to travel in the state and may be exposed to traffic and other road-way hazards.

Physical Abilities:

While performing the duties of this classification in an office setting, incumbents are regularly required to sit for long periods of time, communicate effectively and use information technology resources to process work assignments. Incumbents may be required to transport, move or install 25 pounds of office supplies or equipment (for example paper or case files) with or without assistance and with or without the use of devices or equipment to assist with the effort. Work assignments may be performed with or without reasonable accommodation to a known disability.

Knowledge, Education, and Experience: Applicants must have at least (A) Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) three (3) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers, of which one (1) year must have been in a supervisory or leadership capacity or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff.

Substitutions:

I. A Master's degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full- time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

Incumbents are required to have all the requirements of the Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I and II level plus the following at the time of hire:

1. Thorough knowledge of the types and availability of public and private community-based organizations providing vocational rehabilitation services to consumers.
2. Thorough knowledge of the characteristics and trends of the local labor market.
3. Knowledge of the principles, practices and techniques of program budgeting.
4. Ability to supervise, including planning and assigning work according to the nature of the job to be accomplished, the capabilities of subordinates and available resources; controlling work through periodic reviews and/or evaluations; monitor and encourage subordinates to work effectively and efficiently; and determine the need for and wither recommend or initiate corrective action.
5. Ability to

lead others and organize the efforts of others in accomplishing work objectives and performance standards. 6. Ability to communicate and work effectively with senior leaders

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE SPECIALIST:

The Employment Service Specialist markets and promotes the services of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) to employers and other interested parties in the office's district; develops and implements promotional programs; gathers and disseminates labor market information; provides technical assistance concerning recruitment of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's Consumers; establishes and maintains working relationships with employers; plans and organizes job fairs and recruitment; establishes and maintains a data bank of information on local employers; assists Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's staff by soliciting employment opportunities for specific consumers with disabilities and performs related duties as required.

Qualifications:

Applicants must have (A) at least three (3) years of full-time or equivalent part-time professional experience in: business management, business administration, public relations, marketing, personnel interviewing, recruitment or job placement; employment, vocational, educational, psychological, sociological or rehabilitation counseling or guidance; job analysis or position classification work or any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Extensive travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must possess a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

I. A Bachelor's degree or higher in marketing, business management, business administration, public relations or public administration may be substituted for two (2) years of the required experience.

B. the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

All MRC vocational rehabilitation counselors are expected to meet at least the education and experience requirements of a Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Promotional opportunities in the series would require more experience and/or a higher educational level.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION:

MRC's Training Department supports a wide variety of training and development programs for all staff through a comprehensive training program. MRC's training program have been focused on supporting implementation of WIOA regulations and guidelines, and on working with our workforce partners and

other disability agencies to provide coordinated services. MRC will continue to provide training to its staff to enhance their skills, professional development, and enhanced practices to best serve consumer needs.

A series of workshops and seminars have been and will continue to be planned in the following priority areas:

Continued implementation of WIOA, Vocational Rehabilitation best practices, trainings related to the agency's new initiatives with the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Transitional Assistance, trainings on MRC's revamped CIES employment services procurement and its linkage to the new MRC-DMH Employment initiative, substance abuse training in partnership with the Department of Public Health, Pre-Employment Transition Services, quality, employment outcomes, leadership development and succession training, transportation options, transitional planning, serving consumers on the autism spectrum, computer skills in Microsoft Office Suite (Excel, Access), and programs under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (operated by MRC).

MRC has also worked with the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) on a series of staff development efforts related to Pre-ETS and transition services, Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach, career pathways, and trainings on the Common Performance Measures and understanding and using data. MRC is also working on trainings for staff and consumers in partnership with Work Without Limits, a program run by the University of Massachusetts, and is also coordinating training with MRC employer partners and MRC providers.

MRC also continues to offer ongoing professional development for VR counselors, managers, supervisors, as well as aspiring supervisors. These trainings address 21st century labor trends, high growth occupations and skills that are in demand, trainings on job accommodations and employment tax credits, amongst other topics. MRC is also conducting Change Management Training to support its staff with changes related to WIOA and focusing on improving practices to better serve the needs of MRC consumers and to improve consumer satisfaction. MRC also makes trainings available in cooperation with staff labor unions on professional development, including computer software training and online training via LinkedIn's Learning Online training site.

MRC has also worked with the state HR Division's Center for Staff Development to develop a certificate program for aspiring managers and supervisors where staff works to gain leadership and management skills guided by a supervisor or manager serving as a mentor. Also, project management and leadership certificates are available through this program. Finally, MRC has developed and has operated a regular new staff orientation to assist with educating and retaining staff.

Through its training department, MRC acquires and routinely disseminates rehabilitation materials and research to staff such as the latest publications from the Institute on Rehabilitation on Issues, training materials from the Research and Training Centers, training guides and resource materials produced by recipients of RSA grants, and products from the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials, as well as information and knowledge from RSA VR Technical Assistance centers such as the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC), the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT), the Job-Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (JDVRTAC), the Vocational Rehabilitation Youth Technical Assistance Center (Y-TAC), and the Rehabilitation Training and Technical Assistance Center for Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (PEQATAC). MRC also

disseminates materials and information from the National Rehabilitation Association, the Association of People Supporting Employment First, Explore VR, and other sources. These information and materials are also discussed and utilized in training and staff development meetings and webinars. MRC has also coordinated and consulted with WINTAC and NTACT on training efforts.

4. Staff Development.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. System of staff development

a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

MRC has a system of staff development operated through its training Department. MRC's staff development system supports a wide variety of training and development programs for all staff through a comprehensive training program. MRC's training program has been focused on supporting the implementation of WIOA regulations and guidelines and on working with our workforce partners and other disability agencies to provide coordinated services. MRC will continue to provide training to its staff to enhance their skills, professional development, and enhanced practices to best serve consumer needs.

A series of workshops and seminars have been and will continue to be planned in the following priority areas:

Continued implementation of WIOA, Vocational Rehabilitation best practices, trainings related to the agency's new initiatives with the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Transitional Assistance, trainings on MRC's revamped CIES employment services procurement and its linkage to the new MRC-DMH Employment initiative, substance abuse training in partnership with the Department of Public Health, Pre-Employment Transition Services, quality, employment outcomes, leadership development and succession training, transportation options, transitional planning, serving consumers on the autism spectrum, computer skills in Microsoft Office Suite (Excel, Access), and programs under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (operated by MRC).

MRC has also worked with the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) on a series of staff development efforts related to Pre-ETS and transition services, Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach, career pathways, and trainings on the Common Performance Measures and understanding and using data. MRC is also working on trainings for staff and consumers in partnership with Work Without Limits, a program run by the University of Massachusetts, and is also coordinating training with MRC employer partners and MRC providers.

MRC also continues to offer ongoing professional development for VR counselors, managers, supervisors, as well as aspiring supervisors. These trainings are ongoing and address 21st century labor trends, high growth occupations and skills that are in demand, trainings on job accommodations and employment tax credits, amongst other topics. MRC is also conducting Change Management Training to support its staff

with changes related to WIOA and focusing on improving practices to better serve the needs of MRC consumers and to improve consumer satisfaction. MRC also makes trainings available in cooperation with staff labor unions on professional development, including computer software training and online training via LinkedIn's Learning Online training site.

MRC has also worked with the state HR Division's Center for Staff Development to develop a certificate program for aspiring managers and supervisors where staff works to gain leadership and management skills guided by a supervisor or manager serving as a mentor. There also are project management and leadership certificates available through this program. Finally, MRC has developed and has operated a regular new staff orientation to assist with educating and retaining staff.

Through its training department, MRC acquires and routinely disseminates rehabilitation materials and research to staff such as the latest publications from the Institute on Rehabilitation on Issues, training materials from the Research and Training Centers, training guides and resource materials produced by recipients of RSA grants, and products from the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials, as well as information and knowledge from RSA VR Technical Assistance centers such as the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC), the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT), the Vocational Rehabilitation Youth Technical Assistance Center (Y-TAC), the Job-Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (JDVRTAC), and the Rehabilitation Training and Technical Assistance Center for Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (PEQATAC). MRC also disseminates materials and information from the National Rehabilitation Association, the Association of People Supporting Employment First, Explore VR, and other sources. These information and materials are also discussed and utilized in training and staff development meetings and webinars. MRC has also coordinated and consulted with WINTAC and NTACT on training efforts.

B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge

Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

MRC has the following procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

The Commission acquires and routinely disseminates rehabilitation materials and research to staff such as the latest publications from the Institute on Rehabilitation on Issues, training materials from the Research and training Centers, training guides and resource materials produced by recipients of RSA grants, and products from the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials, as well as information and knowledge from RSA VR Technical Assistance centers such as the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC), the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT), the Job-Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (JDVRTAC), and the Rehabilitation Training and Technical Assistance Center for Program Evaluation and Quality Assurance (PEQATAC). MRC also disseminates materials and information from the National Rehabilitation Association, the Association of People Supporting Employment First, Explore VR, and other sources. These information and materials are also discussed and utilized in training and staff development meetings and webinars. MRC has also coordinated and consulted with WINTAC and NTACT on training efforts.

5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

MRC has dedicated VR counselors skilled in American Sign Language (ASL) and are qualified to work with consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing. In addition, MRC has counselors fluent in the following languages throughout the state: Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Khmer, French/Haitian Creole, Hindi, and Tamil. Some area directors, head clerks and other clerical staff are fluent in American Sign Language, Spanish, Khmer, Cantonese, Mandarin, Haitian Creole, or Portuguese. Eleven full and part-time sign language interpreters are also on staff. MRC also works with its contracted service providers for CIES and Pre-ETS to provide communication coordination for consumers referred by MRC to these contracts. MRC has a bilingual committee of staff which provide support in this area. MRC also works with Cross Cultural Community Services (CCCS) (<https://embracingculture.com/>) to facilitate communication needs for individuals served by MRC who speak languages other than English.

MRC also has a contract for foreign language translation and MRC has translated key agency documents and VR communication letters working closely with the Bilingual Committee. The Commission also maintains a statewide contract with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to secure additional ASL interpreters, CART reporters, and video relay translation as needed. Staff with specific language skills and interpreters are geographically placed to coincide with population and other demographics relating to target consumer groups. This strategy will continue to be applied and staff with specialized skills added, as appropriate, for the upcoming year and beyond. MRC continues to work on ways to work with staff to further improve coordination of communication needs for individuals served by MRC.

6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The information in the State plan pertaining to the RSA requirements for a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development is coordinated and shared with the appropriate State Department of Education unit consistent with the Individual with Disabilities Education Act to assure compliance and coordination of efforts across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

j. Statewide Assessment

1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:

A. with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

The MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) report can be found on MRC's website: www.mass.gov/files/documents/2019/10/10/FY2018-MRC-Comprehensive-Statewide-Needs-Assessment.pdf

The appendix can be found at:

www.mass.gov/doc/fy2018-comprehensive-statewide-vocational-rehabilitation-consumer-needs-assessment-appendix/download

1. The FY2018 CSNA confirms that the majority of consumers served by the MRC are people with the most significant disabilities. The findings indicate that a majority of MRC consumers require multiple Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services and supports to assist them in their efforts to prepare for, choose, obtain, maintain, and advance in competitive employment. There is also a high need for transportation and Community Living (CL) services amongst many consumers. The need for multiple VR services was found to be slightly greater amongst individuals of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds (particularly African Americans and Hispanics) and for individuals with cognitive or psychological disabilities. This finding was consistent with the 2016 report but more pronounced than past years. The findings suggest that many consumers also require supported employment and ongoing and extended employment supports. The need for multiple CL services was greatest among individuals with physical or sensory disabilities.
2. Overall, the majority of MRC consumers believe MRC services are addressing all or most of their needs and are satisfied with MRC services. 80% of consumers feel MRC services are at least somewhat effective in meeting their vocational service needs. 88% of MRC consumers are satisfied with the services they receive. Also, the majority of consumers (79%) are also somewhat or very satisfied with the development of their Individualized Plan for Employment. The satisfaction rate increased from 2016 while the proportion of those who felt services are meeting their needs and satisfaction with IPE development decreased slightly from the prior year. Many of those who feel MRC services are not meeting their needs indicate they have difficulty maintaining contact with their counselor, have experienced changes in their assigned counselors due to high levels of staff turnover, feel they have not been provided consistent or adequate information on services, or are struggling with health issues, financial issues, and other difficulties.
3. Many consumers expressed strong praise and gratitude for the hard work and support provided by the MRC and its counseling staff. It is very evident that MRC and its staff make a significant positive impact on the lives of many of its consumers. The level of positive feedback from consumers this year is once again exceptionally notable. A need raised by consumers included better contact with their counselor and more information about available services and MRC procedures, including information and referral to other agencies. It also appears some consumers may not have a complete understanding of what the MRC can and cannot do for them. Many consumers also appear to be struggling with the high cost of living in Massachusetts and the competitive nature of the job market.
4. The most important and needed VR services listed by consumers were job placement (88%), career counseling (86%), supported employment (84%), benefits planning (82%), work-readiness training (73%), ongoing supports to assist in retaining employment (73%), assistance with college education (71%), and On-the-Job Training and Job-Driven Trainings (70%), and vocational training.
5. The most important job characteristics that MRC consumers indicated they are looking for in a job include a friendly job environment (96%), job satisfaction and personal interests (95%), earning a living wage (95%), an adequate number of hours worked per week (94%), vacation and other leave benefits (90%), promotional opportunities (88%), and health insurance benefits (84%).

6. The most common occupational areas of interest listed by MRC consumers included Community/Social/Human Services (34%), Health Care (29%), Administrative (29%), Self-Employment (26%), Customer Service (25%), Arts/Entertainment (24%), Computers/Information Technology (21%), and Education/Childcare (17%). All but Self-Employment are amongst the top 10 occupational goals by Standard Occupational Code (SOC) in consumer employment plans in the MRCIS Case Management System. A number of consumers also asked for additional information on self-employment supports.
7. Only 27% of consumers indicated that they are aware of the Independent Living Center in their area. Individuals with psychological disabilities, younger consumers, and those in the South and North District tended to be less aware of ILCs compared to consumers with other types of disabilities.
8. Transportation continues to be an area of need for some MRC consumers. The most important and needed transportation services and options listed by consumers are the Donated Vehicle Program (18%), driver's education and training (15%), public transportation (14%), Taxi/Uber/Lyft (11%), information on transportation options (10%), the Transportation Access Pass (9%), The Ride/paratransit (9%), and car pool/ride sharing (6%).
9. Transportation can serve as a barrier to some consumers and 35% of consumers find transportation to be a potential barrier to obtaining employment (up 2% from 2016 but steady on a 4-year trend line). Common reasons for how transportation is a barrier include the distance to and location of available jobs, inability to access jobs in areas without transportation, the cost of transportation, that consumers must rely on others for transportation, lack of a vehicle and/or driver's license, and health conditions or the nature of disability, and the reliability and the time required to travel via public transit/paratransit.
10. The most important and needed Community Living services indicated by responding consumers were affordable, accessible housing and the Mass Access Housing Registry (64%), Social/Recreational opportunities (53%), Medicaid waiver services (43%), Assistive Technology (36%), Home Care Services (35%), Adult Supported Living (33%), and Home Modification (31%).
11. When factoring out consumers who indicated they do not require Community Living services, 89% of MRC consumers indicated that MRC's services were somewhat or extremely useful in assisting them to maintain independence in the community. As with the section on VR, many consumers reflected on how the MRC's assistance has been tremendously valuable. Many consumers, however, were not aware of some or all of the CL services provided by the MRC. Others indicated they do not require CL services. There appears to be a higher need for CL services amongst women and minority consumers.
12. Finding affordable and accessible housing continues to remain a challenge for many consumers due to the high cost of living in Massachusetts. The Independent Living Centers may be able to assist consumers in this area, and counselors may be able to refer consumers to other resources to assist with housing needs.
13. A total of 17% of consumers feel they require additional services and supports. This number decreased about 2% from 2016. These services include job search assistance, job placement and job training, financial assistance, transportation, affordable and accessible housing, counseling and guidance, information on available services, assistive technology, education and training, services from IL centers, and services and supports from other agencies, and computer/technology skills training.

14. The most important single service consumers are receiving includes job placement and job search services, assistance with college education and job training, tuition waivers, vocational counseling and guidance, assistive technology, job readiness training, assistance with obtaining supplies for school and work, ongoing employment supports, job trainings, and transportation,
15. A majority of MRC counselors and supervisors (78% Satisfied/Very Satisfied) are satisfied with their ability to assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining, maintaining, and advancing in competitive employment based on their skills, interests, needs, and choices. This satisfaction rate is down slightly from 2016%. The majority of MRC counselors are generally satisfied with most services provided to consumers, including internal job placement services, services from Community Rehabilitation Providers, and education and training provided to consumers by schools and colleges. One area of improvement identified by counselors was the need to improve communication with both consumers and providers. Counselors identified areas that would assist them in doing their job better, such as improved support and resources for job placement, more full time job placement specialists, increased information on job leads for consumers, additional on-the-job training and other training resources, continued enhancements to the MRCIS system, more resources for vocational assessment and vocational training for consumers, and training on policies, procedures, and Pre-Employment Transition Services, amongst others.
16. Most consumers appear to be satisfied with services received from Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs). The majority of MRC staff also are somewhat or very satisfied with CRP services. 92% of CRPs indicated they are satisfied with services they provide to MRC consumers. Improved communication as well as information flow between CRPs and MRC staff may assist in improving service delivery to consumers and lead to more successful employment outcomes. Some CRPs have asked for MRC to provide additional information on client referrals for CRP services. Recent vendor expansion undertaken appears to have addressed CRP capacity needs, but there still may be a need for additional capacity in specific geographic areas, client population focus areas, and particularly service areas such as assessment based on counselor and provider feedback. MRC is also using CRPs to roll out new procurements to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services to students with disabilities. Feedback on these services from vendors will be incorporated in the FY2019 CSNA.
17. A survey of MRC employer partners through MRC's account management system and those employers participating in the MRC Annual Hiring Event indicate a very high level of satisfaction with MRC job placement services amongst employer partners (88% satisfied/very satisfied) including satisfaction with the job performance of employees hired through MRC (93% satisfied/very satisfied). Most responding employers indicated that MRC meets their recruitment needs and would recommend MRC to other businesses for employment and recruitment. These findings suggest that MRC's efforts to work with employers are effective towards accommodating the needs of our consumers and employer partners. It is recommended MRC expand these surveys to other employers.
18. There are areas where additional MRC staff training may assist in improving the quality and effectiveness of VR services delivered to consumers. Specific areas include trainings on the MRCIS system, as well as on VR best practices, policies, and procedures, strategies for maintaining communication with consumers and time management, internal controls, WIOA common measures and requirements, trainings on Autism, and on Pre-Employment Transition Services and transition services under WIOA.

19. The MRC has again identified Asian and Pacific Islanders as being slightly underserved by the MRC's Vocational Rehabilitation program compared to their proportion in the overall state population. MRC continues to see growth in minority populations served by the MRC VR program in general. Growth in the Asian population continues to be seen in the state's general population while it has remained steady amongst the MRC population. It is recommended that the MRC continue its outreach efforts to Asian communities, however it did grow during FY2018. MRC has translated key agency marketing and information materials and recently completed a project to translate all MRCIS correspondence letters into several Asian languages common in Massachusetts including Mandarin Chinese, Vietnamese, and Khmer as part of its Language Access Plan. MRC will be conducting focus groups in two of its offices with higher concentrations of Asian consumers to gather further information on how MRC can better address the needs of this underserved population. Also, MRC will consult its Bilingual Committee as part of these efforts and develop appropriate training programs for staff.

B. who are minorities;

The CSNA report indicates the need for multiple VR services was found to be slightly greater amongst individuals of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. For example, minority consumers were more likely to find obtaining a high school diploma, transition from school to work, on-the-job training, job-driven training, work-readiness/soft skills training, and vocational training as important service needs. This finding was more pronounced than prior years. The need for college education supports and transportation services were also higher amongst consumers of minority background compared to white consumers.

Over the past ten years, MRC has seen an increase in consumers from minority backgrounds, particularly African American and Hispanic consumers. There also has been a slight growth in the proportion of Native American consumers, reaching a 10 year high of 1.2% in FY2018. Numerically, the largest growth is in Hispanic and African American consumers. Hispanic consumers reached a 10-year high in FY2018. Proportionally, the largest growth in MRC's consumer population over the past decade has been among Asian and Hispanic consumers, which is consistent with the 2010 Census figures for Massachusetts.

Hispanic consumers have been growing the fastest over the past 5 years (+2.7%), while African Americans served has grown by 1.3% over the same period. African Americans are served by the MRC at a much higher rate than their rate in the overall population and Hispanic consumers are served by MRC at a rate slightly above their rate in the general population. Since FY2013, MRC has seen a flat pattern in Asian consumers served (remaining between 3.4% and 3.8%) after seeing a major increase in Asians served between FY2006 and FY2012. It continues to appear that Asians are slightly underserved in comparison with their rate in the overall state population (3.7% of MRC consumers compared to 6.1% for all MA population)

As growth in the Asian community continues to be seen in the state's general population, it is recommended that MRC continues its outreach efforts to Asian communities. There was growth in the number of Asian consumers served by MRC during FY2018, but it still remains below the proportion in the overall state population.

B. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

The MRC has again identified Asian and Pacific Islanders as being slightly underserved by the MRC's Vocational Rehabilitation program compared to their proportion in the overall state population. MRC continues to see growth in minority populations served by the MRC VR program in general. Growth in the Asian population continues to be seen in the state's general population while it has remained steady amongst the MRC population. It is recommended that the MRC continue its outreach efforts to Asian communities, however it did grow during FY2018. MRC has translated key agency marketing and information materials and recently completed a project to translate all MRCIS correspondence letters into several Asian languages common in Massachusetts including Mandarin Chinese, Vietnamese, and Khmer as part of its Language Access Plan. MRC will be conducting focus groups in two of its offices with higher concentrations of Asian consumers to gather further information on how MRC can better address the needs of this underserved population. Also, MRC will consult its Bilingual Committee as part of these efforts and will develop appropriate training programs for staff.

D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

In order to meet the needs of individuals served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System, MRC continues its efforts to collaborate with other core partners in the workforce development system to reduce unemployment of individuals with disabilities and to provide effective services to employers throughout the state, to seek out collaborative opportunities including possible projects and grants that may assist individuals with disabilities across Massachusetts in obtaining competitive employment. MRC continues its efforts to work closely together on WIOA implementation including common performance measures, and is working with its partners to use Workforce Connect as a consumer-facing and staff facing dashboard and case management overlay to track shared consumers across the workforce system, among others. MRC participates in numerous workgroups such as the WIOA Steering Committee, WIOA Systems Integration Workgroup, and other committees who are working on the alignment of services under the workforce system.

MRC is increasing its collaboration with other core partners under WIOA to survey and further identify the needs of individuals working with other components of the Workforce system. Some of the identified needs include: interviewing skills, resume development, job specific skills (CVS Pharmacy Technician training, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Program, Advance Auto Parts, Lowes, Home Depot retail training, customer service jobs skills training, food service training, and human service training). MRC will continue to consult with core partners on the identified needs of their consumers as it relates to accessibility and access to employment opportunities, employment training, and provide employer trainings on disability awareness and job accommodations. MRC is reaching out to its core partners as part of its next needs assessment to gather additional data on the needs of individuals in the overall workforce system to complement and further enhance the CSNA process going forward. MRC will be reaching out to its core partners to gather additional data on the needs of individuals in the overall workforce system to complement and enhance the CSNA.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission VR Program has a growing presence at the Massachusetts Career Centers; the MRC Commissioner serves on the State Workforce Board (SWB), and each MRC Area Director has a formal relationship with at least one Career Center. In addition, Area Directors or other MRC staff are on MassHire Workforce Boards. MRC VR counseling staff make frequent visits and often conduct

interviews at the local career centers and has leased space at all Career Centers to further increase MRC's presence. MRC has finalized its MOUs and infrastructure funding agreements with local areas and the Career Centers. Finally, the MRC's job placement specialists and other assigned MRC staff work closely with local Career Centers to provide high quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities seeking expanded employment opportunities and MRC is providing assistance to Career Centers so they can best meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for Pre-Employment Transition Services or other transition services.

Among individuals with less than a high school education at application, according to the most recent CNSA, 92% indicate that transition services to assist in transitioning from high school to college and employment are important and 93% find Pre-Employment Transition Services for students with disabilities as important service needs. Obtaining a high school diploma and college education were also rated as important services by youth.

The most important and needed Pre-Employment Transition Services listed by MRC consumers of transition age (14 through 21- up to their 22nd birthday) included internships/work-based learning experiences (92%), followed by learning about education/jobs/careers (job exploration counseling) (88.7%), transitioning from high school to college/work (86.7%), assistance with college education (85.2%), work-readiness training (85.1%), and college/career counseling (81.5%) and mentorship/peer counseling/self-advocacy (81%). 74% of consumers of transition age indicate they have received some Pre-Employment Transition Services from MRC. Some consumers report they receive Pre-Employment Transition Services from schools outside of MRC, the frequency of the responses range from 17% for advocacy/peer counseling to 49% for work-based learning experiences.

The majority of transition age consumers indicate they are satisfied with Pre-Employment Transition Services provided by MRC and their partners in meeting their needs towards future education and employment (71% satisfied/very satisfied. and 20% somewhat satisfied), and the majority who are receiving these services (72%) indicate these services are effective in preparing them for their future career.

Overall, results throughout the CSNA demonstrate a significant need for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) among high school students with disabilities and youth consumers of transition age and MRC is working to address this need through its various transition and Pre-ETS initiatives. MRC continues to develop strategies to work more closely with local school districts on transition and Pre-ETS services, including coordinating services with those provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). MRC has a counselor assigned to every public high school in the Commonwealth, has developed strong working relationships with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and has a Transition Manager to oversee transition and coordination with educational authorities.

MRC is also operating a 5-year demonstration grant, Transition Pathway Services, funded by RSA. It will assist with needs in this area, such as work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities. This grant continues to ramp up and will be used to develop additional best practices in this area. MRC has expanded its service offerings to students who are potentially eligible for VR services in addition to those who are VR eligible in collaboration with vendors and school districts and to expand work-based learning

to include job tours, job shadowing, volunteering, and other work-based learning areas based on RSA and WINTAC guidance.

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

In terms of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State. Most consumers appear to be satisfied with services received from Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs). The majority of MRC staff also indicate that they are generally satisfied with CRP services. The operation of CRP programs through the Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) and Pre-Employment Transition Services procurements appear to address many but not all consumer needs. There also appears to be some areas where additional CRP capacity may potentially be needed to cover certain geographic areas or specific populations, and this should be examined closer by MRC. The addition of Pre-ETS services to potentially eligible students as part of MRC's procurements to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services, and the new RFR for the Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) RFR in FY2020 is also an opportunity in this area. Finally, improved communication and information flow between CRPs and MRC staff, more information on consumer referrals, and continued efforts to streamline paperwork processing may assist in improving service delivery to consumers and lead to more successful employment outcomes.

3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and Pre-Employment Transition Services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The most recent CSNA confirms that transition career services and Pre-Employment Transition Services for youth and high school students with disabilities are important and needed services across the Commonwealth. Results throughout the CSNA demonstrate a high need for these services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services among high school students with disabilities and youth consumers of transition age and MRC is working to address this need in coordination with schools across the state.

Among individuals with less than a high school education at application, according to the most recent CSNA. 92% indicate that transition services to assist in transitioning from high school to college and employment are important and 93% find Pre-Employment Transition Services for students with disabilities as important service needs. Obtaining a high school diploma and college education were also rated as important services by youth.

The most important and needed Pre-Employment Transition Services listed by MRC consumers of transition age (14 through 21- up to their 22nd birthday) included internships/work-based learning experiences (92%), followed by learning about education/jobs/careers (job exploration counseling) (88.7%), transitioning from high school to college/work (86.7%), assistance with college education (85.2%), work-readiness training (85.1%), and college/career counseling (81.5%) and mentorship/peer counseling/self-advocacy (81%). 74% of consumers of transition age indicate they have received some Pre-Employment Transition Services from MRC. Some consumers report they receive Pre-Employment Transition Services from schools outside of MRC, the frequency of the responses range from 17% for advocacy/peer counseling to 49% for work-based learning experiences.

MRC continues to develop strategies to work more closely with local school districts on transition and Pre-ETS services, including coordinating services with those provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). MRC has a counselor assigned to every public high school in the Commonwealth, has developed strong working relationships with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and has a Transition Manager to oversee transition and coordination with educational authorities. MRC is also in its second year of a 5-year demonstration grant, Transition Pathway Services, funded by RSA. It will assist with needs in this area, such as work-based learning experiences. This grant continues to ramp up and will be used to develop additional best practices in this area. MRC is also working on expanding its service offerings to students who are potentially eligible for VR services in addition to those who are VR eligible in collaboration with vendors and school districts and to expand work-based learning to include job tours, job shadowing, volunteering, and other work-based learning areas based on RSA and WINTAC guidance.

To assist in determining the statewide need for Pre-Employment Transition Services, MRC analyzed statewide data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) (<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/selectedpopulations.aspx>). According to DESE data, there are 173,843 students with disabilities (consisting of 18.1% of all high school students statewide) enrolled in public high schools in Massachusetts as of October 1, 2018, all who may be potentially eligible for VR services and/or who may benefit from Pre-ETS services. Based on this data and the high need for Pre-ETS services demonstrated throughout the CSNA as described above, MRC forecasts that for FY2020 that its entire 15% reservation of VR funding set aside to provide Pre-ETS services as required under WIOA is necessary (approximately \$6.3 million) to provide the five required Pre-ETS services to students with disabilities (work-based learning experiences, job exploration counseling, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in post-secondary education and other comprehensive training programs, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy). MRC forecasts that due to the fact that the entire set-aside is required, that no funding will remain to provide authorized Pre-Employment Transition Services beyond the five required services due to the high need for Pre-ETS services as demonstrated in this year's CSNA findings and the DESE data.

k. Annual Estimates

Describe:

1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;

The 2018 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey determined that the population of Massachusetts was 6,902,149.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates for 2017 reported the following demographic profile for the residents of the state:

- 80.8% were White;
- 8.9% were Black or African American;
- 12.3% were Hispanic (any race);
- 7.1% were Asian;
- 2.5% were multi-racial;
- 0.5% were American Indian and Alaska Native;
- 0.1% were Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.

Based on an analysis of data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) (<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/selectedpopulations.aspx>), there are

173,843 students with disabilities (consisting of 18.1% of all high school students statewide) enrolled in public high schools in Massachusetts as of October 1, 2018).

In 2017, there were 6,785,622 individuals living in the community in Massachusetts, of which 803,977 were persons with disabilities: a prevalence rate of 11.8%. Of these, 396,597 individuals with disabilities are aged 18 to 64 and living in the community. This is a projection based on available data from the 2018 Disability Statistics Compendium. Thus, our projection is that 396,597 individuals who may be eligible for MRC VR services.

[https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/2018 Compendium Accessible AdobeReaderFriendly.pdf](https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/2018%20Compendium%20Accessible%20AdobeReaderFriendly.pdf)

Please note that this is the most up to date information available as of when the State Plan was developed.

2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

A. *The VR Program;*

FFY2021 Annual Estimates: It is estimated that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will provide services with funds provided under part B of Title I of the Act as follows during FFY2021:

- a. New individuals to be provided services to determine eligibility (new applicants): Projection 8,900
- b. New individuals to be provided services to determine order of selection priority assignment and vocational rehabilitation needs (new individuals determined eligible: Projection 8,100
- c. New Individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments (New IPEs): Projection: 5,900
- d. New Individuals with most significant disabilities to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments (New IPEs, Most Significantly Disabled: Projection: 2,800

FFY2022 Annual Estimates: It is estimated that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will provide services with funds provided under part B of Title I of the Act as follows during FFY2022:

- a. New individuals to be provided services to determine eligibility (new applicants): Projection 8,900
- b. New individuals to be provided services to determine order of selection priority assignment and vocational rehabilitation needs (new individuals determined eligible): Projection 8,100
- c. New Individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments (New IPEs): Projection: 5,900

- d. New Individuals with most significant disabilities to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments (New IPEs, Most Significantly Disabled): Projection: 2,900

B. The Supported Employment Program; and

MRC will be utilizing Title I and Title VI B funds to provide Supported Employment services. It is estimated that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will provide Supported Employment services with Title I and Title VI funds to 450 individuals.

C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;

During FFY2021, MRC estimates we will serve 21,485 consumers, excluding potentially eligible students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services. MRC is not operating under an order of selection and all categories are open for services as of this time.

- 20. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure but is not operating under an Order of Selection at the current time. All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

- 4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

FFY2020 Estimates:

Based upon current forecasting, it is estimated that the costs of services with VR funds will be approximately \$68.1 million dollars in FFY2020.

MRC estimates it will serve 24,500 eligible individuals in the VR program in FFY2020. MRC has an order of selection policy and procedure but is not operating under an OOS and all categories are open at this time. Estimates of cost per category (all consumers are being served) are broken down as follows:

Disability Priority Category 1 (Most Significantly Disabled): 10,780 consumers, total cost of service, \$28,400,000, average cost per individual in category: \$2,634.

Disability Priority Category 2 (Significantly Disabled): 11,270 consumers, total cost of service, \$28,400,000, average cost per individual in category: \$2,520.

Disability Priority Category 3 (Disabled): 2,450 consumers, total cost of service, \$5,000,000, average cost per individual in category: \$2,041.

Potentially Eligible Consumers receiving Pre-ETS: 3,000 students, cost of service \$6,300,000, average cost per student: \$2,100.

FFY2021 Estimates:

Based upon current forecasting, it is estimated that the costs of services with VR funds will be approximately \$68.1 million dollars in FFY2021. MRC has an order of selection policy and procedure but is not operating under an OOS and all categories are open at this time. Estimates of cost per category (all consumers are being served) are broken down as follows:

MRC estimates it will serve 25,000 eligible individuals in the VR program in FFY2021, broken down as follows:

Disability Priority Category 1 (Most Significantly Disabled): 11,000 consumers, total cost of service \$28,400,000, average cost per individual in category: \$2,582.

Disability Priority Category 2 (Significantly Disabled): 11,500 consumers, total cost of service, \$28,400,000, average cost per individual in category: \$2,470.

Disability Priority Category 3 (Disabled): 2,500 consumers, total cost of service, \$5,000,000, average cost per individual in category: \$2,000

Potentially Eligible Consumers receiving Pre-ETS: 3,000 students, cost of service \$6,300,000, average cost per student: \$2,100.

I. State Goals and Priorities

The designated State unit must:

1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has developed the following goals and priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs in collaboration with the SRC. These have been identified based on the most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) during fiscal year 2019 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. They are also based on recommendations and input from the SRC, and input from MRC Senior Management. Additionally, these goals include the new WIOA Common Performance Measures. MRC will review progress towards these goals on at least a quarterly basis with senior management and the SRC. The SRC was involved with the development of the goals and has agreed to these goals.

2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

MRC has based its goals and priorities on the most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) during fiscal year 2019 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. They are based on recommendations and input from the SRC, and input from MRC Senior Management. Additionally, these goals include the new WIOA Common Performance Measures. The SRC was involved in the development of these goals as well.

The MRC has formulated agency specific goals following recommendations in conjunction with recommendations from the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. These goals were formulated with the five WIOA Combined State Plan goals in mind; each of the 21 MRC goals below have been identified and categorized as falling within at least one of the five statewide goals. Targets will be reviewed on an annual basis during the 4-year state plan and will be included in the two-year plan update.

Overall Massachusetts WIOA Combined State Plan Goals:

1. Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.
2. Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.
3. Improve career mobility and unsubsidized employment outcomes for youth.
4. Ensure Massachusetts has a world-class service delivery system by integrating use of modern tools and techniques.

MRC Goal 1-

Create career pathways for job seekers through increasing Employment Outcomes through placement, training, and Job Driven Trainings provided through MRC's Job Placement Unit, Employer Account Management System, and Annual Statewide Hiring Event. Continue to coordinate these business engagement efforts with WIOA partners as part of the overall MassHire Massachusetts workforce system.

This aligns with Goal II of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Continue measuring Key Performance Indicators related to Successful Employment Outcomes (SEO's) including:

- Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes for Vocational Rehabilitation Division and percentage change over the prior year's results
- Total Number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes achieved through the involvement of the MRC in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year's results
- Total Number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 closures) with Employers participating in MRC's Account Management System in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year's results

- Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 Closures) from Consumers Participating in MRC’s annual Statewide Hiring Event in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year’s results
- Continue to coordinate business engagement efforts as part of the MassHire workforce system through quarterly meetings of the Business Services and Engagement Workgroup

Target-

MRC’s target goals:

- 3,700 Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC’s Vocational Rehabilitation Division and 3% a positive percentage change over prior year results, with 15% of all VR eligible consumers served achieving a successful employment outcome.
- Exceed 400 Successful Employment Outcomes, or 11% of all SEOs, for MRC’s Job Placement Unit annually and a positive percentage change over prior year results
- Exceed 200 Employment Outcomes, or 5.5% of all SEOs, from Employer Account Management System annually
- Greater than 50% of JPS Successful Employment Outcomes are the result of employer referrals
- 40% Successful Employment Outcomes for consumers participating in Statewide Hiring Event achieve a annually, a 3% increase over prior year’s outcomes
- Completion of quarterly meetings of the MassHire Business Services and Engagement Workgroup

Data Sources-

MRCIS, Workgroup materials

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.

MRC Goal 2-

Successfully implement a joint venture using the MRC Competitive Integrated Employment Service (CIES) program and the Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) program with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to increase employment outcomes and create career pathways to better meet the needs of individuals with Behavioral Health needs utilizing the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Model and the CIES Pay for Performance competitive employment model.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan.

Key Performance Indicators-

MRC will evaluate the ACCS program based on Key Performance Indicators.

- MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with ACCS Counselors
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with CIES-ACCS providers
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with internal Job Placement Services
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers having a completed IPE within 45 days from eligibility
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiating Placement Services from CIES-ACCS providers or MRC Job Placement Unit Staff as part of their ACCS services
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers receiving Benefits Planning as part of their MRC ACCS services
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers successfully being placed into employment through CIES-ACCS and MRC Job Placement Unit services
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers are successfully maintaining employment for 90 and 180 days through ACCS-CIES and Internal MRC Job Placement services
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed who are working an average and median of 20+ hours/week
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed receiving an average hourly wage of \$12.50/hour and a median hourly wage of \$12.25/hour
- 80% of MRC ACCS Job Seekers satisfied with CIES-ACCS Services they received

Target-

To complete deployment of MRC-DMH employment initiative by the end of the Program Year 2020 (PY20). MRC is currently in the process of developing multi-year annual targets and will update as required.

- MRC ACCS Counselors will serve 900 job seekers based on the caseload capacity goal of 50 per caseload, 60% or more of cases will have eligibility completed within 30 days of application.
- This is a newly established program, and baseline information will need to be established before creating a decisive goal. A goal of MRC ACCS Referrals will be established based on the program's first year results.
- This is a newly established program, and baseline information will need to be established before creating a decisive goal. A goal of MRC ACCS Job Seekers engaging with internal Job Placement Services will be established based on the program's first year results. 60% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers will have a completed IPE within 45 days from eligibility.
- 65% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiating Placement Services from CIES-ACCS providers within the program year.

- 95% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers with Social Security Insurance or Social Security Disability Insurance are receiving Benefits Planning as part of their MRC ACCS services.
- 75% of MRC ACCS Job Seekers will be successfully being placed into employment through CIES-ACCS and MRC Job Placement Unit services.
- 75% of Job Seekers will successfully maintaining employment after placement for 90 and 180 days through ACCS-CIES and Internal MRC Job Placement services.
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed work an average and median of 22.5 hours/week.
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed receive an average hourly wage of \$12.50/hour and a median hourly wage of \$12.25/hour.
- MRC ACCS 80% of Job Seekers are satisfied with CIES-ACCS Services they received.

Data Sources-

MRCIS, CIES-ACCS Vendor Reports, MRC Satisfaction Survey

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated on an ongoing basis, including quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 3-

Fully implement the redesign of the Empower to Employ program in collaboration with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) in order to work to improve services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF support utilizing the Integrated Resource Team Model and the Pay for Performance competitive employment model. This project is part of MRC's efforts with its WIOA partners to align and coordinate services amongst state partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan.

Key Performance Indicators-

MRC will evaluate the Empower to Employ program using Key Performance Indicators with DTA and will update as required. Complete an ISA between MRC and DTA and hire staff for MRC-DTA Individual Planning and Support Pilot Project. Use data from Key Performance Indicators to develop targets during PY2020 and PY2021 based on PY2019 data.

Target-

Completion of the Interagency Service Agreement, hiring of 100% of staff, and commencement of 100% of services for MRC-DTA Individual Planning by the end of the Program Year 2020 (PY2020), complete staff training for the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach.

Increase services to allow 100 or more placements annually for the project.

Expand project sites from 3 to 5 by the end of PY2020.

Employed project participants will earn an average hourly wage of \$14.50 or more and work an average of 28 hours or more per week.

Data Sources-

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 4-

Maximize Employment Retention for MRC Consumers Employed at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Second Quarter after Exit.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Measure the following metric in order to gauge progress toward Goal 4:

- Employment Rate at the 2nd Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings.

Target-

Initial target is 60% pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources-

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data.

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 5-

Maximize Employment Retention of competitive employment for MRC Consumers Employed at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Fourth Quarter after Exit and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 5:

- Employment Rate at the 4th Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings

Target-

Initial target is 55% pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022

Data Sources-

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 6-

Increase Median Quarterly Earnings for MRC Consumers Employed in competitive employment at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Second Quarter after Exit.

This aligns with Goal III of the Combined Overall WIOA State Plan based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 6:

- Median Quarterly Earnings at the 2nd Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings.

Target-

Initial target is \$3,900 quarterly earning pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources-

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Increase credentialing and job placement outcomes for individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment.

MRC Goal 7-

Maximize the Number and Proportion of MRC Consumers with Recognized Secondary and/or Post-Secondary Credential Attainment during Participation in the MRC VR Program.

This aligns with Goal III of the Combined Overall WIOA State Plan and based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 7:

- Number of MRC Consumers obtaining post-secondary education credentials and/or obtaining a secondary school diploma or equivalent during participation in the MRC VR Program (or up to 1 year after exit from program.
 - For proportion, previous number divided by the total number of consumers served during the program year.

Target-

Establish baseline target based on currently available data and monitor progress. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources-

Level of Education Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 quarterly reporting

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 8-

Maximize the Percentage of MRC Consumers Enrolled in Education and Training Programs leading to a recognized credential or employment achieving measurable skills gains during the Program Year.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 8:

- Number of MRC Consumers enrolled in education and training programs leading to employment or a recognized post-secondary credential achieving measurable skills gains during the program year with documented progress divided by total number of consumers receiving services through an IPE in the program year (Status 12-22)

Target-

25% is the proposed target to be submitted in the state plan. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2020

Data Sources-

Level of Education Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 quarterly reporting, WIOA Annual Report

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment

MRC Goal 9-

Provide Effective Services to Employers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to ensure retention rates of individuals placed in competitive employment.

This aligns with Goal I of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 9:

- Employment Retention Rate with the Same Employer at 2nd and 4th Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Status 26 Closures) based on Employer Tax ID (EIN) in Unemployment Insurance Wage Data
- # of Repeat Business Customers (defined as a business where MRC places more than one job seeker during the program year)

Target-

400 or more repeat business customers annually where multiple job seekers are placed into employment. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2022.

Initial Target is 70% of job seekers retained at the same employer between the 2nd and 4th quarter after exit. Establish and refine target based on baseline of data and track progress on performance. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources-

Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data, WIOA Annual Report

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 10-

Maximize Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Job Seekers for 90 Days or more and establish a new annual program outcome goal. Reset goal and target annually based on performance.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 10:

- Total Sum and Percentage of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Consumers for the Current Program Year (Status 26 Closures)

Target-

Achieve 3,700 or more successful employment outcomes in the program year.

Achieve a Rehabilitation Rate of 55.8% statewide as a result of consumer attaining successful employment outcomes.

Data Sources-

Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS, Monthly Key Performance Indicators Tracking Report

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 11-

Maximize the number of Consumers Exiting the MRC VR Program whose Primary Source of Economic Support is from their own Employment Earnings.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Next Steps-

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 11:

- Proportion of Individuals Successfully Closed in Status 26 in the current fiscal year with a RSA-911 Employment Status Code of Competitive Employment in MRCIS with hourly wages at or above minimum wage (the higher of either State or Federal Minimum Wage; currently Massachusetts is higher at \$12.75) whose Primary Source of Support at Closure is Personal Income (Code 1) minus the proportion of those consumers whose primary source of support at application was personal income (Code 1).

Target-

Ratio of 60% or more.

Data Sources-

MRCIS, Monthly Key Performance Indicators Tracking Report

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated monthly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 12-

Fully implement the re-design of Pre-ETS Services to Eligible and Potentially Eligible students (14 - 22) Maximize the Number and Percentage of high school students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services, including work-based learning experiences (Pre-ETS/Potentially Eligible) from MRC, either eligible or potentially eligible. Continue to coordinate Pre-ETS service delivery with partners and schools.

This aligns with Goal IV of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 12:

- Number of students (potentially eligible and eligible) receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) from MRC and its contracted providers during the program year.
- Percent of students initiating services for each of the five Pre-ETS services (Work-Based Learning, Job Exploration Counseling, Counseling on Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education, Workplace Readiness Training, Self-Advocacy) from MRC and its contracted provider.
- Completion of an annual program evaluation report on Pre-ETS services provided by MRC and present findings to the SRC and MRC leadership.
- Explore ways to work with DESE and other partners to coordinate Pre-ETS services.

Target-

Serve 3,000 or more students receiving one or more of the five Pre-ETS services during the program year

An average of 70% of students will initiate services for each of the five Pre-ETS services (Work-Based Learning, Job Exploration Counseling, Counseling on Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education, Workplace Readiness Training, Self-Advocacy) from MRC and its contracted providers during the program year.

Completion of an annual program evaluation report on Pre-ETS services provided by MRC and present findings to the SRC and MRC leadership.

Set up meetings with DESE and workforce partners to discuss coordination of Pre-ETS Services.

Data Sources-

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated monthly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 13-

Maximize the Number and Percentage of youth (defined as ages 14 through 24) consumers served by MRC completing education and training programs, including post-secondary education as part of MRC's efforts to coordinate services for youths with WIOA partners, including the MassHire workforce system.

This aligns with Goal IV of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators-

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 13:

- Number and Percent of Youth Age 14 to 24 Completing Education and Training Programs. Measured by the flow of Youth Consumers moving from Status 18 Training and Education into Status 20 Job Ready or Status 22 Job Placement during the month/fiscal year divided by the total number of youth consumers served in Status 18 Training and Education during the month/fiscal year.

Target-

At or above 200 or 3% of youth consumers per month completing training or education, annual total of 2500 or 16%

Data Sources

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated monthly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Increase credentialing and job placement outcomes for individuals, including youth with barriers to employment.

MRC Goal 14-

Create career pathways for job seekers through maximizing the Number of Successful Competitive Employment outcomes and the percent of Placements leading to Successful Employment Outcomes through MRC's Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) programs in partnership with Community Rehabilitation Providers.

This aligns with Goal II of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 14:

- Total Number of 90 Day Successful Employment Outcomes from CIES Program; Total Number of CIES Successful Employment Outcomes divided by the total number of 30-Day Placements for the CIES Program, % of CIES consumers served achieving a placement.

Target-

Exceed 850 Successful Employment Outcomes for CIES for the fiscal year and greater than 75% of CIES placements result in successful employment outcomes, and 60% or more of CIES consumers served during the year are placed into employment.

Complete the redesign and deployment of MRC CIES contracts successfully through the RFP and annual monitoring and program evaluation process to provide CIES Pay for Performance services (Annual Program Evaluation Report).

Data Source-

MRC CIES Quarterly Cumulative Utilization Report and Annual Program Evaluation Report

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated monthly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.

MRC Goal 15-

Continue to provide consumers with an avenue to access employment and training opportunities through participation in the Donated Vehicle Program in partnership with Good News Garage and exploring other transportation partnerships.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 15:

- Number of Consumers Participating in the Donated Vehicle Program who obtain a successful employment outcome or who enter training and education (Status 18) divided by the number of consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year.
- Research additional transportation partnerships to assist with transportation including programs related to bicycling.

Target-

Greater than 90% of Consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year result in successful employment outcomes or enrollment in training or education (Status 18)

Issue 100 vehicles per program year utilizing the RFR process, for a total of 400 over the 4-year period.

Number of individuals who may be employed as a result of this program

90% or greater satisfaction with the program

Completion of research on additional transportation partnerships and presentation of a report to leadership and the SRC

Data Sources-

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 16-

Provide Quality Vocational Rehabilitation Services leading to increased successful employment outcomes to individuals with Autism. Coordinate services for individuals with Autism with partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 16:

- Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Cause Code of 08 and employment rate for these consumers.
- Number of consumers served on the Autism Spectrum

Target-

Equal or greater to 175 consumers employed per program year

Modernize the Life Skill mapping planning process for individuals with Autism through completion of an enhanced procurement/RFR to provide these services.

75% employment rate or greater for consumers on the autism spectrum receiving Life Mapping services

55.8% or greater employment rate for consumers with autism spectrum receiving VR services

Data Sources-

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 17-

Continued Outreach to the Asian community to identify strategies for serving this underserved population.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Implementation of additional Focus Groups to MRC regions with high concentrations of Asian community, such as Braintree and Boston

Increase in the number and percent of Asian consumers served by MRC

Target-

Complete Focus Groups or community meetings in Braintree and/or Boston, and/or other areas with high population concentration of Asian communities by the end of the program year, with consultation of the diversity and bilingual committees to review results and to develop best practices in collaboration with community organizations for increasing outreach efforts and services to the Asian community based on the comprehensive needs assessment survey conducted by the SRC, to present to agency leadership.

Develop and implement a new consumer engagement program which will include coordination of outreach services to community organizations in areas with underserved populations.

Increase in the number and percent of Asian consumers served by MRC from prior year

Data Sources-

Program Evaluation program data, MRCIS, SRC engagement Work plan

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 18-

Research Best Practices Models to create career pathways and increase employment of Individuals with Disabilities based on recommendations provided by the SRC Executive Committee.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Completion of research of best practices, models, or capstone projects for the development of new programs intended to provide enhanced training and job placement for individuals with disabilities for presentation to the leadership team and the SRC.

Target-

Completion of Research and completion of a report by the end of the program year for presentation to MRC Leadership and SRC

Data Sources-

CSA VR, Google/Electronic Reference Libraries

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 19-

Expand the use of occupational goal information from MRC job seekers to inform job placement efforts. Share occupational data and coordinate sharing of labor market information with WIOA Workforce Partners including MassHire.

This aligns with Goal V of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators-

Develop a report of MRC job seekers based on vocational goals in the MRCIS system by Standard Occupational Code (SOC Code) compared to job placements and outcomes for job seekers by SOC Code.

Track placements and occupational goals by SOC code and SOC category.

Research strategies for linking occupational code data with industry classification data.

Revamp labor market information reports for MRC staff.

Target-

Complete reports and presentation of findings to agency leadership and the Job Placement Unit by the end of the program year.

Research strategies and develop recommendations for linking occupational code and industry classification data to guide job placement efforts, sector employment, and to assist with coordination of business services with WIOA partners.

Complete new labor market report templates for MRC staff.

Data Sources-

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Ensure Massachusetts has a world-class service delivery system by integrating use of modern tools and techniques.

MRC Goal 20-

Research and develop ways to conduct outreach to college students and other groups to increase awareness of MRC services and research additional resources to assist MRC consumers who are in post-secondary education programs

This aligns with Goal V of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Completion of research into ways MRC can outreach to college students to increase awareness of MRC services. Develop additional resources and programs that may assist MRC consumers in post-secondary education program. Present findings to the leadership team and the SRC.

Target-

Completion of research into ways MRC can outreach to college students to increase awareness of MRC services. Develop additional resources and programs that may assist MRC consumers in post-secondary education program. Develop a report and present findings to the leadership team and the SRC.

Data Sources-

Google/Electronic Reference Libraries

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 21-

Implementation of a new MRC MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts.

This aligns with Goals I and III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators-

MRC will develop Key Performance Indicators for this project with MassHire. Use data from Key Performance Indicators to establish a baseline and develop targets during PY2020 and PY2021 based on PY2019 data.

Completion of an annual program evaluation report on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program and present findings to the SRC, MRC leadership, and WIOA partners.

Target-

Completion of Key Performance Indicators, Establishment of baseline data and develop targets by PY2021 based on project data

Completion of an annual program evaluation report on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program and complete presentation of findings to the SRC, MRC leadership, and WIOA partners.

Data Sources-

MRCIS, Reports from MassHire

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

MRC Goal 22-

Provide Quality Vocational Rehabilitation Services leading to increased successful employment outcomes to individuals with behavioral health needs. Coordinate services for individuals with Behavioral Health Needs⁹ with partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators-

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 22:

- Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Code of 18 and employment rate for these consumers (excluding those participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program)
- Number of consumers served with a Disability Code of 18 during the program year

⁹ Behavioral Health Needs are defined by RSA within Policy Directive *RSA-PD-16-04* as Disability Code 18: Psychosocial Impairments (e.g., interpersonal and behavioral impairments, difficulty coping)

Target-

Equal or greater to 600 consumers employed per program year (excluding those consumers participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program)

Employment rate of 55.8% or greater for consumers with Disability Code 18 receiving MRC VR services (excluding consumers participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program)

Data Sources-

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation-

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category-

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

MRC has based its goals and priorities on the most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) during fiscal year 2018. The purpose of the survey is to capture the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. The goals and priorities are also based on recommendations and input from the SRC and input from MRC Senior Management. Additionally, these goals include the new WIOA Common Performance Measures.

A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates:

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) in conjunction with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) conducted its most recent annual Comprehensive Statewide VR Consumer Needs Assessment (CSNA) in the Fall of 2019. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) requires the MRC to conduct a Comprehensive Statewide VR Consumer Needs Assessment at least every three years, but the MRC administers it on an annual basis. The information and findings are incorporated into the MRC's section of the Massachusetts WIOA Combined State Plan, as well as in MRC's Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance activities. The findings on consumer needs listed in the CSNA are presented and shared with MRC Senior Management and VR staff, the full SRC, and other key stakeholders as part of the MRC's State Plan and continuous quality improvement processes. It is also available to the public via the MRC website. The 2018 CSNA process constituted a number of approaches, including: a consumer survey (with additional content for students with disabilities on Pre-Employment Transition Services); focus groups; analysis of key statistical and demographic information and facts taken from the MRCIS system, US Census Bureau Data, Bureau of Labor Statistics Data and the Annual Disability Statistical Compendium, findings from other reports and surveys including the Consumer, Provider, and Counselor Satisfaction surveys; youth and employer surveys; and collaboration and discussion with the SRC and other key stakeholders.

The MRC CSNA report and appendix can be found on MRC’s website at the following links:

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2019/10/10/FY2018-MRC-Comprehensive-Statewide-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/fy2018-comprehensive-statewide-vocational-rehabilitation-consumer-needs-assessment-appendix/download>

B. the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

MRC has included WIOA common performance accountability measures under Section 116 of WIOA in its goals and priorities. MRC will continue to report data to RSA on these measures for PY2020 and further program years as specified in the final requirements for the WIOA Combined/Unified State Plan. Since the VR program only began reporting data for the common measures as of July 1, 2017, MRC only has initial data for PY2017 and PY2018 for Measurable Skills Gains and PY2018 for Employment Rate at 2nd Quarter After Exit and Median Earnings during 2nd Quarter After Exit, and for Effectiveness of Serving Employers. Data for the 4th Quarter After Exit Employment Rate and Credential Obtainment will be available after the completion of PY2019. MRC’s Analytics and Quality Assurance department will continue to analyze the data as it becomes available and create a report for management on the common measures. A data dashboard of this information will also be pursued to push data down to staff at area offices and to counselors as applicable.

Figure 82: MA General Vocational Rehabilitation Two Year Performance

**MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION TWO YEAR PERFORMANCE**

MRC WIOA Common Measure Performance, PY17 and PY18*	PY17 (FY18)	PY18 (FY19)
Employment Rate at 2 nd Quarter after Exit	N/A*	48.2%
Employment Rate at 4 th Quarter after Exit	N/A*	N/A*
Median Earnings at 2 nd Quarter after Exit	N/A*	\$4,332.83
Credential Obtainment Rate	N/A*	N/A*
Measurable Skills Gains	13.1%	8.4%
Effectiveness of Serving Employers – Retention from 2 nd to 4 th Quarter after Exit	N/A*	75%
Effectiveness of Serving Employers - Repeat Business Customers	15.0%	11.6%

*Note: Complete Employment at Fourth Quarter after Exit and Credential Obtainment Rate are not available yet for PY17 and PY18 and were not included by RSA in the PY17 and PY18 WIOA Annual Report Data for Vocational Rehabilitation.

C. other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has an active and productive State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). The SRC works closely with the MRC on ways to improve Vocational Rehabilitation Services for individuals with disabilities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on an ongoing basis.

Information and input from SRC members, SRC committees, quarterly SRC meetings, information from the [SRC annual report](#), and input from other consumer meetings and training were used by MRC to develop its goals best designed to address the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities. The agency and the SRC used the results of their review of consumer satisfaction, the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Report, other evaluation data and reports of the effectiveness of the VR program in their development of the goals and priorities.

Additionally, findings and recommendations from RSA monitoring activities conducted under section 107 is also incorporated in MRC's goals. MRC used information from [RSA's 2017 Monitoring Report](#) of MRC in the development of its goals for the State Plan.

m. Order of Selection

Describe:

1. Whether the designated State unit will implement an order of selection. If so, describe:

A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection. All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

MRC utilizes a fiscal forecasting process to determine whether to implement its OOS policy and to determine if funding is available to serve all eligible individuals and to determine if categories need to be opened or closed. MRC obtains input, guidance, and an official recommendation from the Statewide Rehabilitation Council as part of the process to determine whether an OOS needs to be established or modified.

A functional assessment is provided to all individuals determined eligible to determine their priority category assignment in accordance with 34 CFR 361.42. The definition of the priority categories and the order to be followed if MRC were to implement an OOS is outlined in MRC's OOS policy VR 19-01.

B. The justification for the order.

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection. All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

C. The service and outcome goals.

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection. All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection. All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection. All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

MRC has elected to take the option of provision of services to VR eligible individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment who are at risk of losing their job. These individuals, upon provision of appropriate documentation, will be placed into services. MRC projects that it will serve 500 individuals in need of job retention services at an average cost of \$1,000 per individual, resulting in 350 projected employment outcomes.

n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI Funds.

1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.

MRC will be utilizing Title I funds and Title VI B funds to provide Supported Employment services. MRC has developed a contingency plan to use Title I funds to provide Supported Employment Services if Title VI B are not appropriated in the federal budget. MRC's supported employment services are provided under the notation that rates, fees, and expenditures are subject to applicable Commonwealth of Massachusetts statutory, regulatory, and related requirements governing purchases of services and goods. Such parameters of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts govern, amongst other things, methods of procurement. Further, all providers of supported employment services need to qualify through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' interagency contractual process. To the maximum extent possible, the Commission and the Commonwealth utilizes procurement methods which facilitate the provision of services in a manner that affords individuals meaningful choices among the entities (providers) that deliver services.

MRC establishes consumer need for this service on a fiscal year basis and then funds Supported Employment services for those consumers in that specific geographic location to help inform staffing and service delivery needs. In PY20 MRC has a goal to provide Supported Employment Services to 475 consumers across the state through its area offices and its Competitive Integrated Employment Services

(CIES) procurement. MRC will prioritize Supported Employment services to consumers with Mental Health needs, Developmental Disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injuries, Autism, and severe learning disabilities, amongst other needs.

2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:

A. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and

MRC will use 50% of Title VI B funds as represented by the Supported Employment-B award to provide supported employment services to youth based on their needs and services outlined in their individualized plan for employment. Services will be provided to assist youth with the most significant disabilities in choosing, obtaining, and maintaining competitive employment based on their interest, abilities, and skills.

These funds will also be used to provide extended services to up to 4 years for youths with the most significant disabilities to assist them in maintaining and advancing in competitive employment. As a contingency plan if Title VI B Supported Employment funds are not appropriated, MRC will also use Title I funds and State funding to provide supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities based on their needs.

B. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission works with other human service agencies to identify and secure funding and comparable benefits for extended supports for individuals in supported employment, including youth with the most significant disabilities. Funding for extended services is available from several sources contingent upon the consumer's disability, eligibility and the resources available to each state agency. This service delivery system is currently in place enabling state agencies to cost share the appropriate services needed for consumers to choose, find and maintain meaningful competitive supported employment. With the implementation of this initiative to partner with other human service agencies, we have seen an increase in the availability of resources for extended services. However, the available funding is administered at local levels and each situation handled individually. Sources of funding include:

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (State Revenue), Department of Developmental Services, Department of Mental Health, Medicaid Waiver Supported Employment Services, MRC Statewide Head Injury Program, Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Social Security Administration Work Incentives, as well as Natural Supports from employers and other comparable benefits.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission continues to promote collaboration with stakeholders regarding supported employment services and extended services. This is also evidenced in the number of jointly funded programs that have developed. Some examples of these collaborative programs are services jointly funded for individuals with intellectual disabilities between the MRC and the Developmental Disability Services (DDS); for expansion of partnership between MRC and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) for individuals with mental health needs; for individuals who have traumatic brain injuries in conjunction with the Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP) of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission; and for the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

o. State's Strategies

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, in cooperation with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), conducted a needs assessment (CSNA) during fiscal year 2019 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state. Strategies of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment programs are established consistent with the needs and trends identified in the survey results as necessary for vocational rehabilitation to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expand activities. These strategies are designed to overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs and promote the abilities of people with disabilities to reduce stigmas. Strategies are developed with consultation of the SRC and other stakeholders.

Some strategies developed through this process, as described in the sections below, include development and refinement of MRC's pre-employment transition service (Pre-ETS) contracting; the development of a new employment model with the Department of Mental Health to assist consumers with mental health needs to obtain employment (This new model is designed to rapidly engage individuals in the Vocational Rehabilitation process.); and expansion of a project with the Department of Transitional Assistance to use the concepts of the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) model to engage and employ individuals with disabilities receiving TANF benefits, among other strategies. MRC is in the last two years of a \$5 million demonstration grant on work-based learning experiences by RSA for students with disabilities entitled Transition Pathway Services which will be used to identify and evaluate best practices for improving services to students across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Additional details on these and other strategies can be found in the following sections.

2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.

MRC provides an array of assistive technology services and devices to individuals with disabilities through all parts of the VR program and with partners.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is the state operator of the programs funded under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology, the Assistive Technology Program, and the Assistive Technology Loan Program that provides low-interest loans to consumers when other resources are not available to purchase needed adaptive technology.

MRC participates in the REquipment program in collaboration with the Department of Developmental Services. REquipment is a durable medical equipment (DME) re-use program offering free refurbished wheelchairs, scooters, shower chairs and more to adults, children and elders living across Massachusetts. This assistive technology service helps people with disabilities in addressing equipment needs to assist them in meeting their employment goals and living independently in the community.

Another program is the MRC Adaptive Assistance program, operated by MRC and two contracted providers, Easter Seals and United Cerebral Palsy. For the purposes of this program, adaptive assistance is defined as devices, aids, and enhancements for the elimination of barriers encountered by individuals with disabilities, primarily individuals with the most significant disabilities. Adaptive assistance is defined as services that either:

1) supplements or enhances functions of the individual or

2) that impacts their environment through changes, e.g., workshop modifications. Rehabilitation technology specialists may prescribe both types of rehabilitation technology services in order to create and/or maximize employment opportunities for an individual with a disability. The rehabilitation technology services are provided to open and/or expand vocational rehabilitation and employment opportunities.

MRC also provides vehicle modification and home modification services to Vocational Rehabilitation consumers with disabilities. The Vehicle Modification Program provides driving evaluations, vehicle modifications and equipment installation to privately owned vehicles of individuals with disabilities to enable them to achieve an employment outcome by removing barriers to transportation.

Vehicle modification services include structural (major) vehicle modifications, non-structural (minor) vehicle modifications and driver evaluation services. Structural modifications may include a lowered floor on mini and full-size vans, raised roof, raised entry, automatic wheelchair lift, automatic door opener, servo primary controls, reduced-effort steering and braking and similar modifications. Non-structural modifications may include mechanical hand controls, car-top wheelchair carriers, scooter lifts, steering knobs and similar modifications.

The Adaptive Housing Program provides housing evaluations, architectural services, housing modifications, and equipment installation to individuals with disabilities to enable them to achieve an employment outcome by removing barriers to living in their current home.

Adaptive Housing services include major and minor home modifications. Major home modifications may include wheelchair ramps and lifts, stairlifts, bathroom modifications (such as roll-in showers, roll under sinks, higher toilets and wider doors), and kitchen modifications (such as lowered counters, and roll under cooktops). Minor Home Modifications may include door openers, grab bars, handrails, and widening of doors.

Vehicle Modification and Home Modification services are available to MRC consumers who need these services in their Individualized Plans for Employment.

MRC also works with employers to help facilitate accommodations and to facilitate the provision of on-the-job assistive technology devices to individuals with disabilities employed through the MRC Vocational Rehabilitation program.

Persons served under MRC's Assistive Technology programs described above are applicants or consumers of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The target population is individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom rehabilitation technology services are

considered to potentially eliminate barriers to vocational rehabilitation and/or enhance vocational rehabilitation and employment opportunities. These services are available statewide.

Population includes:

1. Potential applicants undergoing evaluation of vocational rehabilitation, especially when the disabling condition of the individual is of such a nature and severity that the inability of rehabilitation technology services to eliminate barriers to and/or enhance capacities could result in a determination of ineligibility;
2. Eligible vocational rehabilitation consumers for whom rehabilitation technology is being considered to assist the consumer to attain intermediate objectives and long-range rehabilitation goals; and
3. Eligible employed individuals to eliminate barriers to and/or enhance capacities for successful job performance.

Adaptive assistance evaluations, training, and consultations for individuals with disabilities served by the vocational rehabilitation program were:

1. Assessments of functional capacities of individuals with disabilities to include determinations of if and how the provision of rehabilitation technology services is likely to affect the capacity of the individual to perform successfully in competitive employment and/or enhance opportunities for the development of capacities for competitive employment;
 2. Recommendations of specific rehabilitation technology for individuals with disabilities to include descriptions of related barriers to be eliminated and descriptions of functional capacities to be attained;
 3. Rehabilitation technology training to affect the capacity of the individual with a disability to utilize specific assistive technology devices (equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities) and thus perform successfully in competitive employment and/or enhance opportunities for the development of capacities for competitive employment; and
 4. Consultations to be provided to Commission staff to address the elimination of disability-related barriers, improvement of opportunities for competitive employment, and the development of functional capacities of individuals.
3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

MRC has made a commitment to outreach to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are also ethnic and cultural minorities, especially to Asian communities who have been identified as undeserved. MRC is committed to hiring bilingual staff to more effectively reach those communities and to the expectation that directors from local area offices be involved in outreach to local community agencies and organizations, especially those that serve ethnic and cultural minorities.

MRC also has an ongoing statewide Bilingual/Bicultural vocational rehabilitation counselor group who meet on a regular basis to: discuss and share resources on how to outreach to and serve cultural and ethnic minorities, develop new or translate existing agency forms and brochures, and develop and conduct training programs in collaboration with the Commission's staff development unit for local and district offices. These counselors will continue to reach out to these populations and work to break down barriers to seeking and enrolling in vocational rehabilitation services. In addition, as populations grow MRC will continue to track long term trends and has discussed plans to build additional bi-lingual caseloads as appropriate.

MRC conducted a focus group during PY2018 in its Lowell Office, which has a higher concentration of Asian consumers. MRC will also be conducting additional focus groups in other offices with higher concentrations of Asian consumers to gather further information on how MRC can better address the needs of this underserved population. Based on the results of the Lowell Focus group and SRC input, MRC also has developed a workgroup and workplan to focus on outreach efforts to Asian and other minority communities. Strategies and resources for outreach efforts will be developed as part of this workgroup. As part of these efforts, MRC will consult its Bilingual Committee and the SRC to develop appropriate training programs for staff.

MRC has translated key forms and informational materials into Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, French Creole, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese as outlined in MRC's Language Access Plan. MRC has also translated all correspondence letters in its electronic case management system into Asian languages spoken by MRC staff including: Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese, Khmer and Vietnamese. MRC also has contracts for foreign language translation services. As part of its working group established to work on outreach to the Asian and other diverse communities, MRC will be seeking to develop and translate new outreach and referral information.

MRC will also continue to work with its Bilingual Committee to review and revise the Commonwealth's Multi Cultural Population Resource Directory as needed. This directory offers culturally and linguistically appropriate services for many diverse populations.

4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and Pre-Employment Transition Services).

Based on the findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, MRC continues to implement strategies to address the needs of students with disabilities, including Pre-Employment Transition Services, through many efforts, including a multi-million-dollar procurement to provide Pre-ETS services. MRC has revised its policies and has enhanced its case management system to provide (and is now providing) Pre-Employment Transition Services to potentially eligible consumers. For eligible consumers, specific services are addressed in the consumers' individualized plan for employment based on their interests, choice, and needs. MRC continues its efforts to closely coordinate transition services and Pre-Employment Transition Services with local educational agencies.

Through its MOU with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), MRC has established a working group to identify needs and best practices to improve and expand services for

students with disabilities, including Pre-Employment Transition Services. MRC is amending its MOU with DESE to further coordinate service efforts and DESE has produced guidance for local school districts on working with MRC to coordinate transition services. This is incorporated as part of MRC's strategic planning process.

MRC has a Transition team approach to oversee transition, coordination with educational authorities, and implementation of strategies to improve and expand services to students with disabilities. MRC is also in the 4th year of a 5 year, \$5 million demonstration grant on work-based learning experiences by RSA for students with disabilities entitled Transition Pathway Services which will be used to identify and evaluate best practices for improving services to students across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

Over the past several years, MRC and community rehabilitation providers have worked in partnership to develop and operate a variety of programs and services to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve suitable employment outcomes. These programs include: Vocational Services; Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES), MRC's revised Pre-Employment Transition Services procurement (including provision of Pre-ETS to potentially eligible students), MRC's Transition Pathway Services grant program, and many other support services that are essential in vocational rehabilitation.

MRC recently adjusted the CIES model based on lessons learned and input from its staff, Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) partners, and other stakeholders. These adjustments are designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CIES services for MRC consumers. MRC also incorporated peer support and flexible supports into the CIES procurement.

MRC is also working closely with CRPs on a new collaborative effort with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to provide contracted employment services under the CIES program for consumers participating in the Department of Mental Health's Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) model. This program began in July 2019. As part of MRC ACCS services through CIES, MRC has entered into Business Associate Agreements (BAAs) with CIES ACCS providers to assist with facilitating and coordinating services between MRC, DMH, and providers for participating consumers.

MRC and community providers collaborate in developing programs and services in such forums as: Statewide Rehabilitation Council that meets quarterly, quarterly meetings with representatives of the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers, meetings with the Massachusetts Providers Council, periodic district wide meetings with community rehabilitation programs, interagency and cross disability agency councils, task specific work teams, the Massachusetts Association of People Supporting Employment First (MAAPSE), the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Association (MRA), and other provider trade groups across the Commonwealth. In addition, MRC Business Improvement Partners and MRC local area office staff also conduct quarterly on-site review meetings to assess performance and provide feedback to assist CRPs providing services for MRC.

6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

MRC has established an electronic reporting and performance measurement system to monitor, analyze, and report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs. This system will allow the agency to make improvements to ensure optimal performance in accordance with the WIOA common performance measures. MRC continues to establish baseline data on these measures and began reporting data to RSA in the fall of 2017. MRC has also developed and provided several trainings in coordination with WINTAC on the Common Performance Measures which has been delivered to MRC managers, staff, and the SRC. MRC also participates in a cross-agency workgroup with workforce partners on performance measurement under the Common Measures.

MRC continues to develop strategies designed to improve MRC's performance under the WIOA Common Performance Measures. MRC is focusing on the development of strategies to promote the placement of consumers into high quality careers with higher wages and benefits. MRC will also be developing training strategies for staff and its provider network to focus on high quality employment outcomes and seek ways to increase the median wage by focusing on more full-time jobs rather than part-time jobs. MRC will also strive to provide benefits planning on the front end of the placement process to ensure consumers understand how working may affect public benefits they may be receiving and to know about work benefits that are available for them to obtain high paying and self-sustainable employment.

MRC is also conducting ongoing training on the Common Performance Measures with counselors, managers, supervisors, the SRC, and providers to ensure team-orientated outcomes that will improve performance under the Common Performance Measures. MRC will also develop internal performance reports to track performance on the caseload, office, district, and statewide level to assist in these efforts using data from its Case Management System.

7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

As a key partner in the statewide Workforce system, MRC continues to work towards to strengthen the alignment of the VR program with the other core programs of the workforce development system. MRC subscribes to the overall vision for the Massachusetts MassHire Workforce Development system as described below.

All Massachusetts residents, including individuals with disabilities, will benefit from a seamless system of education and workforce services that supports career pathways for individuals and leads to a more informed, educated, and skilled workforce, which meets the Commonwealth's businesses' demands and sustains a thriving economy. To achieve this vision, Massachusetts will engage businesses to understand their needs and develop an integrated education and workforce system that supports career pathways to prepare residents with foundational, technical, professional skills and information and connections to postsecondary education and training. MRC will work with its core workforce partners to:

1. Design career pathways across partners aligned with business demand;

2. Improve foundational skills and transition to postsecondary education and training for individuals with barriers to employment;
3. Assist individuals to achieve economic self-sufficiency through support services, labor market driven credentialing, and employment; and
4. Meet the needs of job seekers and businesses who engage in the public workforce system (including partner programs).

As part of implementing strategies to meet this common vision, MRC is collaborating with other core partners in the workforce development system to reduce unemployment of individuals with disabilities, to provide effective services to employers throughout the state, and to seek out collaborative opportunities including possible projects and grants that may assist individuals with disabilities across Massachusetts in obtaining competitive employment. MRC has entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with its workforce partners. This MOU outlines the principles for the continued development of the Massachusetts Workforce System. The MOU articulates a coordinated vision for organizing the public workforce system.

MRC continues its efforts to work closely with other partners in the workforce development system to assess performance and develop methods to track shared consumers across the workforce system, among other collaborations. MRC participates in numerous workgroups such as the WIOA Steering Committee, WIOA Systems Integration Workgroup, and other committees who are working on the alignment and improvement of services under the workforce system, including services to individuals with disabilities. MRC is working with its workforce partners on the development of Workforce Connect as a consumer-facing and staff facing dashboard and case management overlay to track shared consumers across the workforce system, among others.

Also, MRC has partnered with its workforce partners to develop the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts. This program was initiated in 2019.

MRC continues to work on aligning its services and increasing its presence at the career centers as MRC is a required partner in the Career Center network. The MRC Commissioner serves on the State Workforce Board (SWB), and each area director has a formal relationship with at least one career center. In addition, area directors or other MRC staff are on local MassHire Workforce Boards. MRC has counselors assigned to each career center who are scheduling hours at the local career centers to provide an array of vocational rehabilitation services. MRC has leasing space at all career centers to further increase MRC's presence and operates a satellite office in the Southbridge Career Center. MRC has finalized its MOUs and infrastructure and cost-sharing agreements with local areas and the Career Centers which were negotiated on the local level. MRC's assigned counselors and job placement staff continue to work closely with local career centers to provide high quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities seeking expanded employment opportunities and to make the career centers more responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities including providing disability sensitivity training for career center staff, and ensuring the career centers are accessible to all job seekers.

MRC will also work with its partners such as Community College and employer partners to coordinate training opportunities for individuals with disabilities on nights and weekends to accommodate those who are not able to attend trainings during traditional work hours.

8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:

A. achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, in cooperation with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), conducted a needs assessment during fiscal year 2019 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state. The strategies of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment programs are established by the Senior Leadership Team, consistent with the needs and trends identified in the needs assessment, in order to achieve its goals and priorities, and support innovation and expansion activities. These strategies are designed to overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs. MRC will utilize the following strategies to achieve each of its stated goals and priorities, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment.

1. MRC engages in outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities which includes staff outreach to community and state agencies, schools, other public institutions, and the general public by contact and presentation by MRC local office, district and administrative staff, printed brochures, and consumer meetings and trainings.
2. The MRC Supported Employment Program provides Supported Employment Services to consumers statewide through its network of Area Offices, working with community rehabilitation providers, links with the local school system for transitioning youth and other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health, especially through its clubhouse programs.
3. MRC will work closely with the SRC. A workplan has been created for the MRC and SRC to track progress on the SRC recommendations that informed the development of MRC's goals and strategies. The workplan is blended and braided with the SRC's objectives as listed in their annual report.
4. MRC continues to develop new partnerships to help enhance and coordinate services for individuals with disabilities. This includes the new training program with the MassHire Career Centers, the new employment initiative with the Department of Mental Health, and the Empower to Employ Initiative with the Department of Transitional Assistance.
5. MRC provides an array of assistive technology services and devices to individuals with disabilities through the VR program and with partners. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is the state operator of the programs funded under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology, the Assistive Technology Program, and the Assistive Technology Loan Program that provides low-interest loans to consumers when other resources are not available to purchase needed adaptive technology. MRC has identified how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the Vocational Rehabilitation process; and has worked to ensure that assistive technology services and devices are available and provided to individuals with disabilities across the state.

6. MRC's Analytics and Quality Assurance Department staff conducts training with agency managers, supervisors, and local staff at meetings and at district and local area offices on the Common Performance Measures and overall agency performance, what they mean, how they are derived from agency statistics and how they impact agency performance. The Analytics and Quality Assurance Department also presents and disseminates information on Common Performance Measures, Data trends, and Needs Assessment results on a regular basis. Additionally, this is also presented to new counseling staff as part of their initial training. The Commission also provides automated reports online for managers to use in educating staff and developing strategies for correcting performance in these areas.

B. support innovation and expansion activities; and

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the Commission under section 110 of the Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. Consistent with the findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and goals and priorities identified in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council, the Commission uses funds to support innovation and expansion activities to address the needs of individuals with disabilities, primarily individuals with the most significant disabilities. Activities include:

1. On-The-Job Trainings and Job-Driven Trainings with Employer Partners: MRC continues to expand Job-Driven Trainings (JDT) and on-the-job (OJT) training and evaluations. MRC has found that many consumers who participate in an OJT or Job-Driven training obtain employment with the OJT or JDT. Other participants are able to obtain employment elsewhere as a result of their participation in the OJT or JDT because they gained recent work experience and/or developed job-specific skills. MRC has created job driven training programs to date with the Home Depot, CVS Health, Lowes, G4S Security Solutions, the Kraft Group, MAPFRE Insurance, Advance Auto Parts, and Enterprise Holdings, and Allied Universal Security Services, amongst other employers. In addition, MRC holds job-driven trainings for human service jobs and has started to offer a job-driven training for IT jobs. MRC is also exploring a cyber security job driven training program partnership with CISCO Academy; also, it is working on new job-driven training programs with Travelers Insurance, and BJ's Wholesale Club, and developing new partnerships with UPS and Fed Ex. MRC will also work with its employer partners to coordinate training opportunities for individuals with disabilities on nights and weekends to accommodate those who are not able to attend these trainings during traditional work hours.
2. MRC - Department of Transitional Assistance Empower to Employ Project: MRC and the Department of Transitional Assistance have developed a project known as Empower to Employ designed to increase employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF benefits. The partner agencies use a jointly-funded model of client engagement and intensive co-case management to provide individualized and meaningful services. Through this collaborative effort, DTA and MRC are utilizing an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach to facilitate recruitment (pre-engagement), engagement, service delivery and placement.
3. MRC-Department of Mental Health Employment Initiative: MRC and DMH have undertaken a new initiative as of July 2019 where MRC coordinates employment services for individuals with mental health needs served by the Department of Mental Health's Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS)

program in collaboration with DMH and its vendors. The new MRC/DMH Employment Initiative is designed to build an integrated employment framework that inspires and engages innovation to ensure full employment for people with mental health needs at the same rate of employment as the general population. The focus of this initiative is on individuals served by DMH through Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS). These individuals are being referred to MRC for Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services. To serve these individuals, MRC is using an Integrated Resource Team approach, where partner agencies and supports come together to craft and jointly own a Job Seeker's employment goal, to coordinate wrap-around services and ongoing collaboration and communication. MRC has hired dedicated staff with funding through the ISA to work with ACCS referrals. These counselors will have smaller caseloads and will work with MRC CIES providers, DMH providers, DMH, and other MRC staff to rapidly engage with consumers, develop a plan for employment, and coordinate services designed to assist these consumers in achieving successful employment outcomes.

4. Transition Pathway Services Demonstration Grant Project: MRC is in the 4th year of a 5-year demonstration grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) known as the Transition Pathway Services Grant. This project is evaluating best practices for provision of work-based learning experiences to students with disabilities through a coordinated model of services provided by community partners including MRC, career centers, independent living centers, pre-employment transition vendors and local educational authorities. The goal is to increase employment and/or post-secondary education opportunity for students with disabilities based on their abilities, skills, needs and employment opportunities in the local economy.
5. IT enhancements to modernize the agency's technology and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services. These include a provider portal to assist in reporting and tracking the provision of Pre-ETS services to potentially eligible consumers, to enhance tracking and reporting on internal job placement services, to develop a consumer portal for information and referral, and to develop a paperless system using Electronic Data Management.
6. MRC's Job Placement Unit operates an annual Federal Hiring Event in partnership with MCB, other workforce partners, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) in their Boston and Hartford offices. The Hiring Event assists consumers with securing competitive employment comparable with their interests and abilities. MRC prepares consumers to interview for available jobs with employers participating in the event. It focuses on direct job placement with participating employers and is not simply a career fair. In 2019, MRC completed its 7th annual Hiring Event. Since 2013, Over 480 individuals have been successfully employed across the Commonwealth through participating in this annual one-day event. The aggregate annual wages of all successfully employed consumers through the hiring event since 2013 is approximately \$10.31 million. Consumers have been employed in a variety of occupations ranging from office and administrative support, health care, protective service, human services, and management occupations, amongst others.
7. Transportation: MRC is working diligently to address transportation barriers faced by its consumers. MRC has updated transportation resource fact sheets on its website and makes them available to consumers at its Area Office. MRC has also hired a transportation coordinator through its Transition Pathway Services (TPS) grant and MRC will document lessons learned and best practices at the end of the grant period. One major achievement has been that MRC consumers are now automatically eligible

for the Transition Access Pass (TAP) program. This program offers half-fare rides on all Regional Transit Authorities across the Commonwealth. MRC also works with the Executive Office of Health and Human Service Transportation office on transportation for consumers and operates an innovative car donation program to assist individuals in accessing worksites. MRC has a benefits planning grant to assist consumer in their efforts to go to work, which can include the Plan for Achieving Self Supports (PASS) and impairment-related work expenses as incentives for an individual to go to work. MRC also uses [IRS Section 44](#) as a strategy to assist consumers with Transportation needs. MRC will continue to work with transportation agencies to explore other creative transportation options for consumers.

8. Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in State Jobs: MRC places numerous individuals with disabilities into state government jobs each year, including at MRC. MRC has a diverse workforce with a high percentage of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. We have a key contact with the state's Human Resources Division to facilitate employment for consumers in state jobs, including the provision of On-The-Job training and internship opportunities with state and federal agencies. The Commonwealth also participates in MRC's annual hiring event to provide information to consumers on available state job opportunities, including how to apply.
9. Research Best Practices Models to Increase Employment of Individuals with Disabilities: MRC will continue to research best practice models designed to increase the employment rate of individuals with disabilities in Massachusetts.
10. Learn to Earn: MRC is engaged with the Learn to Earn initiative. Learn to Earn is a comprehensive approach to providing unemployed and underemployed individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs with the supports, skills, and credentials they need to gain and retain employment in occupations for which employers have persistent demand. Learn to Earn Programs will help participants set and achieve goals necessary for employment and sustained economic stability, such as maintaining and growing family net resources and minimizing the real or perceived potential impact of increased earned income on benefit receipt, including improving coordination across benefit programs and reducing benefit cliff effects. As part of this program, MRC is providing information on benefits counseling.
11. Work Based Learning Experiences for Students with Disabilities to assist them in preparing for future employment and educational experiences.
12. Apprenticeships: MRC will utilize available apprenticeship resources, including the ODEP guide to expand apprenticeship, to provide apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the Commonwealth. As an example, MRC participates in the Merit Apprenticeship Program. Additionally, MRC has obtained a copy of the ODEP guide on apprenticeships. MRC will also work with the Career Centers on providing apprenticeship opportunities for consumers. MRC has leased space at the career centers and has staff dedicated to the career centers to make available the range of career services from Career Centers for MRC consumers.
13. MRC has developed an Interagency Service Agreement (ISA) with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to develop training programs to assist individuals with disabilities to complete training programs and obtain credentials to be substance abuse counselors. This has been identified as a growth area and a higher compensated profession in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

14. MRC has developed a partnership with the Career Centers known as the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts.
15. MRC partners and contracts with The Asperger/Autism Network's (AANE) Life Management Assistance Program (LifeMAP). This program provides practical assistance to individuals on the Autism Spectrum and other related conditions. LifeMAP provides intensive, highly individualized coaching by professionals with expertise in both Autism Spectrum Disorder and specific content areas. Coaches focus on identifying and overcoming the specific barriers each client faces so that the clients can increase their levels of independence towards reaching their full potential.

C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

MRC strategies to overcome barriers relating to access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the MRC VR Services Program and the MRC Supported Employment Services Program include the following:

1. Outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities. MRC conducts outreach to community and state agencies, schools, other public institutions, and the general public. This is accomplished through direct contact and presentations by MRC local office, district and administrative staff, use of printed brochures, and agency consumer and employer trainings.
2. The MRC Supported Employment Program provides Supported Employment Services to consumers statewide through its local Area Offices. Services are coordinated by MRC counselors using a network of community rehabilitation providers, links with the local school system for transitioning youth and other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health, especially through its clubhouse programs.
3. MRC has an ongoing statewide Bilingual/Bicultural vocational rehabilitation counselor group who meet on a regular basis to: discuss and share resources on how to outreach to and serve cultural and ethnic minorities, develop new or translate existing agency forms and brochures, and develop and conduct training programs for local and district offices in collaboration with the Commission's staff development unit. MRC has twelve VR counselors skilled in American Sign Language (ASL) and are qualified to work with consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing; thirty are fluent in Spanish and work with Hispanic consumers; four are able to communicate in Cantonese; two in Vietnamese, three are fluent in Portuguese; three are fluent in Khmer, three are fluent in French/Haitian Creole, and one counselor is fluent in Hindi and Tamil. A smaller number of area directors, head clerks and other clerical staff are fluent in American Sign Language, Spanish, Khmer, Cantonese, Mandarin, Haitian Creole, or Portuguese. Eleven full- and part-time sign language interpreters are also on staff. The Commission also maintains a statewide contract with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to secure additional ASL interpreters and CART reporters, as needed. Staff with specific language skills and interpreters are geographically placed so as to coincide with population and other demographics relating to target consumer groups.

4. MRC has translated key forms and informational materials into Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, French Creole, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese as outlined in MRC's Language Access Plan. MRC recently completed a project to translate all correspondence letters in its electronic case management system into Asian languages which are spoken by MRC staff including Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese, Khmer and Vietnamese. MRC is in the process of conducting focus groups in two of its offices with higher concentrations of Asian consumers to gather further information on how MRC can better address the needs of this underserved population. MRC has also developed a workgroup and workplan to focus on outreach efforts to Asian and other minority communities. Strategies and resources for outreach efforts will be developed as part of this workgroup. MRC will also consult its Bilingual Committee as part of these efforts and develop appropriate training programs for staff.
5. MRC is working to ensure equitable access to services for consumers with Autism. MRC has worked with several organizations such as The Asperger/Autism Network (AANE) to provide training to staff and providers on the needs of individuals with autism, including competency to address behavioral, communication (including Alternative Augmentative Communication or AAC), sensory, social, and generalization needs. This will assist MRC staff in developing the capacity to address behavioral, communication (including AAC), sensory, social, and generalization needs for consumers. MRC also works with AANE to provide life-mapping services to individuals on the Autism spectrum to ensure equitable access.
6. MRC partners and contracts with the Federation for Children with Special Needs to assist families in accessing MRC services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).

p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

Describe:

1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission developed the following goals and priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs for the previous Program Year as submitted in the approved VR services portion of the Massachusetts PY2016-PY2020 Combined State Plan. These goals were identified based on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, these goals are based upon agency performance on the former RSA Standards and Indicators, recommendations and input from the SRC, and input from MRC Senior Management. MRC will review progress on these goals on a regular basis with senior management. This is a report on progress on these goals based on PY2018 (FY2019) outcomes.

MRC's strategies are to work with the senior management team to evaluate and assess progress towards the achievement of these goals, to identify lessons learned, and any corrective actions. Progress towards goals is distributed to local managers, supervisors, and counseling staff.

Goal 1: Continue to Increase Employment Outcomes through placement, training, and Job Driven Trainings provided through MRC's Job Placement Unit, Employer Account Management System, and Annual Statewide Hiring Event. Measurement: Total Number of Successful Employment Outcomes achieved through the involvement of the MRC Job Placement Unit in the current fiscal year, Total Number of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 closures) with Employers participating in MRC's Account Management System in the current fiscal year, Total number of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 Closures) from Consumers Participating in MRC's annual Statewide Hiring Event in the current fiscal year.

Target: Exceed 400 Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC's Job Placement Unit, exceed 65 Successful Employment Outcomes for Consumers Participating in the Statewide Hiring Event, and exceed 200 Employment Outcomes from Employer Account Management System. Data Source: MRCIS Case Management System, MRCIS Job Placement Module Frequency: Annually

Evaluation of Progress: Consumers Obtaining Successful Employment Outcomes in PY2018 (FY2019)

Competitive Employment Outcomes through MRC's Employer Engagement Efforts (Job Placement Unit, Account Management System) Annual Hiring Event)

Job Placement Unit Outcomes: Goal: 400 Actual: 758

Hiring Event Outcomes (2018): Goal: 65 Actual: 84

Employer Account Outcomes: Goal 200: Actual: Being Calculated

MRC continues to focus on reaching out to employers and develop partnerships designed to lead to competitive employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. This is tied into the emphasis of employer engagement under WIOA. MRC's Employment Service Specialists in coordination with the Job Placement Specialists continue to outreach to employers especially to those in high growth industries, including employer accounts. MRC operated its 7th Annual Statewide Hiring Event in 2019 in partnership with the US Office of Contract Compliance Program (OFCCP) with Federal Contractors.

Goal 2: Develop a joint employment initiative and complete pilot projects with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to increase employment outcomes to better meet the needs of individuals with mental health disabilities. Measurement: Complete planning of MRC-DMH employment initiative and complete and evaluate three MRC-DMH pilot projects.

Target: Complete planning of MRC-DMH employment initiative and complete and evaluate 3 MRC-DMH pilot projects by the end of the program year PY18. MRC is currently in the process of developing multi-year annual targets and will update as required. Data Source: N/A Frequency: Annually.

Evaluation of Progress: MRC has completed the three MRC-DMH pilot projects. Lessons learned and best practices were incorporated into the development of MRC and DMH's joint employment initiative to increase employment outcomes and create career pathways to better meet the needs of individuals with Behavioral Health needs utilizing the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Model and the CIES Pay for Performance competitive employment model. This program was launched on July 1, 2019.

Goal 3: Develop a pilot project with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to collaboratively work to improve services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF support. MRC is currently in the process of developing multi-year annual targets and will update as required. Measurement: Completion of ISA and hire staff for MRC-DTA Individual Planning and Support Pilot Project. Target: Completion of ISA, hiring of staff, and commence services for MRC-DTA Individual Planning and Support Pilot Project by the end of the program year. Data Source: N/A Frequency: Annually

Evaluation of Progress: MRC has successfully launched the MRC-DTA Empower to Employ Program as of July 1, 2018. Four offices (Lawrence, Braintree, Salem, and Brockton) are operating with a fifth to join during late 2019.

Progress on Goals 4 through 9: (Common Performance Measures): During PY2018, MRC reported baseline data to RSA for the WIOA common performance measures as specified in the state plan requirements. MRC will have a negotiated adjusted performance goal established for Measurable Skills Gains for PY2020 and PY2021, and performance goals will be developed by RSA for the remaining measures for PY2022 and beyond once PY2020 and PY2021 data is submitted.

As the VR program only began reporting data for the common measures as of July 1, 2017, MRC only has initial data for PY2018 for Measurable Skills Gains and PY2018 for Employment Rate at 2nd Quarter After Exit and Median Earnings during 2nd Quarter After Exit, and for Effectiveness of Serving Employers. Data for the 4th Quarter After Exit Employment Rate and Credential Obtainment will be available after the completion of PY2019.

Goal 4: Employment Rate at 2nd Quarter after Exit: 48.2%

Goal 5: Employment Rate at 4th Quarter after Exit: N/A*

Goal 6: Median Earnings at 2nd Quarter after Exit: \$4,332.83

Goal 7: Credential Obtainment Rate: N/A*

Goal 8: Measurable Skills Gains: 8.4%

Goal 9: Effectiveness of Serving Employers - Retention from 2nd to 4th Quarter after Exit: 75%

Effectiveness of Serving Employers - Repeat Business Customers: 11.6%

Goal 10: Maximize Successful Employment Outcomes for 90 Days or Greater to exceed last year's Program Year Outcome Measurement: Total Sum of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Consumers for the Current Program Year (Status 26 Closures) Target: 4,000 Data Source: Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS Case Management System, Monthly Standards and Indicators Tracking Report Frequency: Monthly, Annually.

Evaluation of Progress: Consumers Obtaining Successful Employment Outcomes in PY2018 (FY2019): Goal: 4,000. Actual: 3,695 Variance: -305

MRC was short of its goal for the most recent program year (PY2018) as 3,695 consumers achieved successful employment outcomes of 90 days or greater, falling short of the target in the state plan by 305. MRC served less consumers during PY2018 as the agency was going through some financial challenges and a new maximum obligation policy affected referrals during the period.

Goal 11: Maximize the number of Consumers Exiting the MRC VR Program whose Primary Source of Economic Support is from their own Employment Earnings Measurement: Proportion of Individuals Successfully Closed in Status 26 in the current fiscal year with a RSA-911 Employment Status Code of Competitive Employment in MRCIS with hourly wages at or above minimum wage (the higher of either State or Federal, Minimum Wage currently is \$12.00 in Massachusetts) whose Primary Source of Support at Closure is Personal Income (Code 1) minus the proportion of those consumers whose primary source of support at application was personal income (Code 1). Target: At or above 58% Data Source: MRCIS Case Management System, Monthly Standards and Indicators Tracking Report Frequency: Monthly, Annually

Evaluation of Progress: PY2018 (FY2019): Target: 58% Actual: 67.1% Variance: +9.1%

MRC successfully achieved its goal for the most recent program year (PY2018) as MRC saw a 67.1% increase in consumers exiting MRC's vocational rehabilitation program with successful employment outcomes with personal incomes as their primary source of financial support compared to their primary source of financial support at the time of entry into the VR program.

Goal 12: Maximize the Number and Percentage of youth consumers served by MRC completing education and training programs, including post-secondary education. Measurement: Number and Percent of Youth Age 14 to 24 Completing Education and Training Programs. Measured by the flow of Youth Consumers moving from Status 18 Training and Education into Status 20 Job Ready or Status 22 Job Placement during the month/fiscal year divided by the total number of youth consumers served in Status 18 Training and Education during the month/fiscal year Target: At or above 225 or 3% of youth consumers per month completing training or education, annual total of 2,750 or 16%. Data Source: Data from MRCIS Case Management System Frequency: Monthly, Annually.

Evaluation of Progress: Consumers of Transition Age Completing Education and Training Programs PY2018 (FY2019): Goal: 2,750/16% Actual: 2,105/26%

In PY2018, MRC was close to its target for the number and met its target for percent of consumers of transition age (14 to 24) completing training and education programs. MRC served less individuals in PY18, therefore the number was lower than anticipated but the percentage completing training and education was higher than anticipated. Serving transition-age consumers effectively is a priority of the agency.

Goal 13: Maximize the Number and Percentage of high school students receiving VR and/or Pre-Employment Transition Services from MRC, either eligible or potentially eligible. Measurement: Number of High School Student Consumers Served by MRC receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).

Target: 4,100 Data Source: Data from MRCIS Case Management System Frequency: Monthly, Annually.

Evaluation of Progress: Students Receiving Services from MRC: PY2018 (FY2019): Goal: 4,100 Actual: 4,315

In PY2018, MRC successfully exceeded its target for high school students served by MRC VR and/or receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services from MRC by a wide margin.

Goal 14: Maximizing the Number of Successful Competitive Employment outcomes and the percent of Placements leading to Successful Employment Outcomes through MRC's Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) programs in partnership with Community Rehabilitation Providers
Measurement: Total Number of 90 Day Successful Employment Outcomes from CIES Program; Total Number of CIES Successful Employment Outcomes divided by the total number of 30 Day Placements for the CIES Program. Target: Exceed 850 Successful Employment Outcomes for CIES for the fiscal year and greater than 75% of CIES placements result in successful employment outcomes Data Source: MRC CIES Quarterly Cumulative Utilization Report and Analysis Report Frequency: Quarterly, Annually.

Evaluation of Progress: Competitive Employment Outcomes through MRC's Competitive Integrated Employment Services Program (CIES) PY2017 (FY2018)

CIES Successful Employment Outcomes Goal: 850 Actual: 883 Variance: +33

% of CIES Placements Leading to Successful Employment Outcomes: Goal: 75% Actual: 84.9% Variance: +9.9%

Through its Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) program in partnership with Community Rehabilitation Providers, MRC achieved both state plan targets under this goal in PY2017 by achieving 883 Successful Employment Outcomes through CIES, exceeding the goal by 33, and achieving a 84.9% rate of successful employment outcomes for consumers placed through CIES.

Goal 15: Continue to provide consumers with an avenue to access employment and training opportunities through participation in the Donated Vehicle Program in partnership with Good News Garage,
Measurement: Number of Consumers Participating in the Donated Vehicle Program who obtain a successful employment outcome or who enter training and education (Status 18) divided by the number of consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year. Target: Greater than 80% of Consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year result in successful employment outcomes or enrollment in training or education (Status 18) Data Source: MRCIS Frequency: Quarterly, Annually.

Evaluation of Progress: Competitive Employment Outcomes and/or Enrollment in Training and Education as a result of MRC's Donated Vehicle Program, PY2018 (FY2019)

Goal: 80% Actual: 100%

In PY2018, MRC met its state plan targets under this goal as 100% of consumers participating in MRC's Donated Vehicle Program respectively achieved a successful employment outcome or enrolled in training and education programs, exceeding the goal of 80%.

Goal 16: Provide Quality Vocational Rehabilitation Services leading to increased successful employment outcomes to individuals with Autism. Measurement: Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Cause

Code of 08. Target: Equal or greater to 175 Data Source: MRCIS Case Management System Frequency: Quarterly, Annually.

Evaluation of Progress: Competitive Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Autism PY2016 (FY2017): Goal: 175 Actual: 336 Variance +161

Goal 17: Continued Outreach to the Asian community to identify strategies for serving this underserved population. Measurement: Completion of Focus Groups to MRC regions with high concentrations of Asian community. Target: Completion of Focus Groups to MRC regions with high concentrations of Asian community by the end of the program year, with consultation of the diversity and bilingual committees to review results and to develop strategies for increasing outreach efforts and services to the Asian community, to present to agency leadership. Data Source: N/A Frequency: Annually.

Evaluation of Progress: Outreach to the Asian Community: During PY2018 MRC held a focus group in its Lowell office which has a high concentration of Cambodian residents. The office has a dedicated counselor that speaks Khmer with a dedicated caseload serving the community. The focus group involved consumers, family members, community organizations, and other stakeholders. The information from the focus group has been used to establish a working group to focus on outreach to the Asian community. Lessons used in Lowell and learned from the focus group are being used to develop a workplan to develop and implement a series of strategies to reach out to the Asian community. A focus group in the Braintree Office is planned for early 2020.

Goal 18: Research Best Practices Models to Increase Employment of Individuals with Disabilities. Measurement: Completion of research of best practice employment models such as the Progressive Employment Model, Missouri's Pre-ETS potentially eligible model, and development and completion of a presentation to MRC's Leadership Team. Target: Completion of Research by the end of the program year. Data Source: N/A Frequency: Annually.

Evaluation of progress:

MRC continues to research best practice models to increase the employment of individuals with disabilities. MRC has used its learnings from its research and incorporated them in the development of the Empower to Employ Program with the Department of Transitional Assistance and the MRC - Department of Mental Health Employment Initiative, both programs are utilizing an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach based on research of best practices.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

The following is an evaluation of the extent to which the MRC program goals described in the previously approved VR services portion of the Unified State Plan for the most recently completed program year, were not achieved.

MRC achieved most of its goals and priorities as stated in the approved VR services section of the Massachusetts Combined State Plan for PY2016 except for Goal 10. Apart from Goal 10, there are no notable factors impeding the achievement of the goals and priorities. For Goal 10, which was to maximize the number of successful employment outcomes of 90 days or more for individuals with disabilities served

by MRC, MRC fell short of its numerical target for employment outcomes. During PY17 and into PY18, MRC saw a drop in the number of consumers served by its VR program. This ultimately led to the slowing of employment outcomes. There were a variety of factors which may have contributed to this drop in consumers served and ultimately in employment outcomes. First there was a decrease in referrals to MRC VR during this period compared to prior periods (although this has improved so far in PY2019). Second, MRC underwent a series of financial challenges leading to the enactment of a revised maximum obligation policy, which also may have affected consumer referrals. There was also a period of increased unsuccessful employment outcomes which combined with lower referrals led to a drop in the number of consumers served. This has since stabilized.

As noted above, for Goals 4 through 9: (Common Performance Measures): During PY2018, MRC reported baseline data to RSA for the WIOA common performance measures as specified in the state plan requirements. MRC will have a negotiated adjusted performance goal established for Measurable Skills Gains for PY2020 and PY2021, and performance goals will be developed by RSA for the remaining measures for PY2022 and beyond once PY2020 and PY2021 data is submitted. As data continues to become available, MRC's Analytics and Quality Assurance Department will begin to analyze the data and create a report for management on the common measures.

2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

Supported Employment Program FY2019/PY2018 Goal Achievement:

Consumers Served: Goal: 450, Actual: 485

Employment Outcomes: Goal: 88, Actual: 90

MRC's strategy for provision and delivery of Supported Employment Services utilizes a network of community providers. MRC reviews progress on supported employment cases with staff and providers on a quarterly basis to assess progress and make any necessary corrective actions to ensure consumers are receiving quality services.

MRC achieved its goals for the Supported Employment Program for FY2019/PY2018 as stated in the approved VR section of the Massachusetts Combined State Plan. MRC saw a steady number of consumers successfully employed and served through MRC's Supported Employment Program. These consumers were served using a combination of Title I and Title VI B funds.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

MRC achieved its supported employment goals for PY2018/FY2019, therefore there are no factors impeding the achievement of the goals and priorities. MRC monitors economic and labor market trends to forecast the potential impact on MRC's ability to achieve our employment goals and priorities. MRC's leadership team works closely with our fiscal staff to project available resources to provide services and the potential impact on achievement of our goals and priorities.

3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

During PY2017 and PY2018, MRC reported baseline data to RSA for the WIOA common performance measures as specified in the state plan requirements. As required by RSA, MRC began collecting data for the Common Performance measures as of July 1, 2017, replacing the prior Vocational Rehabilitation Standards and Indicators. As the VR program only began reporting data in the fall of 2017, MRC will continue reporting baseline data for RSA on these measures for PY19, and for all measures except Measurable Skills Gains for PY2020 and PY2021. MRC will have a negotiated adjusted performance goal established for Measurable Skills Gains for PY2020 and PY2021, and performance goals will be developed by RSA for the remaining measures for PY2022 and beyond once PY2020 and PY2021 data is submitted.

As the VR program only began reporting data for the common measures as of July 1, 2017, MRC only has initial data for PY2017 and PY2018 for Measurable Skills Gains and PY2018 for Employment Rate at 2nd Quarter After Exit and Median Earnings during 2nd Quarter After Exit, and for Effectiveness of Serving Employers. Data for the 4th Quarter After Exit Employment Rate and Credential Obtainment will be available after the completion of PY2019. MRC has and will continue working with its workforce partners to complete the Statewide Performance Report for the Common Measures.

MRC’s Data Analytics and Quality Assurance department will continue to analyze the data as it becomes available and create a report for management on the common measures. A data dashboard of this information will also be pursued to push data down to staff at the office and counselor level as applicable. This will allow the agency to work on strategies to increase performance on the common measures.

Figure 83: Massachusetts General Vocational Rehabilitation Two Year Performance

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission		
Massachusetts General Vocational Rehabilitation Two-Year Performance		
MRC WIOA Common Measure Performance, PY17 and PY18*	PY17 (FY18)	PY18 (FY19)
Employment Rate at 2 nd Quarter after Exit	N/A*	48.2%
Employment Rate at 4 th Quarter after Exit	N/A*	N/A*
Median Earnings at 2 nd Quarter after Exit	N/A*	\$4,332.83
Credential Obtainment Rate	N/A*	N/A*
Measurable Skills Gains	13.1%	8.4%
Effectiveness of Serving Employers – Retention from 2 nd to 4 th Quarter after Exit	N/A*	75%
Effectiveness of Serving Employers - Repeat Business Customers	15.0%	11.6%

*Note- Complete Employment at Fourth Quarter after Exit and Credential Obtainment Rate are not available yet for PY17 and PY18 and were not included by RSA in the PY17 and PY18 WIOA Annual Report Data for Vocational Rehabilitation.

4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the Commission under section 110 of the Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. Consistent with the findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and goals and priorities identified in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council, the Commission uses funds to support innovation and expansion activities to address the needs of individuals with disabilities, primarily individuals with the most significant disabilities, and to promote increased employment rates and labor force participation rates for people with disabilities across Massachusetts. Activities include:

1. On-The-Job Trainings and Job-Driven Trainings with Employer Partners: MRC continues to expand Job-Driven Trainings (JDT) and on-the-job (OJT) training and evaluations. MRC has found that many consumers who participate in an OJT or Job-Driven training obtain employment with the OJT or JDT. Other participants are able to obtain employment elsewhere as a result of their participation in the OJT or JDT because they gained a recent work experience and/or developed job-specific skills. MRC has created job driven training programs to date with the Home Depot, CVS Health, Lowes, G4S Security Solutions, the Kraft Group, MAPFRE Insurance, Advance Auto Parts, and Enterprise Holdings, and Allied Universal Security Services, amongst other employers. In addition, MRC holds job-driven trainings for human service jobs and has started to offer a job-driven training for IT jobs. MRC is also exploring a cyber security job driven training program partnership with CISCO; also, it is working on developing new job-driven training programs with Travelers Insurance, and BJ's Wholesale Club, and developing new partnerships with UPS and Fed Ex.
2. MRC - Department of Transitional Assistance Empower to Employ Project: MRC and the Department of Transitional Assistance have developed a project known as Empower to Employ designed to increase employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF benefits. The partner agencies use a jointly funded model of client engagement and intensive co-case management to provide individualized and meaningful services. Through this collaborative effort, DTA and MRC are utilizing an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach to facilitate recruitment (pre-engagement), engagement, service delivery and placement.
3. MRC-Department of Mental Health Employment Initiative: MRC and DMH have undertaken a new initiative as of July 2019 where MRC coordinates employment services for individuals with mental health needs served by the Department of Mental Health's Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) program in collaboration with DMH and its vendors. The new MRC/DMH Employment Initiative is designed to build an integrated employment framework that inspires and engages innovation to ensure full employment for people with mental health needs at the same rate of employment as the general population. The focus of this initiative is on individuals served by DMH through Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS). These individuals are being referred to MRC for Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services. To serve these individuals, MRC is using an Integrated Resource Team approach, where partner agencies and supports come together to craft and jointly own a Job Seeker's

employment goal, to coordinate wrap-around services and ongoing collaboration and communication. MRC has hired dedicated staff with funding through the ISA to work with ACCS referrals. These counselors will have smaller caseloads and will work with providers, DMH providers, DMH, and other MRC staff to rapidly engage with consumers, develop a plan for employment, and coordinate services designed to assist these consumers in achieving successful employment outcomes.

4. Transition Pathway Services Demonstration Grant Project: MRC is in the 4th year of a 5-year demonstration grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) known as the Transition Pathway Services Grant. This project is evaluating best practices for provision of work-based learning experiences to students with disabilities through a coordinated model of services provided by community partners including MRC, career centers, independent living centers, pre-employment transition vendors and local educational authorities. The goal is to increase employment and/or post-secondary education opportunity for students with disabilities based on their abilities, skills, needs and employment opportunities in the local economy.
5. Kessler Foundation Career Pathway Services Employment Grant: MRC recently completed a two-year grant from the Kessler Foundation to determine what the best practices are in assisting individuals undergoing physical and mental restoration to obtain employment and reduce their reliance on public benefits. Known as Career Pathway Services, this project utilized a client-centered, customized service model providing comprehensive benefits planning services, customized client-centered employment planning, peer supports from Independent Living Centers, and job matching tools. The project resulted in the development of a series of best practices for working with individuals with more complicated needs.
6. IT enhancements to modernize the agency's technology and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services. These include a provider portal to assist in reporting and tracking the provision of Pre-ETS services to potentially eligible consumers, to enhance tracking and reporting on internal job placement services, to develop a consumer portal for information and referral, and to develop a paperless system using Electronic Data Management.
7. MRC's Job Placement Unit operates an annual Federal Hiring Event in partnership with MCB, other workforce partners, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) in their Boston and Hartford offices to assist consumers with securing competitive employment comparable with their interests and abilities. MRC prepares consumers to interview for available jobs with employers participating in the event. The event focuses on direct job placement with participating employers and is not simply a career fair. In 2019, MRC completed its 7th annual Hiring Event. Since 2013, over 480 individuals have been successfully employed across the Commonwealth through participating in this annual one-day event. The aggregate annual wages of all successfully employed consumers through the hiring event since 2013 is approximately \$10.31 million. Consumers have been employed in a variety of occupations ranging from office and administrative support, health care, protective service, human services, and management occupations, amongst others.
8. Transportation: MRC is working diligently to address transportation barriers faced by its consumers. MRC has updated transportation resource fact sheets on its website and makes them available to consumers at its Area Office. MRC has also hired a transportation coordinator through its Transition Pathway Services (TPS) grant and MRC will document lessons learned and best practices at the end of

the grant period. One major achievement has been that MRC consumers are now automatically eligible for the Transition Access Pass (TAP) program. This program offers half-fare rides on all Regional Transit Authorities across the Commonwealth. MRC also works with the Executive Office of Health and Human Service Transportation office on transportation for consumers and operates an innovative car donation program to assist individuals in accessing worksites. MRC has a benefits planning grant to assist consumer in their efforts to go to work, which can include the Plan for Achieving Self Supports (PASS) and impairment-related work expenses as incentives for an individual to go to work. MRC also uses [IRS Section 44](#) as a strategy to assist consumers with Transportation needs. MRC will continue to work with transportation agencies to explore other creative transportation options for consumers.

9. Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in State Jobs: MRC places numerous individuals with disabilities into state government jobs each year, including at MRC. MRC has a diverse workforce with a high percentage of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. We have a key contact with the state's Human Resources Division to facilitate employment for consumers in state jobs, including the provision of On-The-Job training and internship opportunities with state and federal agencies. The Commonwealth also participates in MRC's annual hiring event to provide information to consumers on available state job opportunities, including how to apply.
10. Research Best Practices Models to Increase Employment of Individuals with Disabilities: MRC will continue to research best practice models designed to increase the employment rate of individuals with disabilities in Massachusetts.
11. Learn to Earn: MRC is engaged with the Learn to Earn initiative. Learn to Earn is a comprehensive approach to providing unemployed and underemployed individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs with the supports, skills, and credentials they need to gain and retain employment in occupations for which employers have persistent demand. Learn to Earn Programs will help participants set and achieve goals necessary for employment and sustained economic stability, such as maintaining and growing family net resources and minimizing the real or perceived potential impact of increased earned income on benefit receipt, including improving coordination across benefit programs and reducing benefit cliff effects. As part of this program, MRC is providing information on benefits counseling.
12. Work-Based Learning Experiences for Students with Disabilities to assist them in preparing for future employment and educational experiences.
13. Apprenticeships: MRC will utilize available apprenticeship resources, including the ODEP guide to expand apprenticeship, to provide apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the Commonwealth. As an example, MRC participates in the Merit Apprenticeship Program. Additionally, MRC has obtained a copy of the ODEP guide on apprenticeships. MRC will also work with the Career Centers on providing apprenticeship opportunities for consumers. MRC has leased space at the career centers and has staff dedicated to the career centers to make available the range of career services from Career Centers for MRC consumers.
14. MRC has developed an Interagency Service Agreement (ISA) with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to develop training programs to assist individuals with disabilities to complete training

programs and obtain credentials to be substance abuse counselors. This has been identified as a growth area and a higher compensated profession in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

15. MRC has developed a partnership with the Career Centers known as the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts.
16. MRC partners and contracts with The Asperger/Autism Network's (AANE) Life Management Assistance Program (LifeMAP). This program provides practical assistance to individuals on the Autism Spectrum and other related conditions. LifeMAP provides intensive, highly individualized coaching by professionals with expertise in both Autism Spectrum Disorder and specific content areas. Coaches focus on identifying and overcoming the specific barriers each client faces so that the clients can increase their levels of independence towards reaching their full potential.

q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.

Include the following:

1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has established a process to provide quality statewide Supported Employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, for adults and youth. MRC will be utilizing Title I funds and Title VI B funds to provide Supported Employment services. MRC has developed a contingency plan to use Title I funds to provide Supported Employment Services if Title VI B are not appropriated in the federal budget MRC provides a range of supported employment services to assist consumers in their efforts to choose, obtain and maintain complete employment opportunities based on their abilities, skills, interests and needs as outlined in their Individualized Plan for Employment. MRC provides Supported Employment services through its area office network. MRC provides supported employment services to youths and adults with disabilities based on their needs and services outlined in their individualized plan for employment.

MRC utilizes a network of Qualified Community Rehabilitation Providers through MRC's Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) program) to purchase and provide Supported Employment services to consumers. These programs, located throughout the state, serve persons with an array of significant disabilities including mental health, autism, deaf/severely hearing impaired, severely physically disabled, traumatic brain injured and dual diagnosed persons with intellectual disabilities and mental health, and other individuals with disabilities. MRC has recently completed a new procurement for CIES services which took effect on July 1, 2019. MRC adjusted the CIES model based on lessons learned and input from its staff, CRP partners, and other stakeholders. These adjustments are designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CIES services for MRC consumers, including supported employment services. MRC also incorporated peer support and flexible supports into the CIES procurement which should benefit consumers receiving supported employment services through MRC.

In addition, MRC works with its Workforce Partners and continues to expand partnerships with other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental

Health to provide wrap-around supports and comparable benefits to assist individuals receiving supported employment services in obtaining and maintaining employment.

2. The timing of transition to extended services.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has developed a process to provide extended ongoing employment support services to assist individuals with disabilities in maintaining and advancing in their careers utilizing state funding, comparable benefits, and natural supports for long-term extended support services after federal funds can no longer be used. Paid extended supports are provided through a network of qualified community rehabilitation providers as part of MRC's Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) program as well as partnering with other state agencies such as the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Developmental Services.

Funding for extended long-term support services is available from several sources depending on the nature of the consumer's disability and the resources available. Sources include:

1. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission State Ongoing Support Funding
2. IRS Section 44
3. Department of Mental Health
4. Department of Developmental Services
5. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Statewide Head Injury Program
6. Social Security Work Incentives/PASS Plan
7. Impairment-Related Work Expenses
8. Natural Supports from Employers
9. Medicaid Waiver Supported Employment Services
10. Other Comparable Benefits

Certifications

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate: **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

Name of designated State agency: **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Toni A. Wolf**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner**

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.** Yes

2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. Yes
3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan,* the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under Title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan.** Yes
4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes
5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes
6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. Yes
7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. Yes
8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services. Yes
9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

Footnotes

Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

Additional Comments on the Certifications from the State

Certification Regarding Lobbying — Vocational Rehabilitation

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

1. No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
2. If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.
3. The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to

insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization: **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Toni A. Wolf**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)

(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

Certification Regarding Lobbying – Supported Employment

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

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If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for

making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization: **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Toni A. Wolf**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

Assurances

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

- a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.
The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable: **(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**

c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.

d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).

e. the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds: **No**

f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **No**

g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **No**

h. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.

j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.

k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.

m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.

4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.

c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above: **Yes**

d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.

g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.

h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.

i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs

j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State,

i. has developed and will implement,

A.strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and

B.strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and

ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).

5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:

- a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under Title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
- c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.

6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:

- a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under Title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.

7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:

- a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that:
 - i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.
 - ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with Title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) State Plan

Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (Blind)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council (RC)

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;

The MCB RC has made the following recommendations for FFY 2021 on VR services

- Make budget recommendations and advocate, when appropriate, to ensure that MCB both receives sufficient VR funding and provides appropriate and cost-effective services for consumers;

Ensure that MCB's social services and vocational rehabilitation staff can fully participate in IEP meetings for children and youth;

- Enhance the service delivery of MCB VR counselors to increase job development activities, job placement services, technology services, job retention, and job coaching services to all individuals (including individuals with other disabilities in addition to blindness) receiving vocational services at MCB regional offices;
- Work with committee chairs to grow and increase the productivity of RC committees;
- Work and advocate for accessibility of state and local government portal systems, including all applications for services and all documents posted on these portals; and
- Continue to work with state officials to support the Commonwealth's initiative to move forward as a model employer.

For some time, the MCB RC has been concerned that the availability and quality of braille instruction provided by school systems to elementary through high school age children can vary in quality and frequency from town to town. The MCB RC supports the agency's decision to take the lead in revitalizing the Braille Literacy Council. The MCB RC has made no specific recommendations during the past year to the agency on this issue.

The MCB RC is concerned about the increasing difficulty that blind job seekers have in filling out inaccessible company applications. The agency does have employment specialists as well as VR counselors who can help consumers but does agree that this is a major issue and that advocacy from consumer groups and collaboration is very important for the long term in making these websites more accessible. The MCB RC has made no specific recommendations during the past year to the agency on this issue.

MCB and the MCB RC are concerned that vending stands in Massachusetts have been on the decline. MCB continues to explore other opportunities away from the food industry to diversify the program. A partnership was established with the Lottery Commission where MCB was involved in the testing of new lottery machines for accessibility. The machines have been purchased and are working well for blind vendors. In addition, the MCB Commissioner has reached out to the Massachusetts Trial Court to establish new vending stands in the courts. The MCB RC has made no additional recommendations during the past year to the agency on this issue.

MCB RC members remain very interested in the effects of MCB's usage of Section 257 (State statute) to evaluate the purchase pricing of services through community providers. The intent of the law is to simplify pricing and make it more efficient. MCB has explained that this rate restructuring will benefit consumers heavily impacted by older and more complicated pricing, including the deaf-blind and multiply impaired populations. Most vendors are happy with the newer simpler 257 rates. The rate increase assures access to more providers for MCB consumers.

MCB RC has continued to review the consumer satisfaction studies conducted. The Council had in previous years provided input into the design of these studies as well as the design of the comprehensive needs assessment study. The MCB RC worked with the agency on the development and implementation of the 2018 comprehensive needs assessment methodology in line with the requirements and focus of WIOA on competitive integrated employment. One focus group was held and a web-based survey was developed and conducted.

The RC had previously expressed concerns that Survey Monkey is not secure, so Google Forms was used. While Google Forms is minimally accessible, in practice it proved to not be user-friendly for blind consumers. The RC and MCB will re-think and re-evaluate future use of web-based surveys. MCB will work closely with the RC and a sub-committee on needs assessment to plan future needs assessment methodology. Recently, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) engaged a consultant to develop an MCB survey of its consumers to support MCB's efforts to better ascertain the data dynamics of people with blindness throughout the Commonwealth. The goal of this innovative program is to enhance its development and targeting of future programming and to contribute to its comprehensive needs assessment. The consultant developed a short survey to be asked during the intake process. The consultant developed a much larger panel of questions that could be used in the survey of existing clients. Now MCB is looking to progress to the next stage which will be implementing the surveys. MCB has issued an RFR to seek a consultant to provide guidance via a report and to implement the long survey that will go to existing consumers and provide analytics on the data collected. Representatives of the RC will provide feedback and advice throughout this process.

The MCB RC has had a long-term interest in transportation accessibility and its impact on the ability of consumers to pursue vocational objectives. The director of MCB's Mobility Unit attends a number of meetings on regional and statewide transportation issues to keep the agency informed on issues relevant to transportation accessibility. MCB and the RC are closely following new transportation options such as UBER, Lyft etc. A number of blind persons who are proficient with technology have benefitted from these services. While the MCB RC believes that lack of transportation is a major barrier to consumers' ability to participate in VR services and to obtain employment, it has made no specific recommendations during the past year to the agency on this issue.

The MCB RC continues to pay close attention to the agency's implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. MCB provides updates on the effort at each meeting. The agency and the council have continued to refine goals and priorities and plans for innovation and expansion based on the new law. MCB and the Rehabilitation Council are in full support of the Workforce Development Plan Vision that all Massachusetts residents will benefit from a seamless system of education and workforce services that supports career pathways for individuals and leads to a more informed, educated, and skilled workforce, which meets the Commonwealth's business demands and sustains a thriving economy.

The agency and the council are committed to the following paths to the realization of that vision:

- Work with Core Program partners to promote Career Pathways for individuals who are legally blind and to improve the one-stop delivery system.
- Strengthen the alignment of the MCB VR program with the other core programs of the workforce development system.
- Use state and regional labor market information analysis to develop more employment options for consumers who are legally blind, utilizing regional labor market data, regional economic development agencies, and business intelligence gathered from interactions with core partners.
- Participate in the development of a coordinated, streamlined regional strategy for business partner outreach and follow up.

WIOA and its state plan requirements have been discussed at each quarterly meeting of the Rehabilitation Council since its enactment.

The agency's performance on RSA standards and indicators over previous years has at all times met the minimum level of overall performance established by RSA.

Some agency-specific results for FFY 2019 are:

- Percentage of MCB consumers who exited with employment was 57.6%.
- Average hourly earnings for competitive employment outcomes for MCB was \$22.86.
- Average number of hours worked per week for competitive employment outcomes was 31.16 hours.
- Cost per participant served in Career Services: \$159.84
- Cost per participant served in Training Services: \$4,206.05
- Ratio of Minority Service Rate to Non-Minority Service Rate: .911.

The MCB RC has made no specific recommendations during the year on VR performance evaluations. It did make recommendations and participate as a partner in the development of the plan goals. All of the MCB RC recommendations on plan goals have been adopted and are included in this plan.

The Rehabilitation Council submits an annual report to the Governor of Massachusetts and to the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

2. the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and

The MCB RC has made no specific recommendations during the past year on VR services and performance evaluations. It did make recommendations and participate as a partner in the development of the plan goals. All of the MCB RC recommendations on plan goals were jointly developed, agreed to, and adopted and are included in this plan (Section I. State Goals and Priorities).

3. the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

No input or recommendations were rejected.

b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

1. a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;

Not applicable. The agency is not requesting a waiver of statewideness.

2. the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and

Not applicable. The agency is not requesting a waiver of statewideness.

3. All State plan requirements will apply requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Not applicable. The agency is not requesting a waiver of statewideness.

c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind falls within the purview of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Other agencies within this organization include: the Department of Mental Health, Department of Developmental Services, Department of Public Health, Department of Children and Families, Department of Transitional Assistance, Department of Youth Services, Department of Elder Services, Office of Medicaid (MassHealth), Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Office for Refugees and Immigrants, Department of Veterans' Services, Chelsea Soldiers' Home, and Holyoke Soldiers' Home. The agency has strong cooperative and collaborative relationships with all of these agencies. Agency heads meet every two weeks to discuss issues of mutual concern and to resolve inter-agency problems. Other agency staffs meet collaboratively to work on numerous Secretariat-wide projects. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in the agency's unit that provides specialized services to persons who are deaf-blind and intellectually disabled blind work closely with the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to facilitate development and completion of plans and services for persons with developmental disabilities who may need their services in addition to vocational rehabilitation services. These specialized counselors also work very closely with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and staff of the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults to provide coordinated services to deaf-blind persons.

2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has excellent relationships with the programs funded under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act and administered through the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology; the Assistive Technology Program that provides AT assessments, buys and sets up equipment, and provides train and follow-up. Three providers, MA Easter Seals and United Cerebral Palsy of Berkshire County and the University of MA-Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering provide services on a regional basis and have on-site AT devices for evaluation and training. The Massachusetts Assistive Technology Loan Program, operated by Easter Seals Massachusetts, gives people with disabilities and their families access to low-interest cash loans so they can buy the assistive technology devices they need. A number of MCB consumers benefit each year from these programs.

3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;

While Massachusetts is not predominately a rural state, there are rural communities, especially in central and western Massachusetts. When appropriate, the agency works with USDA Rural Development programs such as the Small Business Resource at Cornell University in developing vocational opportunities for consumers. The agency makes frequent referrals to the SNAP program

of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that is administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance in Massachusetts; MCB has also participated in special outreach initiatives of that program.

4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and

Massachusetts has a number of programs for out-of-school youth that MCB works with to provide services for individual consumers. During the past year, MCB has been working closely with the Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD), a non-profit agency that empowers youth with disabilities to reach their full potential by providing transformative mentoring programs, youth development opportunities, and inclusion expertise. MCB offers all transition-age students and out-of-school youth mentoring through the Partners for Youth with Disabilities Mentor Match program. The Mentor Match pairs youth and young adults with disabilities with adult mentors who best fit their personality, interests, and skills. MCB also has begun offering transition-age students and out-of-school youth online mentoring through Project L.E.N.S.

5. State use contracting programs.

In 2015, the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Program was expanded to include Veteran Business Enterprises, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Business Enterprises; and Disability-Owned Business Enterprises. Some consumers of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind have been able to take advantage of this program to increase their business and vocational opportunities.

d. Coordination with Education Officials

Describe:

1. DSU's plans

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities include:

- The implementation of the agency's agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). MCB and ESE cooperate to outreach to and identify students with visual impairments who are in need of transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students occurs as early as possible during the transition planning process and includes information about the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals.

- The continued provision of consultation and technical assistance to the education agency relative to the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services.
- The continued transition planning by MCB and education personnel that facilitates the development and completion of students' individual education programs through the Chapter 688 process described in Section B. below.

2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:

A. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has for several years had a cooperative agreement that complies with WIOA relative to the services provided to legally blind children. The agreement describes the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services. It also provides for regular communication and information sharing on topics of mutual interest such as agency policy initiatives; resources; transition activities, including pre-employment transition services; the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks; and the Expanded Core Curriculum for legally blind students.

B. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;

MCB conducts formal transition planning in conjunction with education personnel that facilitates the development and completion of students' individualized education programs through the following process. As indicated above, MCB falls within the purview of the Executive Office of Human Services of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Chapter 688, a state law passed in 1984 mandated that the Executive Office of Health and Human Services establish a Bureau of Transition Planning to assure the provision of adequate transitional planning services to disabled persons completing special education. The Bureau of Transitional Planning monitors an inter-agency cooperative planning process that requires the participation of all relevant human services agencies. An individual transition plan must be developed by the agencies at least six months before the termination of special education services. This plan must be approved by an inter-agency Transitional Advisory Committee, the Secretary of Human Services, and the consumer or his guardian. The plan outlines the services to be provided and identifies the agency responsible for the provision of each service. This process assures that an individualized plan for employment is developed and approved for each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services before the student leaves the school setting. MCB has found that this transitional planning process has clarified agency responsibilities and has made it much easier to arrange necessary support services to enable consumers to participate in vocational rehabilitation services.

C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;

A new agreement with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) was finalized several years ago that describes the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services.

Specific provisions of the agreement include:

- Regular Communication - DESE and MCB representatives will meet semi-annually and as necessary to communicate and share information on topics of mutual interest including, but not limited to, legislative and regulatory changes; agency policy initiatives; resources; transition activities, including pre-employment transition services; the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks; and the Expanded Core Curriculum for legally blind students.
- MCB assistance with Braille Literacy and Curriculum for Legally Blind Students - MCB with the participation of the Braille Literacy Advisory Council (BrLAC) will advise DESE on issues related to Braille Literacy, the implementation of the Unified English Braille Code (UEB), the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and the Expanded Core Curriculum for legally blind students.
- Coordination with AIM Library - MCB will contact all eligible students identified through the mandatory report of legal blindness and will provide information about the purpose and benefits of the Accessible Instructional Materials Library ("AIM Library"). The AIM Library will share information with MCB about users who grant permission. MCB will provide information on available services to newly identified eligible individuals.
- DESE Guidance for School Districts - DESE, with the assistance of MCB, will provide school districts with guidance on using the Expanded Core Curriculum with eligible students. DESE, with the assistance of MCB, will develop guidance for school districts on the Workforce and Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014; on MCB services for legally blind students and how such services can be accessed; on developing collaborative relationships with MCB caseworkers, on procedures for including caseworkers in the development of IEPs and transition plans, and accessing pre-employment transition services.
- DESE will provide local school districts with technical assistance to facilitate district compliance with G.L. c. 71B, §§ 12A-12C.
- MCB's role as the federally designated Vocational Rehabilitation Agency for Blind Individuals - A referral to MCB may be made when a student is 14 and older. MCB will determine if a student is eligible for MCB vocational rehabilitation services. If a student is eligible, MCB will coordinate the development of an Individualized Plan for Employment ("IPE") before the student leaves the school setting and will oversee implementation of the IPE, post-graduation or when the student turns 22 years of age, whichever comes first.
- For students eligible for MCB service and who are discussing transition, MCB may be invited to participate as a member of the IEP Team and may recommend transition services and goals consistent with the IPE for the student.
- MCB will provide information, as requested, to school districts about school and community-based vocational training and integrated employment (including supported employment)

training for transition-aged eligible students available through MCB regional offices. MCB will designate staff in regional offices to provide technical support to school districts on legal blindness, independent living skills development, the Expanded Core Curriculum for legally blind students as it relates to the General Curriculum, and transition services, including pre-employment transition services.

- Both DESE and MCB shall abide by state and federal laws and policies concerning student and client records confidentiality, and agency policies and procedures.
- DESE will provide school districts with technical assistance and guidance concerning special education law and policy and will monitor compliance.
- In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA, nothing in this agreement will be construed to reduce the obligation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) of a local educational agency (LEA) or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities.
- In accordance with IDEA, nothing in this agreement relieves MCB of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet MCB's eligibility criteria.
- Disputes regarding MCB financial responsibility for services provided or recommended by MCB for blind students will be resolved by the MCB Deputy Commissioner.
- The agreement shall be in effect for ten years subject to biannual review. It may be revised upon agreement by the parties or terminated by either party upon written notice to the Commissioner of intent to withdraw.

D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

As described in Section B. above, identification and outreach are accomplished by transition planning by MCB and education personnel that facilitates the development and completion of students' individualized education programs through the Chapter 688 process.

MCB provides children's services to legally blind children under its state social services funding. Children participating in these services are referred by their social workers to vocational rehabilitation counselors when they are age 14. Referrals from this program are a major component of outreach for the provision of pre-employment transition services, transition services, and other vocational rehabilitation services.

An MCB vocational rehabilitation counselor has developed, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Federation for Children with Special Needs (the state Parent Training and Information Center), an information packet for the parents of children with visual impairments on the pre-employment transition services and transition services offered by the MCB vocational rehabilitation program.

In addition, all legally blind children and adults in Massachusetts are registered with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind as a consequence of the state's mandatory reporting law and, thus, identified. MCB regularly reaches out to all registrants between the ages of 14

and 22 to acquaint them with the agency and its services and to offer pre-employment transition services, transition services, and other vocational rehabilitation services.

e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

In accordance with the procedures of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has contracts with all private, non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers that it purchases services from. Statewide rates and technical specifications are established in these contracts for the services most commonly purchased from non-profit vocational rehabilitation services providers including vocational evaluation, supported employment, on-site job coaching and job development. These contracts are subject to competitive bidding; solicitations are posted on the COMMBUYS website maintained by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As required by the Rehabilitation Act, one member of the State Rehabilitation Council represents a non-profit provider. In addition, several other members happen to work for non-profit providers. During the recent years, MCB has developed enhanced public-private collaborations with the Commonwealth's significant non-profit service providers for the blind to leverage MCB's resources. The organizations include Perkins, the Carroll Center, and Massachusetts Association for the Blind (MAB) Community Services. In the fall of 2018, the MCB Commissioner held a statewide meeting for the leadership teams of MCB and of partner agencies to build closer relationships and to discuss common concerns and possible mutual initiatives at a high level. The agency has also been collaborating with the Perkins School in its initiative, the Perkins Business Partnership (PBP), which is actively assisting MCB job-ready consumers to optimize their resumes and to obtain job interviews. Perkins Business Partnership meetings involve MCB job-ready candidates breaking into small groups with PBP members to review resume, evaluate and brainstorm job search strategies and identify a mentor. MCB is exploring other ways to increase collaboration and regular communication with all of the Massachusetts non-profit agencies that serve blind consumers to improve the provision of services to persons who are legally blind.

f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

In October 1997, a Community-Based Employment Service (CBES) service delivery system was developed through the Executive Office of Health and Human Services Employment Services Advisory Committee. Later that year, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), the Massachusetts Commission of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) and the Massachusetts Commission of the Blind (MCB) collaborated on the

release of a competitive bid for CBES. It was the first interagency collaboration of its kind. Because of this effort, a supported employment consumer is able to access a system of supports in a more streamlined fashion that incorporates collaboration and consumer choice and is outcome driven. This effort is designed to offer all reasonable and allowable supports to consumers, including extended services. Through this effort the disability agencies have a consistent pay scale, defined outcomes and can now easily cost share the support services for people with disabilities. The CBES service delivery system continues, slightly modified, with the existing agencies, as the Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) service delivery system today. In recent years, MCB has contracted with an increasing number of new providers of community-based supported employment services. The results of these services have varied, but the agency's positive experience in the cases of some consumers who have needed very intensive supported employment services. The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) have over the years worked cooperatively with MCB and provided extended services to a number of legally blind persons that have been provided supported employment services by MCB. A new Memorandum of Agreement with DDS that includes provisions for use of joint agency resources to ensure quality service delivery and long term supports for supported employment was executed in November 2015. This includes a formal commitment of funding from MCB for appropriate supported employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long-term, ongoing employment support services when needed. The agreement also provides for cross-training of staff. In accordance with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, MCB executed a WIOA Cooperative Agreement with MassHealth in January 2016. In addition, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) has clarified that MCB consumers who have been rehabilitated into competitive integrated supported employment will be eligible to receive funding for on-going supports under its state-funded Extended Ongoing Supports Program. MCB is very appreciative of the help and advice that the MRC Extended Ongoing Supports Program provided and expects that the availability of this resource will increase the opportunities for supported employment for legally blind consumers who have significant secondary disabilities but do not qualify for on-going supports from another state or private agency.

g. Coordination with Employers

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

1. VR services; and

In recent years, MCB has participated in several hiring events with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission that were sponsored by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). Federal contractors are required to set a hiring goal of having 7% of their employees drawn from qualified workers with disabilities by regulations promulgated in 2013. MCB has also held several smaller in-service presentations for OFCCP contractors and intends to continue its outreach to OFCCP contractors using several strategies including: participation in hiring events, scheduling group and individual in-service presentations and assistive technology

demonstrations, and contact with individual OFCCP contractors on behalf of consumers who are applying for jobs.

MCB employment specialists participate in regional employment collaboratives that share information on employer needs at regular meetings. The members of these collaboratives also share job listings across agencies.

- MCB obtained a grant, now completed, from the Job-Driven Technical Assistance Center at the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) to enhance the collaboration among MCB, the Carroll Center, and the Perkins Business Partnership in order to more effectively meet the job placement needs of both consumers and employers. As part of the project, MCB operationalized a VisionWorks Consortium which consists of MCB, the Carroll Center for the Blind, and the Perkins School for the Blind. The three organizations that are a part of the consortium pooled their employer contacts to track the business partner engagement to increase employment opportunities for job seekers who are visually impaired. This project was fruitful in many ways and the three agencies have continued to work together on initiatives such as the “2020 Challenge” discussed below.
- Perkins School for the Blind, MCB, the Carroll Center, the National Braille Press, and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study usually hold a job fair each October. This year the partners held an employer education event instead. The event included approximately seventy employers who were asked to interview, mentor, provide an internship opportunity to, hire, or promote at least one blind consumer (or one more than during 2019) during the year as part of a “2020 Challenge” initiative. Many of the employer’s present expressed their commitment to this initiative.
- MCB plans to develop a guide for Massachusetts business employers on tax incentives available for hiring individuals with disabilities. There are numerous tax incentives available to incentivize businesses to hire individuals with disabilities; however, they are poorly understood by many employers. Complexity is a deterrent for many potential employers of MCB consumers. Having an accessible and easy-to-follow guide will facilitate employment interaction for MCB’s consumers and potential employers.

MCB is currently exploring the best avenues to solicit employers’ opinions about additional mutual cooperation to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration and pre-employment transition opportunities for consumers and students with disabilities. The agency will use the knowledge and expertise of those Rehabilitation Council members who represent business, labor, and industry and that of the members of the Perkins Business Partnership, an alliance among Perkins, the Carroll Center for the Blind, and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind in this endeavor.

2. transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.

The Perkins Business Partnership (PBP) is major initiative to coordinate with employers in the provision of transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for youth and of

employment-related services to other consumers who are visually impaired or blind. PBP is an alliance between Perkins, the Carroll Center for the Blind, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and some of the region's best-known businesses (including large banks, hospitals, and insurance companies) that is working to break down barriers to employment and expand opportunities for individuals who are blind. PBP also provides the following services to employers: Information on workplace accommodations, information on interviewing candidates who are blind, and accessibility consulting.

MCB is currently exploring the best avenues to solicit employers' opinions about additional mutual cooperation to identify other competitive integrated employment and career exploration and pre-employment transition opportunities for students with disabilities.

MCB has had extensive experience over the past sixteen years in collaborating with employers to provide career exploration opportunities, pre-employment transition services, and transition services within its summer internship program to more than 1,000 consumers. Approximately 80 consumers participated in the program during the summer of 2019.

h. Interagency Cooperation

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

1. the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has always had a good relationship with MassHealth, the program that provides Medicaid services in Massachusetts. About 33% of the persons registered as legally blind in Massachusetts benefit from the program. MassHealth services have been key comparable benefits that have enabled many VR consumers to reach their vocational goals. The agency's state-funded Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program also works closely with MassHealth to provide services under the Home and Community-Based waiver that can provide the underpinning of vocational outcomes in some cases.

2. the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in the agency's unit that provides specialized services to persons who are deaf-blind and intellectually disabled and blind work very closely with the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to facilitate the development and completion of plans and services for persons with intellectual disabilities who may need DDS services in addition to vocational rehabilitation services. These specialized counselors also work closely with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and staff of the Helen Keller National Center to provide coordinated services to deaf-blind persons.

During 2016, MCB and DDS agreed to share and match data in order to identify all consumers who are potentially eligible for services from both agencies. When the data match was

completed, approximately 1,800 consumers had been identified. A further review by DDS estimated that 400 of these consumers might be appropriate for VR services.

The two agencies have executed a Memorandum of Agreement that includes provisions for use of joint agency resources to ensure quality service delivery and long-term supports that result in competitive, integrated employment outcomes. This includes funding from MCB for appropriate vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long-term, ongoing employment support services when needed.

3. the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

Over the years, the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) has worked cooperatively with MCB by providing extended services and other services to some legally blind persons that have received supported employment services and other services from MCB.

i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

A. Qualified Personnel Needs.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

The average caseload per MCB vocational rehabilitation counselor is 70 vocational rehabilitation consumers. Growth in MCB's consumer base has been static during the past few years. Based upon this pattern and an agency turnover rate of about 1%, it is projected that there will be a need for some 5-8 entry-level direct services staff over the next five years. The agency estimates that in FY 2021, it will serve approximately 1,300 legally blind individuals. The agency believes that numbers and types of personnel listed below are adequate and will continue to be adequate in five years, based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

- Administrative Staff: 1, Rehabilitation Counselors and Employment Specialists: 18, Other Direct Service (AT engineers, OM, RT, etc.): 20, Direct Service Supervisors: 4 and Clerical and Support Staff: 5

ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

- Administrative Staff: 0, Rehabilitation Counselors and Employment Specialists: 1, Other Direct Service (AT engineers, OM, RT, etc.): 0, Direct Service Supervisors: 1 Clerical and Support Staff: 0

iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

- Projected vacancies over the next five years: Administrative Staff: 2 Rehabilitation Counselors: 3 Other Direct Service (AT engineers, OM, RT, etc.): 5 Direct Service Supervisors: 1 Clerical and Support Staff: 1

B. Personnel Development

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

- Assumption College
- Springfield College
- University of Massachusetts at Boston

Many MCB staff have graduated from these programs over the years. One recently hired counselor has a degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Assumption College. The agency also recently provided an internship and practicum for a rehabilitation counseling student from Springfield College.

ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

In a given academic year, upwards of 100 undergraduate students and 125 graduate students are enrolled in degree programs, either full-time or part-time, as rehabilitation "majors" at Assumption College, Springfield College, Salve Regina, and the University of Massachusetts at Boston.

iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or

licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Each year, upwards of 50 undergraduate students are awarded the Bachelor's degree and upwards of 60 graduate level students graduate with credentials to qualify for certification by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification and/or licensure by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

- As part of its ongoing In-Service Training Program, MCB's Staff Development Unit regularly conducts needs assessments of the professional staff to identify training requirements and areas needing attention. The Staff Development Unit also utilizes the resources of Technical Assistance Center at the Institute for Community Inclusion for needs assessment data; direct training programs; and referral and evaluation of trainers, lecturers, and presenters. MCB's Staff Development Unit utilizes this data to plan, budget and provide the most comprehensive training plan possible.
- MCB is a leader in the area of adaptive technology and has long utilized its in-house resources to keep its professional staff current in this area.
- Training on the Rehabilitation Act is regularly included in the annual training calendar.
- Recruitment is conducted through mechanisms such as the Massachusetts online job recruitment site and at job fairs. Preparation is accomplished through new staff orientation, supervision, and on-going training.
- MCB has had a productive relationship with the graduate rehabilitation-counseling program at Assumption College and Springfield College. MCB has been able over the years to hire a number of graduates of Assumption College and Springfield College as MCB rehabilitation counselors. MCB also has developed a positive relationship with the University of Massachusetts, Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling program and has hired several graduates as rehabilitation counselors. Another college, Cambridge College, offers some coursework in Rehabilitation Counseling. MCB is in contact with the college and sends job openings to the college.

3. Personnel Standards

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

A. standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and

In accordance with 34 CFR 361.18 c (2)(I), the highest requirements in the State applicable to a professional discipline means the highest entry-level academic degree needed for any national or State approved or recognized certification, licensing, or registration requirement. In Massachusetts, pursuant to 34 CFR 361.18 (c) (2)(I), the degree needed if a person chooses to apply for state licensure is a master's in rehabilitation counseling or a related field. Persons who have attained a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or have been awarded a license in rehabilitation counseling by the Board of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions before July 1, 1999 are deemed to have met the academic standard. Meeting the academic standard requires the attainment of a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a related field from a recognized educational institution and successful completion of a graduate-level course in each of the following areas:

- Job Placement or Occupational Information;
- Vocational Assessment and Evaluation;
- Vocational Counseling; and
- Medical or Psychosocial Aspects of Disabilities

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind defines a person with a master's degree in a related field as one who has a master's degree with a major in Counseling, Guidance, Psychology, Education, Special Education, Social Work, Human Services, Human Development, Sociology, or in a major that has been determined to be comparable by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. Some years ago, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind developed an Action Plan to Comply with Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act in conjunction with the Regional Office of the Rehabilitation Services Administration. This plan called for completion of a plan by which all existing Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) who did not have a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a related field would be on a mandatory schedule to fulfill this academic requirement, consistent with the ongoing provisions of federal law and in accordance with the MCB State Division of Human Resources and labor union policies and/or agreement(s). All vocational rehabilitation counselors who did not meet this standard have now completed additional graduate-level work to meet CSPD requirements. The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has for a number of years begun to apply the master's-level standard to new hires, if at all possible.

B. the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

MCB actively recruits new rehabilitation staff from area graduate-level college and university programs. The agency also provides a number of short-term training opportunities for

vocational rehabilitation staff. During FY 2019 MCB conducted more than twenty in-service training programs on topics such as: ethics, diversity, crisis intervention, eye diseases, the Expanded Core Curriculum, autism, and work incentives.

On March 22, 2019 the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) held its fourth MCB Visions of Collaboration Conference for Teachers of the Visually Impaired, MCB VR counselors and supervisors, and other special education staff. One hundred and fifty professionals attended - a 19% increase from the 2018 conference. The focus of the conference was on Skills for Success in Work and Life: Pre-Employment Transition Services for Students with Visual Impairments. The agenda included presentations on self-advocacy; employer needs; pre-employment programs and services offered by MCB; and preparing for college. Employers, special education staff, students, and MCB staff were among the presenters. The participant evaluations were very positive.

Agency staff also attended a number of training courses and programs provided by the Commonwealth and other private institutions. In all, MCB staff participated in 126 different training events.

4. Staff Development.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

A. System of staff development

A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has for a number of years, begun to apply the master's-level standard to new hires, if at all possible. In addition, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind supports graduate-level training for its professional staff through its Staff Development Unit. MCB actively recruits new rehabilitation staff from area graduate-level college and university programs. The agency also provides a number of short-term training opportunities for vocational rehabilitation staff.

During FY 2019 MCB conducted more than twenty in-service training programs on topics such as: ethics, diversity, crisis intervention, eye diseases, the Expanded Core Curriculum, autism, and work incentives.

The agency also developed and sponsored a conference called "Vision of Collaboration" on pre-employment transition services. More than 150 Teachers of the Visually Impaired, MCB VR counselors and supervisors, and other special education staff attended.

Agency staff also attended a number of training courses and programs provided by the Commonwealth and other private institutions. In all, MCB staff participated in 126 different training events.

The Steering Committee of the Massachusetts Workforce Board works with the Steering Committee members, including the MassHire Department of Career Services, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, to coordinate cross-training for staff. Additional cross-training on labor market information and technology tools is a high priority. Cross-training staff is available across all partners (economic development organizations, MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Centers, TANF-SNAP, adult education, vocational rehabilitation, business services, Veterans, and other key programs) on the online technology tools available to individuals across programs including JobQuest, TORQ, Career Information System, etc. MCB VR staff members also participate in webinars offered by the Job Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (JDVRTAC) and the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC).

MCB intends to take advantage of any other webinars and training opportunities on workforce and labor force needs.

The agency also offers participation in an Aspiring Supervisor Certificate Program in order to prepare interested staff to apply for supervisory positions that are expected to become vacant within the next few years.

B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

The Commission acquires and routinely disseminates rehabilitation materials and research to staff such as the latest publications from the Institute on Rehabilitation on Issues, training materials from the Research and Training Centers, training guides and resource materials produced by recipients of RSA training grants, and literature from the American Foundation for the Blind and the National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision at Mississippi State University. In addition, each counselor and supervisor have a personal computer giving them access to a wide variety of software applications and websites to acquire rehabilitation materials and research reports.

5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

The agency has two Rehabilitation Teachers who are fluent in Spanish, and another Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor who is fluent in both Albanian and Greek languages. One VR supervisor speaks French and the language of the Congo. MCB also has one staff member is fluent in Polish and another staff member is fluent in Kiswahili. MCB VR counselors who work with deaf-blind individuals are proficient in American Sign Language.

6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Memorandum of Understanding between MCB and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education contains provisions to explore ways to develop cross-training opportunities on transition and pre-employment transition services. For the fourth year, the agency also developed and sponsored a conference called "Vision of Collaboration" on pre-employment transitions services. More than 150 Teachers of the Visually Impaired, MCB VR counselors and supervisors, and other special education staff attended.

MCB has developed Memoranda of Understanding with both the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Developmental Services. These Memoranda of Understanding include provisions for the cross training of staff to improve shared client service delivery. In 2017 the Department of Developmental Services delivered training for all VR staff and the Department of Mental Health provided training in 2018. In 2017 MCB delivered training "Adjustment to the Challenges of Vision Loss" for the Department of Developmental Services at their annual "A FOCUS on Vision" conference. In 2017 the MA Office on Disability delivered a training program for all VR staff on ADA Training: Employer Responsibilities. In 2017 MCB delivered cross training for all Department of Transitional Assistance's Service Coordinators who are responsible for the effective service delivery of agency services for clients with disabilities. In 2019 MCB provided training on the Expanded Core Curriculum under IDEA. In addition, MCB has had VR and Pre-ETS staff attend ongoing training at the Federation for Children with Special Needs.

j. Statewide Assessment

1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:

A. with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

MCB, in consultation with the MCB SRC and a number of other agencies serving the blind, commissioned a comprehensive needs assessment that was completed in 2005. The

methodology used for the assessment was a telephone poll conducted by UMass Poll of a random sample of registrants. The MCB RC was satisfied with the original comprehensive needs assessment conducted for MCB by the UMass Poll, so it was decided that the comprehensive needs assessment would be replicated by MCB staff. Other needs assessments were completed during FY 2009 and FY 2012. A fourth needs assessment, using the same questions and methodology was undertaken in 2014 and completed in 2015.

The MCB RC worked with the agency on the development and implementation of the 2018 comprehensive needs assessment methodology in line with the requirements and focus of WIOA on competitive integrated employment. One focus group was held, and a web-based survey was developed and conducted.

The RC had previously expressed concerns that Survey Monkey is not secure so Google Forms was used. While Google Forms is minimally accessible, in practice it proved to not be user-friendly for blind consumers. The RC and MCB will re-think and re-evaluate future use of web-based surveys. MCB will work closely with the RC and a sub-committee on needs assessment to plan future needs assessment methodology. Recently, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) engaged a consultant to develop an MCB survey of its consumers to support MCB's efforts to better ascertain the data dynamics of people with blindness throughout the Commonwealth. The goal of this innovative program is to enhance its development and targeting of future programming and to contribute to its comprehensive needs assessment. The consultant developed a short survey to be asked during the intake process. The consultant developed a much larger panel of questions that could be used in the survey of existing clients. Now MCB is looking to progress to the next stage which will be implementing the surveys. MCB has issued an RFR to seek a consultant to provide guidance via a report and to implement the long survey that will go to existing consumers and provide analytics on the data collected. Representative of the RC will provide feedback throughout this process.

The full analysis and report of the most recent comprehensive needs assessment is below.

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Comprehensive Needs Assessment 2018

Executive Summary

This report describes research undertaken by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) to investigate the needs, interests, and opinions of the legally blind in Massachusetts. The contents of this report are intended to inform MCB and relevant organizations that work with blind residents for the purpose of planning and coordination of services as well as of building awareness about issues and rehabilitation needs facing legally blinded consumers.

Data for the study was drawn from an online survey using Google Forms. A sample of 1,950 blinded residents across all age groups was sent an email with the online survey link. A total of

167 responses were received. The response rate is about 9%. The survey questionnaire contains 47 questions in total.

Key Findings in Brief

Demographic Highlights

☐ The survey sample was slightly young, mostly white, highly educated, and had good self-rated health.

Employment

☐ Most of survey respondents (76%) were not working or just working part-time. However, only half of them were interested in finding a job or more work.

☐ In general, respondents' awareness of the importance of means to help them get employed was relatively low.

Travel and Safety

☐ Respondents were, in general, able to travel safely in familiar areas, both in indoor and outdoor areas. However, they felt much less safe to travel in unfamiliar outdoor areas and to use public transportation.

☐ The primary means of transportation were family and public transportation. And the majority reported their transportation needs were met.

Communication and Information

☐ Computer was the most preferred method of communication. And most people considered computer skills to be very important for job market.

☐ However, about 20% of respondents were not using a computer. The most common reason was "don't know how".

☐ Although 70% of respondents used multiple types of assistive technology, about 20% of respondents were not using assistive technology.

☐ Only a small share (17%) reported a need for vocational counseling.

☐ MCB was the most helpful agency that provided the most assistance.

Recommendations

Readers are cautioned against drawing strong conclusions based on sampling results with small numbers of respondents. From the results of this survey, services are needed in each area mentioned in this study. We also included 16 questions about the Transition and Pre-

employment Transition Services Program (for young adults age 14-21). However, only 25 respondents answered. In any future study, it is suggested to separate respondents who have retired from those who have not worked before (e.g. students) in the responses. In addition, it is crucial to take accessibility into account when conducting any online survey in future research.

Lastly, it would be helpful to carry out surveys using other methods (i.e. in person interview, focus group, etc.) rather than only an online survey. Electronic means of information distribution, such as website or email, may not be the most effective in reaching people with vision impairment, especially for older blind adults.

Introduction

There were 28,000 legally blind registrants in Massachusetts in 2018. And there were 4,144 registrants who had email addresses recorded. The purpose of this survey was to investigate the needs, opinions, and issues for the Blind community in MA and to inform MCB and relevant organizations to plan and to coordinate vocational rehabilitation services.

Demographics

This survey had 167 respondents, with 53% Male and 41% Female, with 1% indicating “I do not identify as male or female” and 4% not answering. About one-third of survey respondents (31%) were 65 and over years old, compared to 65% over 65 years old in 2014 survey. 13% were aged 22-35; 8% aged 36-45; 11% aged 46-55; 16% aged 56-64. Young adults between 14 and 21 years old, which were the targeted population for the Transition and Pre-employment Transition Services Program, made up 15% (25 respondents). 3% were under age 14 and 4% preferred not to answer.

The survey respondents were somewhat diverse with respect to race and ethnicity. The large majority of Massachusetts legally blind residents reported their race as White (71%), followed by African American (8%). Approximately 7% of respondents reported Hispanic ethnicity. A small portion (2%) reported an Asian race. The remaining 11% did not report or did not know their race.

The respondents’ highest education attainment was asked. Approximately 81% of respondents completed high school or higher education. About 12% of respondents reported their highest education attainment as less than high school. 25% reported post-college graduate education; 22% college graduation; 20% high school graduation; 14% some college. The remaining 6% of respondents’ highest education attainment was missing. The result indicates that these legally blind registrants in Massachusetts are well educated on average.

A large share of respondents (80%) reported their overall health as good or excellent. Only 3% of respondents reported poor overall health. (31% excellent; 17% fair; 49% good; 1% missing.)

Employment

More than half of the respondents (63%) reported not working at all at the survey point of time. This group included retired, not applicable, or unemployed. About one-fifth respondents (22%) were working full-time, compared to 13% working part-time, with 2% missing an answer.

Among those respondents who are part-time or not working at all (n=126), about 57% of them were interested in finding a job or more work (21% “somewhat interested” and 36% of them “very interested”). The remaining 43% of respondents showed no interest in finding a job or more work (34% “not interested at all” and 9% “not very interested”).

For all survey respondents, no matter whether they were currently employed or unemployed, about 40% of them believed that it is very important to learn about jobs that people who are blind have done successfully, and another 28% of them also considered that it is somewhat important. On the contrary, about one-third (30%) of respondents reported that it was not very important (10%), or it was not important at all (20%) to learn about jobs that blind people have done successfully. 2% did not answer.

Similarly, about 58% of respondents reported that “Deciding what kind of work would be possible for you” was very important (36%) or somewhat important (22%) while the remaining 40% of them thought that it was not very important (10%) or not important at all (30%). 2% did not answer. Regarding the importance of training in a rehabilitation center, less than half (42%) of respondents reported “very important” (15%) or “somewhat important” (27%). Most respondents (56%) answered “not very important” (20%) or “not important at all” (36%). The remaining 2% did not answer this question.

When it comes to the importance of employment program such as supported employment that provides a job coach, it is reported that 41% of respondents thought it was “very important” (23%) or “somewhat important” (17%); whereas 58% of respondents thought it was “not very important” (21%) or “not important at all” (37%). 2% did not answer.

Data from the questions about employment suggests that it is necessary and urgent to raise respondents’ awareness of means to learn about and obtain employment.

When asked about the most important thing in the past that led to you getting a job, approximately 18% of respondents chose “right place at the right time”, followed by “help from family and friends” (14%) and “help from an agency” (14%). A small portion of respondents answered, “school placement service” and “answering an ad”, 6% and 5%, respectively. About 30% of respondents answered “other”, which included self-employed, professional network, or not applicable (i.e. students never worked before, not legally blind then, or retired). The remaining 13% of respondents did not answer this question.

Among the most important factors that led to success on the job, 29% of respondents considered job skills as the most important thing, followed by “hard work” (25%). 11% chose “ability to get along with others”; 7% “a mentor or co-worker”. It is noted that 15% of respondents answered “other”, most of whom wrote down “more than one factor”. It would be better to include this question as a multiple-choice question in the future. 14% did not answer this question.

Among those who worked, only 22% of respondents used a MassHire career center at some level (3% “often and 19% “some”). The majority of respondents (74%) used MassHire Career Center not often (21%) or not at all (53%). 3% did not answer.

Travel and Safety

Approximately 88% of respondents reported that they could safely travel at home and in familiar indoor areas (69% “very safely” and 19% “somewhat safely”). The remaining 8% of respondents said that they felt “not very safely” (3%) or “not safely at all” (5%) about navigating at home and indoor familiar areas. 4% did not answer.

As for traveling in outdoor familiar areas, about 81% of respondents said “very safely” (46%) or “somewhat safely” (35%). A slightly larger share of respondents (16%) answered “not very safely” (8%) or “not safely at all” (8%) relative to travel outdoors in familiar areas. 4% did not answer.

In unfamiliar areas outdoors, 15% of respondents said that they could travel very safely and 46% of them said that they could travel somewhat safely. It is noted that 37% of respondents said that they did not feel very safe (17%) or did not feel safe at all (20%) when traveling in unfamiliar areas outdoors. 3% did not answer.

About one-third of respondents (28%) felt very safe when traveling by public transportation, while the other one-third (35%) felt somewhat safe. It is important to note that another one-third (30%) of respondents felt not very safe (16%) or not safe at all (14%) to use public transportation. 7% did not answer.

The most common source of transportation for the survey respondents was family, reported by 44%, followed by public transportation (25%). The third primary means of transportation was the RIDE (14%). Ride sharing (e.g. Uber/Lyft) made up about 8%. Another 5% of respondents reported friends as their primary means of transportation. Only 1% of respondents used taxis as their primary means of transportation. 3% did not answer.

Most of respondents (84%) believed that their transportation needs were met (40% very well and 44% somewhat). Still, 12% of respondents reported that their transportation needs were “not met very well” (11%) or “not met at all” (1%). 4% did not answer.

Communication and Information

The most preferred method of communication is through computer, reported by 58% of respondents. Large print ranked as the second preferred information format for communication, making up 21%. It is noted that 15% of respondents had no ability to read at the survey time. A small portion (3%) of respondents preferred braille (2%) or cassette tape (1%) as a means of communication. 3% did not answer.

59% of respondents said that necessary support for education was very available (26%) or somewhat available (33%) to assist them in pursuit of education. However, 28% of respondents

indicated that support for their education was not available; 12% “not very available” and 16% “not at all available”. A relatively large portion of respondents (13%) did not answer this question.

About eight out of ten respondents (78%) were currently using a computer, laptop or tablet. But still about 19% of respondents were not using a computer, laptop or tablet. 3% did not answer similarly, when it comes to usage of assistive technology, about 77% of respondents use assistive technology. The rest (20%) of respondents do not use assistive technology. 2% did not answer. Among the 129 respondents who use assistive, 28% said they use large print. About 69% of respondents answered “other” to this question. It is found in the “other” responses that respondents used more than one type of assistive technology. (In future study, it might be better to set this question as a multi-choice question.) 2% answered “braille” and 2% did not answer.

Among the 31 respondents who don't use a computer, the most common three reasons for not using a computer included: “don't know how” (32%), “can't see the screen” (29%), and “can't afford one” (23%). About 10% of respondents said that they were not interested in using a computer. 3% of them reported that they can't type. 3% did not answer.

About three-quarters (75%) of respondents considered that computer skills were very important (68%) or somewhat important (6%) for the job market. However, 16% of respondents said that computer skills were not important at all for job market. 7% did not answer.

Less than one-fifth (17%) of respondents thought that there is a need for vocational counseling. Half of respondents (50%) said there is no need for vocational counseling. And 28% of respondents report themselves as not sure whether there is a need for vocational counseling or not. 5% did not answer.

65% of respondents chose the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) as the agency that provided them with the most help relating to visual impairment. Also, it is noted that about 11% of respondents said that more than one organization or governmental agency helped them most with issues related to visual impairment. 7% cited Perkins School for the Blind; 4% the Carroll Center for the Blind; 4% MAB Community Services; 1% Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (Learning Ally); 1% MassHire Career Center; 1% National Braille Press. 6% did not answer.

As part of the comprehensive needs assessment, MCB conducted a focus group at a consumer conference in 2017. The most mentioned needs were orientation and mobility training and promptness of services.

B. who are minorities;

- 17% of the respondents to the Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey identified themselves as members of minority groups. Their reported needs did not differ significantly from the other respondents.
- In recent years, MCB has seen an increase in African American, Hispanic, and Asian consumers as well as consumers who do not speak English fluently. For FY 2013, the RSA

minority background service indicator for MCB was .89. For FY 2019, the RSA minority background service indicator for MCB was .91. 30% of the consumers currently receiving VR services from MCB are members of minority populations.

- The agency's needs assessment studies and public hearings have for a number of years identified the lack of availability of English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction for blind persons as a very serious problem since so many ESL programs use a picture-based methodology. MCB has also continuously advocated for the availability of English as a Second Language instruction in accessible media. MCB advises ESL programs on resources for accessible instructional materials through organizations such as the American Printing House for the Blind. The agency believes that the increased partnership under WIOA with Adult Education and Literacy programs will facilitate cooperation to address this long-standing problem.

C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

Young adults between 14 and 22 years old made up 15% of the respondents. Their reported needs did not differ significantly from the other respondents. However, Congress, RSA, and MCB have clearly identified youth as an underserved group in light of their needs for pre-employment transition services and transition services. The MCB SRC agreed with the agency's proposal for a separate needs assessment survey conducted in 2016 that was been sent out for parents to fill out for this population (age 14-22) about their educational services and pre-employment transition services, transition services and vocational services. Analysis of this survey indicates that there is a clear need for pre-employment transition services. MCB plans to conduct future surveys tailored to the needs of youth and students with disabilities.

D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and

Among those who worked, only 22% of respondents used a MassHire Career Center at some level (3% "often and 19% "some"). The majority of respondents (74%) used MassHire Career Center not often (21%) or not at all (53%).

MCB's practice is to refer all VR consumers to MassHire Career Centers. MCB has, over the years, offered to place staff on-site at the centers, to provide staff training on blindness and accessibility, and to provide consultation career centers on the accessibility of materials and software. With the implementation of WIOA, the MassHire centers are more open to using MCB as a resource (rather than referring the consumer back) than they have been in the past.

E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.

Young adults between 14 and 22 years old made up 15% of the respondents. Their reported needs did not differ significantly from the other respondents. However, Congress, RSA, and MCB have clearly identified youth as an underserved group in light of their needs for pre-

employment transition services and transition services. The MCB SRC agreed with the agency's proposal for a separate needs assessment survey conducted in 2016 that was sent out for parents to fill out for this population (age 14-22) about their educational services and pre-employment transition services, transition services and vocational services. Analysis of this survey indicates that there is a clear need for pre-employment transition services. MCB plans to conduct future surveys tailored to the needs of youth and students with disabilities.

Major Findings of the 2016 Pre-Employment Transition Services Needs Assessment Survey:

AWARENESS OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES - There is a general lack of awareness among consumers and their families of the availability of pre-employment transition services:

- Only 42.7% or 50 consumers were aware of cooperation or coordination between their school and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind in providing or planning services for them.
- Only 29.2% or 33 consumers have been offered transition or pre-transition employment services by Massachusetts Commission for the Blind counselor.
- Only 28.6% or 32 consumers have been offered transition or pre-transition employment services by their school system.
- 33.3% or 39 consumers were not aware that Massachusetts students of age 14 - 22 received special education services and had Individualized Education Programs (are on an IEP) or 504 Plan which were eligible for pre-employment transition services and transition services.

LOW PARTICIPATION IN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES - Only 23.7% of the respondents were receiving vocational rehabilitation services from the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. This is despite the fact that the agency offers vocational rehabilitation services to each person registered as legally blind at the age of 14. There is a clearly a need for more effective outreach. The survey was used as an element of MCB's intensified outreach to students. In response to a question, 112 or 73.2% of the respondents indicated that they would like more information about transition and pre-employment transition services, and 83 (72.2%) of them responded that they would like to be contacted by a Massachusetts Commission for the Blind counselor. All requests were referred to the appropriate region to contact the consumer.

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

Massachusetts has numerous well-regarded community rehabilitation programs. There are several that specialize in serving persons who are blind or visually impaired: the Perkins School for the Blind, the Carroll Center for the Blind, the Lowell Association for the Blind, and MAB Community Services. In the 2018 Comprehensive Needs Assessment, respondents were asked: "What organization or governmental agency provides you with the most help relating to your visual impairment?" While 65% of respondents named MCB as the organization that provides

the most help relating to their visual impairment, 7% named the Perkins School. Others named Carroll Center for the Blind (4%), MAB Community Services (4%), but 11% of respondents received help relating to their visual impairment from other organizations that were not listed.

3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Young adults between 14 and 22 years old made up 15% of the respondents. Their reported needs did not differ significantly from the other respondents. However, Congress, RSA, and MCB have clearly identified youth as an underserved group in light of their needs for pre-employment transition services and transition services. The MCB SRC agreed with the agency's proposal for a separate needs assessment survey conducted in 2016 that was been sent out for parents to fill out for this population (age 14-22) about their educational services and pre-employment transition services, transition services and vocational services. Analysis of this survey indicates that there is a clear need for pre-employment transition services. MCB plans to conduct future surveys tailored to the needs of youth and students with disabilities.

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k. Annual Estimates

Describe:

1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;

The number of potentially eligible legally blind persons in Massachusetts is approximately 26,000, the number of persons currently registered as legally blind; approximately, 65% of the registrants are aged 65 and older.

2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

A. The VR Program;

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind estimates that approximately 1,300 legally blind individuals per year will receive VR services as active consumers during FFY 2021. In October 2017, MCB established a new eligible category for individuals with low vision with a progressive visual impairment (including dual sensory loss) and a diagnosis leading to legal blindness. MCB shall provide all VR services to individuals who qualify for services under the low vision category in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as most recently amended. This improves the opportunity for the caseload to grow substantially. The definition of legal blindness in Massachusetts is: A person is legally blind if his/her visual acuity is, with correction, 20/200 or less in the better eye, or if, regardless of visual acuity, the peripheral field of his/her vision is reduced to a radius of 10 degrees or less. The definition for the new category includes a visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after best correction, due to a condition that is expected to lead to legal blindness; or a visual field no greater than 40 degrees' radius in the better eye with correction, due to a condition that is expected to lead to legal blindness.

B. The Supported Employment Program; and

It is estimated that 15-25 individuals with the most significant disabilities will be provided with Supported Employment services.

C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

The projected annual cost of services for FFY 2021 will be approximately \$10,700,000. About \$7,000,000 will be from Section 110, the Basic Vocational Rehabilitation Program. In the event federal funds for Supported Employment are not available in FFY 2021, MCB will utilize federal and state vocational rehabilitation funds instead.

I. State Goals and Priorities

The designated State unit must:

1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

Goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind State Rehabilitation Council

2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

MCB State Plan Goals and Priorities Jointly Developed with the Rehabilitation Council 2019

Goal I: To have sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

Priorities include, but are not limited to:

Monitor the agency budget and regularly advocate full funding of the VR program to ensure that in the years ahead the MCB can carry out its obligations to its many consumers. A measure for evaluation is the amount of state vocational rehabilitation funds appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature.

Monitor the allocation of funds for the Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program and the Supported Employment Program. A measure for evaluation is the amount of state funds appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature for the agency's state-funded Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program. Some of these funds are used for on-going supported employment services after VR services are completed.

Goal II: To develop more employment options for VR consumers, including supported employment, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council’s annual evaluation of the agency’s progress toward the goal.

Priorities include, but are not limited to:

Develop and implement plans to increase training opportunities for transition and pre-employment transition) consumers who are not going to college.

Continue and expand the agency’s internship program for legally blind students and youth who are attending college and high school graduates who are not going to college or who are “out of school” youth with the result that the number of students and youth participating increases each year. Coordinate the agency’s internship program with other pre-employment transition services.

Expand and develop a wide range of pre-employment transition services to enhance transition and employment opportunities for students who are legally blind and for potentially eligible students with disabilities as mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Devote re-allotment funds to the continuance of the “Employment Now Initiative” program that has demonstrated a high success rate for employment outcomes for its participants.

Coordinate with the other components of the statewide workforce development system to better enable them to provide appropriate assistance to individuals who are legally blind by: recommending and helping to fund appropriate assistive technologies for MassHire Career Centers; offering to provide all MassHire Career Centers with guidance regarding their accessibility to visually-impaired consumers; providing on-site VR services to legally blind consumers who have scheduled appointments at MassHire Career Centers; providing training about blindness and visual impairment to the workforce development agencies; providing consultation to workforce development staff; working with workforce development agencies to develop apprenticeship and on-the-job training opportunities for legally blind consumers; identify job-driven training opportunities for legally blind consumers; and developing an improved referral process among the partner agencies.

Goal III: Increase Outreach to Enroll Additional Eligible VR Consumers Statewide based upon estimates that a significant number of qualifying consumers are not presently enrolled.

Priorities, including, but not limited to:

Establish additional mediums for creating increased MCB exposure by:

- o Back fill the MCB Research Analyst position to help guide MCB to identify and reach out to unenrolled qualifying MA consumers.
- o Fill current opening for MCB Marketing and Communications position.

- o Explore the use of RSA Innovation and Expansion funding to increase outreach.
- o Reevaluate the effectiveness of the present methodologies for conducting MCB consumer satisfaction surveys, and adjust, as appropriate.

Explore the outcomes derived from the present Peer Mentoring program to determine the potential value for expanding the program.

Recruit and train successful MCB VR alumni as ambassadors to conduct outreach to unenrolled consumers.

Goal IV: To help legally blind persons, including students and potentially eligible students, to develop and increase the independence needed to be successful in competitive employment, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

Priorities:

Advocate and educate consumers and public officials on pedestrian safety issues which impact travel by pedestrians who use a white cane or service dog to seek and maintain employment.

Advocate for better access to and improvement of public transportation and paratransit systems in order to increase the employment outcomes of persons who are legally blind.

Increase access to computers and basic keyboarding skills in order to enable more MCB registered consumers to acquire elementary job readiness skills.

Increase consumers' access to adaptive equipment as measured by the number served by the agency's Technology for the Blind Unit or referred to the Carroll Center's training program.

Increase pre-employment transition, transition, and college students' access to educational materials, resources and websites.

Increase and adjust Assistive Technology training for working age MCB consumers to support those currently working to maintain or advance their employment opportunities.

Improve job readiness technology skills for those MCB consumers hoping to enter or reenter the competitive workforce.

Advocate for improved accessibility of federal and state government and private internet sites and documents.

Goal V: Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of vocational rehabilitation services delivery, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council’s annual evaluation of the agency’s progress toward the goal.

Priorities include, but are not limited to:

Annually review the agency performance on RSA standards and indicators and on other statistical measures of effectiveness and recommend actions to improve performance when appropriate.

Improve communication and collaboration between VR counselors in MCB’s regional offices and VR counselors in MCB’s Deaf-Blind Extended Support Unit to enhance services to consumers.

Improve communication and collaboration among MCB staff (VR counselors, children’s service workers and social workers) in order to facilitate services to pre-employment transition consumers who have reached their fourteenth birthday and to identify on a case by case basis the most appropriate departments within MCB and programs offered by service providers to meet these individuals’ needs.

Improve communication and collaboration between MCB VR counselors and all other state, federal, contracted and private agencies providing technology, vocational training and employment services to MCB consumers, including eligible and potentially eligible pre-employment transition consumers.

Provide appropriate after-school assistive technology and orientation and mobility services as pre-employment transition services to eligible and potentially eligible middle and high school students.

Provide appropriate job exploration and counseling pre-employment transition services such as mentorships and exposure to real life career information.

Provide appropriate work readiness pre-employment transition services in areas such as financial management, budgeting, and social skills.

3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

The goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;

The Rehabilitation Council (MCB RC) has continued to review the consumer satisfaction studies and the comprehensive needs assessment on a routine basis and the members and the agency have used them in developing the goals and priorities.

B. the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and

The agency and the Rehabilitation Council look forward to using the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA and the baseline measurements when developed in conjunction with RSA. WIOA and its state plan requirements have been discussed at each quarterly meeting of the Rehabilitation Council since its enactment. The agency and the council have developed new goals and priorities and plans for innovation and expansion based on the law.

C. other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

The agency and the Rehabilitation Council used the results of their review of consumer satisfaction studies and reports of the effectiveness of the VR program and the agency's performance on the RSA Standards and Indicators in their development of the goals and priorities.

m. Order of Selection

Describe:

1. Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection. If so, describe:

A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

B. The justification for the order.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

C. The service and outcome goals.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds.

1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.

One of MCB's major goals for FY 2021 is to expand provision of supported employment services, particularly to students and youth with disabilities. This will be a formal, explicit FY 2021 objective for each VR manager overseeing the delivery of direct consumer services and will be incorporated into his or her individualized goals and objectives document for the year. It is projected that a number of additional consumers (statewide) will be evaluated for their potential participation in supported employment programming and 20-30 of them will be appropriately served under the Supported Employment Program.

MCB will increase its outreach efforts to individuals with blindness and intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, acquired brain injury including individuals not eligible for the extended supports from the Department of Mental Health or the Department of Developmental Services. The clarification that MCB consumers who have been rehabilitated into competitive integrated supported employment will be eligible to receive funding for on-going supports under the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's state-funded Extended Ongoing Supports Program will be extremely helpful.

The agency has during the past several years created several new positions in its Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Unit. A major objective of MCB's Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Unit is to better provide specialized, intensive VR services to a group of multi-disabled consumers who are thought to be currently underserved; these are consumers who are not deaf or intellectually disabled, but have very significant disabilities such as mental illness or brain injury in addition to blindness. Emphasis on serving deaf-blind and deaf-blind and intellectually disabled consumers who are leaving Special Education programs provided by the public schools and providing appropriate adult services, including supported employment, will continue. The agency's Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Unit has a goal that fifteen such consumers will be served under Title VI programming in FFY 2021.

The agency's experience indicates that supported employment can be a very effective service for deaf-blind consumers and also for consumers with blindness and multiple disabilities. In past years, MCB has been involved with several other agencies, including the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, in a successful effort to expand the number of providers of supported employment services. This effort has resulted in more choices for consumers; performance-based contracting has been adopted as an incentive to promptness and flexibility in service provision and to successful outcomes. While MCB has provided staff training on supported employment a number of times over the years, the agency has many new VR

counselors. The agency, in collaboration with the TACE Center, conducted a training program on supported employment for all VR staff in November 2014 and will repeat this training over the next several years.

MCB will distribute any FFY 2021 Title VI resources from a centrally located blanket service contract, which has been established within the Deputy Commissioner budget center. This instrument enables MCB to encumber funds for authorized supported employment services with a wide variety of community-based vendors located in any of our six regional areas.

2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:

A. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and

As stated in the previous section:

One of MCB's major goals for FY 2021 is to expand provision of supported employment services, particularly to students and youth with disabilities. This will be a formal, explicit FY 2021 objective for each VR manager overseeing the delivery of direct consumer services and will be incorporated into his or her individualized goals and objectives document for the year.

B. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.

As stated in a previous section: The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) have over the years worked cooperatively with MCB and provided extended services to a number of legally blind persons that have been provided supported employment services by MCB. A Memorandum of Agreement that includes provisions for use of joint agency resources to ensure quality service delivery and long term supports for supported employment was executed in November 2015. This includes a formal commitment of funding from MCB for appropriate supported employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long-term, ongoing employment support services when needed. The agreement also provides for cross-training of staff.

o. State's Strategies

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

Goal I: To have sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

Priorities include, but are not limited to:

Monitor the agency budget and regularly advocate full funding of the VR program to ensure that in the years ahead the MCB can carry out its obligations to its many consumers. A measure for evaluation is the amount of state vocational rehabilitation funds appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature.

Monitor the allocation of funds for the Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program and the Supported Employment Program. A measure for evaluation is the amount of state funds appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature for the agency's state-funded Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program. Some of these funds are used for on-going supported employment services after VR services are completed.

Measurement Methodology:

- The Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.
- The agency's success in maintaining or increasing its state budget.

Goal II: To develop more employment options for VR consumers, including supported employment, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

Priorities include, but are not limited to:

Develop and implement plans to increase training opportunities for transition and pre-employment transition) consumers who are not going to college.

Continue and expand the agency's internship program for legally blind students and youth who are attending college and high school graduates who are not going to college or who are "out of school" youth with the result that the number of students and youth participating increases each year. Coordinate the agency's internship program with other pre-employment transition services.

Expand and develop a wide range of pre-employment transition services to enhance transition and employment opportunities for students who are legally blind and for potentially eligible students with disabilities as mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Devote re-allotment funds to the continuance of the "Employment Now Initiative" program that has demonstrated a high success rate for employment outcomes for its participants.

Coordinate with the other components of the statewide workforce development system to better enable them to provide appropriate assistance to individuals who are legally blind by: recommending and helping to fund appropriate assistive technologies for MassHire Career Centers; offering to provide all MassHire Career Centers with guidance regarding their accessibility to visually-impaired consumers; providing on-site VR services to legally blind consumers who have scheduled appointments at MassHire Career Centers; providing training about blindness and visual impairment to the workforce development agencies; providing consultation to workforce development staff; working with workforce development agencies to develop apprenticeship and on-the-job training opportunities for legally blind consumers; identify job-driven training opportunities for legally blind consumers; and developing an improved referral process among the partner agencies.

Measurement Methodology:

- The Rehabilitation Council’s annual evaluation of the agency’s progress toward the goal.
- The number of consumers who complete the agency’s internship program.
- The number of students who participate in pre-employment transition services.

Goal III: Increase Outreach to Enroll Additional Eligible VR Consumers Statewide based upon estimates that a significant number of qualifying consumers are not presently enrolled.

Priorities, including, but not limited to:

Establish additional mediums for creating increased MCB exposure by:

- o Back fill the MCB Research Analyst position to help guide MCB to identify and reach out to unenrolled qualifying MA consumers.
- o Fill current opening for MCB Marketing and Communications position.
- o Explore the use of RSA Innovation and Expansion funding to increase outreach.
- o Reevaluate the effectiveness of the present methodologies for conducting MCB consumer satisfaction surveys, and adjust, as appropriate.

Explore the outcomes derived from the present Peer Mentoring program to determine the potential value for expanding the program.

Recruit and train successful MCB VR alumni as ambassadors to conduct outreach to unenrolled consumers.

Measurement Methodology:

- The Rehabilitation Council’s annual evaluation of the agency’s progress toward the goal.

- The number of applicants for services.

Goal IV: To help legally blind persons, including students and potentially eligible students, to develop and increase the independence needed to be successful in competitive employment, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

Priorities:

Advocate and educate consumers and public officials on pedestrian safety issues which impact travel by pedestrians who use a white cane or service dog to seek and maintain employment.

Advocate for better access to and improvement of public transportation and paratransit systems in order to increase the employment outcomes of persons who are legally blind.

Increase access to computers and basic keyboarding skills in order to enable more MCB registered consumers to acquire elementary job readiness skills.

Increase consumers' access to adaptive equipment as measured by the number served by the agency's Technology for the Blind Unit or referred to the Carroll Center's training program.

Increase pre-employment transition, transition, and college students' access to educational materials, resources and websites.

Increase and adjust Assistive Technology training for working age MCB consumers to: Support those currently working to maintain or advance their employment opportunities.

Improve job readiness technology skills for those MCB consumers hoping to enter or reenter the competitive workforce.

Advocate for improved accessibility of federal and state government and private internet sites and documents.

Measurement Methodology:

- The Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.
- The number of consumers who are provided with assistive technology services.

Goal V: Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of vocational rehabilitation services delivery, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

Priorities include, but are not limited to:

Annually review the agency performance on RSA standards and indicators and on other statistical measures of effectiveness and recommend actions to improve performance when appropriate.

Improve communication and collaboration between VR counselors in MCB's regional offices and VR counselors in MCB's Deaf-Blind Extended Support Unit to enhance services to consumers.

Improve communication and collaboration among MCB staff (VR counselors, children's service workers and social workers) in order to facilitate services to pre-employment transition consumers who have reached their fourteenth birthday and to identify on a case by case basis the most appropriate departments within MCB and programs offered by service providers to meet these individuals' needs.

Improve communication and collaboration between MCB VR counselors and all other state, federal, contracted and private agencies providing technology, vocational training and employment services to MCB consumers, including eligible and potentially eligible pre-employment transition consumers.

Provide appropriate after-school assistive technology and orientation and mobility services as pre-employment transition services to eligible and potentially eligible middle and high school students.

Provide appropriate job exploration and counseling pre-employment transition services such as mentorships and exposure to real life career information.

Provide appropriate work readiness pre-employment transition services in areas such as financial management, budgeting, and social skills.

Measurement Methodology:

- The Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.
- The number of consumers who are provided with pre-employment transition services.

2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.

Relevant strategies listed in the previous section:

- Increase consumers' access to adaptive equipment as measured by the number served by the agency's Technology for the Blind Unit.
- Increase pre-employment transition, transition, and college students' access to educational materials, resources and websites.
- Advocate for improved accessibility of federal and state government and private internet sites and documents.

- Improve communication and collaboration between MCB VR counselors and all other state, federal, contracted and private agencies providing technology, vocational training and employment services to MCB consumers, including eligible and potentially eligible pre-employment transition consumers.
- Provide appropriate after-school assistive technology and orientation and mobility services as pre-employment transition services to eligible and potentially eligible middle and high school students.

3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

- The agency has long placed a high priority on outreach to minority and underserved persons. The agency has for some years had a Diversity Committee within the agency. The committee consists of the Commissioner (or designee), the Director of Communications, vocational rehabilitation counselors, Human Resources Liaison, representatives of the agency Staff Development Unit, and support staff. The goal of the committee is to increase access to services for multi-cultural and minority consumers. The Diversity Committee has participated in the development of the curriculum for agency diversity training and has promoted staff attendance at community conferences which address issues relevant to provision of services to specific groups such as immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Cambodia.
- One strategy which the Diversity Committee uses is to invite the staffs of community groups with which the agency would like to develop closer relationships to attend brown bag events at MCB and share information and recommendations about outreach to minority group members who are legally blind.
- Regional staff identify agencies and associations serving minority communities throughout the state and attend health fairs, church groups and other community events relevant to members of minority communities. MCB is listed in the Boston Community Health Education Center Resource Guide which leads to invitations to attend events to promote the agency's services among Boston's minority communities.
- The agency's needs assessment studies and public hearings have for a number of years identified the lack of availability of ESL instruction for blind persons as a very serious problem since so many ESL programs use a picture-based methodology. A Massachusetts consumer group, the Association of Blind Citizens, has developed an audio (tape and CD) ESL course for blind and visually impaired persons. It has been shared with several ESL programs. MCB has continuously advocated for the availability of English as a Second Language instruction in accessible media. MCB advises ESL programs on resources for accessible instructional materials through organizations such as the American Printing House for the Blind. The agency believes that the increased partnership under WIOA with Adult Education and Literacy programs will facilitate cooperation to address this long-standing problem.
- The agency's Staff Development Unit has for a number of years worked to assist staff to better address the needs of traditionally underserved minority groups. A training program on cultural diversity and rehabilitation issues is offered to vocational rehabilitation staff.

In addition, the Director of Communications continues to arrange periodic luncheon seminars for staff on topics relevant to provision of services to minority populations.

4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).

Relevant strategies and methods:

- Develop and implement plans to increase training opportunities for transition and pre-employment transition consumers who are not going to college.
- Continue and expand the agency's internship program for legally blind students and youth who are attending college and high school graduates who are not going to college or out-of-school youth with the result that the number of students and youth who participate increases each year. Coordinate the agency's internship program with other pre-employment transition services.
- Expand and develop a wide range of pre-employment transition services to enhance transition and employment opportunities for students who are legally blind and for potentially eligible students with disabilities as mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- Increase pre-employment transition, transition, and college students' access to educational materials, resources and websites.
- Improve communication and collaboration among MCB staff (VR counselors, children's service workers and social workers) in order to facilitate services to pre-employment transition consumers who have reached their fourteenth birthday and to identify on a case by case basis the most appropriate departments within MCB to meet these individuals' needs.
- Improve communication and collaboration between MCB VR counselors and all other state, federal, contracted and private agencies providing technology, vocational training and employment services to MCB consumers, including eligible and potentially eligible pre-employment transition consumers.
- Provide appropriate after-school assistive technology and orientation and mobility services as pre-employment transition services to eligible and potentially eligible middle and high school students.
- Provide appropriate job exploration and counseling pre-employment transition services such as mentorships and exposure to real life career information.
- Provide appropriate work readiness pre-employment transition services in areas such as financial management, budgeting, and social skills.

The RC supported MCB's statewide event held in June 2018 for providers of Pre-ETS Services to come together and learn about PRE-ETS requirements. There is a lack of coordination of Special Education in the Commonwealth which is complicated by the fact that there are more than 350 local school districts, in addition to numerous independent private school organizations. On March 22, 2019 the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) held it fourth MCB Visions of Collaboration Conference for Teachers of the Visually Impaired, MCB

VR counselors and supervisors, and other special education staff. One hundred and fifty professionals attended - a 19% increase from the 2018 conference. The focus of the conference was on Skills for Success in Work and Life: Pre-Employment Transition Services for Students with Visual Impairments. The agenda included presentations on self-advocacy; employer needs; pre-employment programs and services offered by MCB; and preparing for college. Employers, special education staff, students, and MCB staff were among the presenters. The participant evaluations were very positive.

5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

Not applicable.

6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

Annually review the agency performance on RSA standards and indicators, performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA, and on other statistical measures of effectiveness and recommend actions to improve performance when appropriate.

7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

Relevant strategies:

Assist the other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals who are legally blind by: offering to provide all MassHire Career Centers with an evaluation of their accessibility to visually-impaired consumers; providing on-site VR services to legally blind consumers who have scheduled appointments at MassHire Career Centers; providing training about blindness and visual impairment to the workforce development agencies; providing consultation to workforce development staff; working with workforce development agencies to develop apprenticeship and on-the-job training opportunities for legally blind consumers; identify job-driven training opportunities for legally blind consumers; and developing an improved referral process among the partner agencies.

In 2017, MCB along with other WIOA partners entered into an MOU with MassHire Career Centers. Under the MOU, access to MCB programs, services, and resources will be made available at all MassHire Career Centers. Local areas will determine how MCB programs and services are accessed through the MassHire Career Centers based on the volume of customers and the availability of MCB staff. Legally Blind and visually impaired consumers will receive access to MCB services at the MassHire Career Centers in one or more of the following ways:

- MassHire Career Center staff will be appropriately trained to provide information to legally blind and visually impaired consumers about programs, services, and activities available through MCB.

- MassHire Career Center staff will make a direct link between the legally blind and visually impaired consumer and MCB staff to schedule an appointment, or to receive useful information about programs and services.
- Based on need, MCB staff will be physically present at the MassHire Career Center to provide services.
- MCB will support an integrated service delivery strategy in which MassHire Career Center staff will provide Career Center services to legally blind and visually impaired customers by:
- Assisting the Local Boards with training MassHire Career Center staff to use assistive technology with visually-impaired or legally blind consumers who seek career center services.
- Providing training to MassHire Center staff on accessibility requirements for legally blind and visually impaired consumers.
- Assisting with accommodations related to workshops for legally blind and visually impaired consumers.
- Providing training to MassHire Career Center staff so that staff have basic knowledge of programs, services, and resources available through MCB.
- Ensuring that MCB Employment Services Representatives and MassHire Centers Business Service Representatives collaborate so that legally blind and visually impaired consumers receive appropriate job matching by reviewing consumers skills, communicating employer qualifications and organization culture, and sharing employer contacts.
- Providing sensitivity training to MassHire Centers staff.

MCB believes that these strategies will significantly improve consumer access and utilization of career center services.

Since apprenticeships have seldom been available to legally blind consumers, MCB continues to research information available through the Massachusetts Division of Apprenticeship Standards, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, and other vocational rehabilitation agencies to learn more about apprenticeships for legally blind persons and how to access opportunities through the Massachusetts Apprenticeship Initiative (MAI) or other resources in Massachusetts and New England.

8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:

A. achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;

The Rehabilitation Council (MCB RC) has continued to review the consumer satisfaction studies conducted and the comprehensive needs assessment on a routine basis and the members and the agency have used them in developing the goals and priorities.

B. support innovation and expansion activities; and

C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

The agency has long placed a high priority on outreach to minority and underserved persons. The agency has for some years had a Diversity Committee within the agency. The committee consists of the Commissioner, the Director of Communications, vocational rehabilitation counselors, representatives of the agency Staff Development Unit, and support staff. The goal of the committee is to increase access to services for multi-cultural and minority consumers. The Diversity Committee has participated in the development of the curriculum for agency diversity training and has promoted staff attendance at community conferences which address issues relevant to provision of services to specific groups such as immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa and Cambodia. One strategy which the Diversity Committee uses is to invite the staffs of community groups with which the agency would like to develop closer relationships to attend luncheons at MCB and share information and recommendations about outreach to minority group members who are legally blind.

The agency has two Rehabilitation Teachers who are fluent in Spanish, and another Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor who is fluent in both Albanian and Greek languages. One VR supervisor speaks French and the language of the Congo; one speaks Italian. MCB also has one staff member is fluent in Polish and another staff member is fluent in Kiswahili. MCB VR counselors who work with deaf-blind individuals are proficient in American Sign Language.

The agency has access to the Language Line interpreter service in all its offices to assist counselors in working with consumers who speak all languages, especially uncommon ones. Language Line offers interpretation of more than 140 languages. For home visits, MCB contracts with Catholic Charities for language interpreters in the community who can interpret languages such as Khmer, Chinese, French, Russian, Polish, Croatian, Vietnamese, and Spanish.

In 2017, MCB developed an electronic brochure of services. The list of services organized by topic was recorded and has been made available on a thumb drive as well as on a cartridge. In addition, the information is being recorded and will be made available on YouTube through a link on the MCB website. The goal is for prospective consumers to receive information on MCB services before they leave an eye professional's office after a diagnosis of legal blindness or visual impairment. MCB will distribute the thumb drives and cartridges statewide with special emphasis on targeted underserved regions of the state as well as on collaboration with minority organizations to distribute them to their members. By using different avenues to get the information out, MCB anticipates attracting prospective consumers and getting them engaged in VR services and closing the information access gap. MCB has also developed a Request for Response (RFR) for a project of outreach to both consumers and employers. The RFR seeks a consultant with integrated marketing skills expertise to recommend and implement an ad campaign across various media to target employers, MCB consumers, and eye professionals. The multi-faceted goals of this are to reach employers who we can potentially partner with in the future to increase successful and rewarding employment for consumers. Additionally, we want to elevate awareness in the low vision and blind community of the services that we provide for our consumers and to encourage the legally blind to engage with MCB so that we can better assist them.

p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals

Describe:

1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

The following is an evaluation of the extent to which the MCB VR program goals described in the previously approved VR services portion of the Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year, 2019, were achieved.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind worked with the Rehabilitation Council on the mutually agreed upon goals and the use of Title I funds for innovation and expansion activities. The narrative interwoven with the goals below provides a report of progress in achieving the VR program goals; it describes factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities, to the extent they were not achieved, and provides a report on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized in the preceding year. One baseline for evaluation is a survey of MCB RC members' annual evaluation of progress towards the goals.

Goal I: To have sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

Priorities

- Monitor annually the budget and regularly advocate full funding of the VR program to ensure that in the years ahead the MCB can carry out its obligations to its many consumers. A measure for evaluation is the amount of state vocational rehabilitation funds appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature.
- Monitor annually the allocation of funds for the Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program and the Supported Employment Program. A measure for evaluation is the amount of state funds appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature for the agency state-funded Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program. Some of these funds are used for on-going supported employment services after VR services are completed.

Report of Progress: The agency has had sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals during PY 2019 as well as projected for PY 2020. The Massachusetts Legislature has continued to fund the agency's VR program sufficient to match federal funds. The Rehabilitation Council expresses interest in advocating for increased vocational rehabilitation funding at the state level. For the SFY 2020, there is more than sufficient state match. The SFY 2020 state appropriation for the state-funded Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program is enough to cover the need for more residential services for those consumers who are turning age 22. This program provides residential and day services, including on-going supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

MCB RC Evaluation: In FY 2018, members rated the agency's progress as Very Good (4 out of 5).

Goal II: To develop more employment options for VR consumers, including supported employment, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

Priorities

- Develop and implement plans to increase training opportunities for transition-age consumers who are not going to college.
- Continue and refine the agency's internship program for legally blind students who are attending college; explore ways to expand the program to include recent high school graduates who are not going to college with the result that the number of students participating increases each year.

Report of Progress:

- The development of increased training opportunities for transition-age consumers who are not going to college continues to be a major focus area.
- In 2015, MCB partnered with Massachusetts Eye and Ear and Cambridge Health Alliance to become the first agency for the blind to launch Project SEARCH, a successful national 9-month program for individuals with disabilities that provides internship experiences. Between 2015 and 2019 there have been 30 participants with 21 of them achieving employment, resulting in an 70% employment outcome rate. In 2019, drawing on this successful experience, the agency developed the Employment Now initiative which is similar to Project SEARCH but is locally managed by the agency and two non-profit providers. The Employment Now initiative is a model that moves vocational rehabilitation consumers on a fast track to employment. The goal is to combine internships or work experiences with the support of an onsite job coach while conducting an active job search. Job development for the specific consumer takes place during internships or work experiences so that transition from the internship to a paying job will occur without long gaps of unemployment. Of the eight consumers who have participated during 2019, six have achieved full-time employment. Massachusetts Eye and Ear and Cambridge Health Alliance have remained as partners. MCB is also seeking to recruit partners in other industries since hospitals tend to have large, proprietary information systems that can be difficult to make accessible to all legally blind consumers.
- The Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Unit has one counselor who provides specialized, intensive VR services to a group of multi-disabled consumers who are thought to be currently underserved; these are consumers who are not deaf or intellectually disabled, but have very significant disabilities such as mental illness or brain injury in addition to blindness.

During the past five years, MCB has participated in several hiring events with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission that were sponsored by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). Federal contractors are required to set a hiring goal of having 7% of their employees drawn from qualified workers with disabilities. MCB

continues, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, to maintain dialogue with OFCCP and has participated in several of its in-service training programs.

- In 2017, with a technical assistance grant from RSA, the Job Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical assistance (JDVRTAC), MCB operationalized VisionWorks Consortium which consists of MCB, the Carroll Center for the Blind, and the Perkins School for the Blind. The three organizations that are a part of the consortium pooled their employer contacts into a centralized database to track the business partner engagement to increase employment opportunities for job seekers who are visually impaired.
- For the past several years, agency staff has regularly conducted a four-hour course of soft skills training for prospective student interns and job-ready consumers. Soft skills are those interpersonal skills such as cooperativeness, politeness, and friendliness that enhance an individual's on-the-job interactions, job performance and career prospects. The training takes place in regional offices, making attendance more convenient for consumers. The subjects covered are: resumes and cover letters, interviewing, work place behaviors, personal grooming, networking, and disclosure of one's disability. In addition, for those job-ready consumers who do not need soft skills training, different courses are held for them such as networking and how to get onto LinkedIn. MCB intends to enhance and expand this training by developing a series of intensive soft skills "boot camp" training video sessions. MCB will develop copies in different formats that can be used for webinar series and other social media platforms.
- Recognizing that many employers are now using telephone interviews to screen applicants, the agency for several years has contracted with Phone Interview Pro, a company that provides consumers with a thirty-minute interview that simulates an actual interview with an experienced corporate evaluator. The consumer and the counselor are then provided with a detailed, personalized report of the interview that identifies strengths and areas that need improvement. A second interview is then arranged to give the consumer the opportunity to practice what he or she has learned from the first interview. MCB counselors have referred approximately 35 consumers to undergo this evaluation during FY 2014. The majority of the consumers find the experience to be very beneficial.
 - o MCB also provides a one-day Essential Skills Training for transition-age youth. This training covers soft skills and other career development skills for younger consumers. Based on feedback from consumers and counselors, this training has been expanded to offer consumers more opportunities to interact with employers and to include other pre-employment transition components such as occupational information and career exploration.
 - o MCB's summer internship program is a long-established job preparation model that supports college-age and nontraditional students, all of whom are legally blind, to acquire work experience. In 2019, the program reached its 16th year and involved 80 participants. During the program's 16-year span, there have been approximately 1,000 internship opportunities with 400 private and public business partners.

o MCB is a founding member of the Perkins Business Partnership (PBP) which is an alliance between Perkins and some of the region's best-known businesses and nonprofits that is working to break down barriers to employment and expand opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. Through conversations with employers across the Commonwealth, the PBP is striving to raise awareness and motivate businesses to create work environments that are inclusive and accessible to all.

MCB RC Evaluation: In FY 2018, members rated the agency's progress as Good/Very Good (3.6 out of 5).

Goal III: To help legally blind persons to increase their independence, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

Priorities:

- Advocate and educate consumers and public officials on pedestrian safety issues which impact pedestrians who are legally blind and issues regarding laws pertaining to the white cane and the use of service dogs;
- Advocate for better access to, and improvement of, public transportation and paratransit systems throughout the Commonwealth.
- Increase consumers' access to adaptive equipment as measured by the number served each year by the agency's Technology for the Blind Unit.
- Increase students' access to accessible textbooks.
- Advocate for improved accessibility of federal and state government documents and internet sites.

Report of Progress:

In recent years, MCB has collaborated with the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) around White Cane Safety Law, and as a result, the RMV included white cane and use of service dog flyers in two separate mailings. They also ran public service announcements (PSAs) on electronic billboards on four major highways across the state. Building on the momentum, MCB worked with a local Cable Access network to produce a television PSA that promotes white cane safety and the Massachusetts White Cane Law.

- The agency has been able to increase consumers' access to both adaptive equipment and accessible textbooks during PY 2018 and PY 2019. The agency's Technology for the Blind Unit will serve approximately 1,200 VR consumers during FFY 2020. The staff of the unit includes a technology specialist who is able to provide extended training in Word, Outlook, and basic navigation and eight rehabilitation engineers.
- The agency continues to enhance the independence and educational and vocational potential of blind children by providing adaptive equipment and software on a limited basis to elementary and middle-school aged children under its state-funded social services program. These services enable these young consumers to transition to pre-transition employment and vocational rehabilitation services at age 14 with the same level of technical skill as their sighted peers. In addition, MCB has revised its policies

under the vocational rehabilitation program (in line with RSA regulations and guidance) to provide more adaptive equipment and training to pre-employment transition consumers to allow them to access and improve their work readiness, vocational, and independent living skills when they are not in school.

- MCB has been working with providers to develop new options for pre-employment transition services. The Carroll Center for the Blind, Polus Center, Lowell Association for the Blind, Perkins, and Our Space, Our Place have developed work readiness programs to address several needs. Example: Pre-ETS participants had a chance to participate in a hands-on culinary arts program where they explored careers in the culinary field.

MCB RC Evaluation: In FY 2018, members rated the agency's progress as Very Good (4.4 out of 5).

Goal IV: Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of vocational rehabilitation services delivery, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

Priorities:

- Review annually the agency performance on RSA standards and indicators, WIOA performance measurements, and on other statistical measures of effectiveness and to recommend actions to improve performance when appropriate.
- Improve communication among all MCB VR staff between VR counselors in MCB regional offices and VR counselors in the MCB Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Unit to enhance services to consumers who would otherwise not receive necessary services.
- Improve communication among MCB staff (VR counselors, children's service workers and social workers) in order to facilitate services to consumers who have reached their fourteenth birthday and to identify on a case-by-case basis the most appropriate department within MCB to meet these individuals' needs.
- Improve and maintain ongoing communication between MCB VR counselors and all other state, federal, contracted and private agencies providing technology, vocational training and employment services to MCB consumers, including those individuals with other disabilities in addition to blindness.

Report of Progress

- In 2017, MCB migrated to a new case management system, AWARE which is currently used by over 38 VR state agencies and 24 tribal nations. This system has the capacity to generate statistical reports to help counselors, management, and Rehabilitation Council members to evaluate the agency's effectiveness. MCB continues to work with the vendor to develop improved specific statistical reports for both the MCB management and the Rehabilitation Council, including those required for the new WIOA performance measurements and the new RSA-911 reporting requirements for PY 2020.
- The MCB RC members currently annually review the agency's performance on statistical measures of effectiveness as well as the agency's consumer satisfaction studies. The

agency's performance on RSA standards and indicators has at all times met the minimum level of overall performance established by RSA.

- MCB has addressed the priority to facilitate services to consumers who have reached their fourteenth birthday and to identify on a case by case basis the most appropriate unit within MCB by developing a comprehensive assessment form for children's workers to complete. In addition, MCB and DESE have jointly developed a technical advisory to educate TVIs, OandM instructors and other special education representatives on eligibility requirements for Pre-ETS including for those who are potentially eligible, making these services accessible to all youth with disabilities.
- The agency holds several College Nights each year throughout the state for students who are considering attending college. Their families are also invited. The purpose is to orient the students to MCB services, college disability services, etc. and to answer their questions. MCB also holds a half-day orientation session each spring in Greater Boston for those consumers who intend to begin college in the fall.
- MCB has developed a transition form to improve services to adolescents and their transition to adult services and to improve communication among the involved staff when the child turns 14. MCB Children's Workers and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors often make joint visits to the adolescent and parents to help the family to develop a roadmap for the child's services going forward. Consultations with agency rehabilitation teachers, mobility specialists, and technology specialists are also offered to the consumer and family.
- MCB has committed in the statewide Memorandum of Understanding to participate in teams to be established comprised of individuals who are empowered to represent the core partner agency for the purpose of developing and executing local MOUs, modeled on the state MOU.

MCB RC Evaluation: In FY 2018, members rated the agency's progress as Good/Very Good (3.8 out of 5).

MCB has reviewed its performance on the national Standards and Indicators each year since the implementation of these standards and indicators many years ago. Analysis of the indicators has identified areas for improvement in the agency's performance. The agency is pleased to note that its rehabilitants earn one of the highest average wage levels of all the state vocational rehabilitation programs. The agency has attained one of the highest average wage levels since those standards and indicators were implemented some years ago.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Long-standing problems and factors that impede the achievement of the goals and priorities include:

- public transportation systems and pedestrian safety issues which limit access to employment and some vocational rehabilitation services
- students' access to accessible textbooks
- accessibility of documents and internet sites needed to obtain and retain employment

- employer attitudes toward blindness
- inaccessible information systems used by many large employers

Report of Progress:

- In 2016, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's piloted a program between the Ride (the Ride service provides paratransit, or supplemental transportation, to disabled customers), Uber and Lyft. Those eligible for the Ride became eligible to take part in the program where they could use a ride-hailing service any time at a lower cost. In 2017, a review showed that more than 10,000 rides covering 45,000 miles in 133 zip codes had been provided. In addition, the partnership had resulted in a 20% cost reduction for the transportation agency. The service, concentrated in the eastern part of the state, is benefiting many of MCB consumers.
- In 2017, a statewide mobility management initiative was started between EOHHS and MassDOT to develop an on-line One-Stop searchable directory of public, private and accessible transportation options in the state. This initiative should be of particular interest for consumers in the rural parts of the state that still experience a lack of reliable transportation. The MCB RC continues to support MCB's efforts on this issue.
- In 2015, The Braille Literacy Advisory Council (BrLAC) was charged with developing a plan for implementing Unified English Braille (UEB) in Massachusetts to present to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). In 2017, The Braille Literacy Advisory Council proposed a plan for transitioning to a full implementation of UEB to ensure a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with vision impairments in Massachusetts. Some of the items on the implementation plan include:
 - Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVIs) to receive professional development training in UEB.
 - TVIs began to expose and instruct braille learners in non-technical UEB on an individual basis.
 - Instructional Materials available in UEB, EBAE, UEB with Nemeth and/or EBAE/Nemeth.
 - AIM Library accepted requests for instructional materials in the above-mentioned formats.
 - School districts prepared to support requests for instructional materials in the above-mentioned formats.
 - Statewide Assessments will be provided in EBAE/Nemeth for all statewide assessments
 - Teachers-in-Training at UMass Vision Studies received braille instruction in UEB (technical and non-technical) and Nemeth.
 - The implementation was planned for school year 2016 through 2020. More information can be found at: www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=23936

In addition, over the past year, the BrLAC focus has been on encouraging the College Board to provide SAT and other tests in the Braille format, which is most appropriate for each student, sometimes Unified English Braille and sometimes the traditional English Braille System. Commissioner D'Arcangelo signed off on a letter to the College Board, requesting that it

accommodate each student's individual needs. The BrLAC also has also been working on Braille Certification/testing of TVIs.

2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.

Monitor annually the allocation of funds for the Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program and the Supported Employment Program. A measure for evaluation is the amount of state funds appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature for the agency's state-funded Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program. Some of these funds are used for on-going supported employment services after VR services are completed.

Report of Progress:

The agency has had sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals during FY 2018 and 2019. The Massachusetts Legislature has continued to fund the agency's VR program sufficient to match federal funds. The Rehabilitation Council has been very active in advocating for increased vocational rehabilitation funding at the state level. The SFY 2020 state appropriation for the state-funded Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program is enough to cover the need for more residential and supported services for those consumers who are turning age 22. This program provides residential and day services, including on-going supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

In addition, as also stated in previous sections: The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) have over the years worked cooperatively with MCB and provided extended services to a number of legally blind persons that have been provided supported employment services by MCB. MCB continues to collaborate with the DDS on plans to expand services to mutual consumers that includes an initiative to better identify consumers who could benefit from supported employment services and are not receiving them at this time. A new Memorandum of Agreement that includes provisions for use of joint agency resources to ensure quality service delivery and long term supports for supported employment was executed in November 2015. This includes a formal commitment of funding from MCB for appropriate supported employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long-term, ongoing employment support services when needed. The agreement also provides for cross-training of staff.

In accordance with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, MCB executed a WIOA Cooperative Agreement with MassHealth in January 2016. In addition, discussions with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) have clarified that MCB consumers who have been rehabilitated into competitive integrated supported employment will be eligible to receive funding for on-going supports under its state-funded Extended Ongoing Supports Program. MCB is very appreciative of the help and advice that the MRC Extended Ongoing Supports Program provided and expects that the availability of this resource will increase the opportunities for

supported employment for legally blind consumers who have significant secondary disabilities but do not qualify for on-going supports from another state or private agency.

Over the years, the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) has worked cooperatively with MCB by providing extended services and other services to some legally blind persons that have received supported employment services and other services from MCB.

To address the problem of lack of adequate supported competitive integrated employment opportunities, MCB intends to hire a consultant to evaluate the viability of establishing a for-profit business enterprise that employs individuals who are blind and visually impaired in a competitive integrated supported employment environment. It is understood that such a business must be comprised of blind, visually impaired, and people both with and without disabilities so that the workforce and environment is fully integrated. The business is expected to generate positive, measurable social impact alongside a financial return. Business models that can be studied can involve potential ownership by employees and profit-sharing plans. Examples of potential business models for consideration include: Medical Billing/Coding, Information Technology Support, Contract Support, Sourcing, Cyber-Security, and 508 Assurance, etc.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Long-standing problems and factors that impede the achievement of the supported employment goals and priorities include:

- public transportation systems and pedestrian safety issues which limit access to employment and some vocational rehabilitation services
- lack of funding for extended supports for consumers who are not eligible for funding from the Department of Developmental Services or the Department of Mental Health

3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.

The RC is aware of and has discussed the new WIOA common performance accountability measures under Section 116 of WIOA and looks forward to using them more in its considerations of the effectiveness of the VR program. MCB will continue to report baseline data to RSA on these measures as specified in the final requirements for the WIOA Combined/Unified State Plan. MCB will analyze the data and create a report for management and the RC on the common measures. MCB continues to track progress on many of the prior Standards and Indicators.

4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.

During FFY 2018 and 2019, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind worked with the Rehabilitation Council on the mutually agreed upon goals and the use of Title I funds for innovation and expansion activities.

Specific innovation and expansion (I&E) activities and initiatives include:

- In 2015, MCB partnered with Massachusetts Eye and Ear and Cambridge Health Alliance to become the first agency for the blind to launch Project SEARCH, a successful national 9-month program for individuals with disabilities that provides internship experiences. This program resulted in a 70% employment outcome rate. In 2019, drawing on this successful experience, the agency developed the Employment Now initiative which is similar to Project SEARCH but is locally managed by the agency and two non-profit providers. The Employment Now initiative is a model that moves vocational rehabilitation consumers on a fast track to employment. The goal is to combine internships or work experiences with the support of an onsite job coach while conducting an active job search. Job development for the specific consumer takes place during internships or work experiences so that transition from the internship to a paying job will occur without long gaps of unemployment. Of the eight consumers who have participated during 2019, six have achieved full-time employment. Massachusetts Eye and Ear and Cambridge Health Alliance have remained as partners. MCB is also seeking to recruit partners in other industries since hospitals tend to have large, proprietary information systems that can be difficult to make accessible to all legally blind consumers.
- MCB's summer internship program is a long-established job preparation model that supports college-age and nontraditional students, all of whom are legally blind, to acquire work experience. In 2019, the program reached its 16th year and involved 80 participants. During the program's 16-year span, there have been approximately 1,000 internship opportunities with 400 private and public business partners. An agency study conducted in FY 2012 showed that 93% of the interns have had successful outcomes from the internship experience; that is, the intern has either finished school and obtained a job or is on track with his or her individual plan for employment.
- The agency has been able to increase consumers' access to both adaptive equipment and accessible textbooks during FY 2018 and 2019. The agency's Technology for the Blind Unit will serve approximately 1,500 VR consumers during FFY 2020. The staff of the unit includes a technology specialist who can provide extended training in Word, Outlook, and basic navigation and eight rehabilitation engineers.
- The agency has been able to continue to enhance the independence and educational and vocational potential of blind children by providing adaptive equipment and software on a limited basis to elementary and middle-school aged children under its state-funded social services program. These services enable these young consumers to transition to pre-transition employment and vocational rehabilitation services at age 14 with the same level of technical skill as their sighted peers. In addition, MCB has revised its policies under the vocational rehabilitation program (in line with RSA regulations and guidance) to provide more adaptive equipment and training to pre-employment transition consumers to allow them to access and improve their work readiness, vocational, and independent living skills when they are not in school.
- MCB continues to work with providers to develop new options for pre-employment transition services. For example, the Carroll Center for the Blind has developed a SAT/ACT

and College Application Pre-requisites and Process program to address the need for counseling on opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary educational programs.

q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.

Include the following:

1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

The purpose of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind's Supported Employment Program is to create and provide paid employment opportunities for legally blind persons with significant secondary disabilities within integrated work settings. Services include: an individual evaluation of rehabilitation potential via supported employment, provision of job development services (including job analysis and appropriate engineering accommodation); intensive on-the-job training and job coaching, and provision or coordination of support services such as counseling or transportation. Services are provided within federal guidelines until the employment is secure and appropriate extended (non-VR) services are in place.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind remains committed to increasing the quality, scope and extent of Supported Employment Services to eligible consumers. There are a sufficient number of service providers who deliver supported employment in the state on a fee for service basis. The Commission for the Blind is fortunate that the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services provides on-going extended services to many consumers who are both intellectually disabled and legally blind. The agency is also fortunate to have some state funding available to provide extended services to consumers who are both deaf and legally blind.

During 2015, the agency collaborated with the DDS on plans to expand services to consumers including an initiative to better identify mutual consumers who could benefit from supported employment services and are not receiving them. In late 2015, MCB and DDS executed a new Memorandum of Agreement that includes provisions for use of joint agency resources to ensure quality service delivery and long term supports for supported employment. All work programs will be in integrated settings paying the minimum wage. The agreement includes a formal commitment of funding from MCB for appropriate supported employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long-term, ongoing employment support services when needed. The agreement also provides for cross-training of staff.

In January 2016, MCB executed a WIOA Cooperative Agreement with MassHealth in accordance with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act.

In addition, in 2015, discussions with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) clarified that MCB consumers who have been rehabilitated into competitive integrated supported employment will be eligible to receive funding for on-going supports under its state-funded Extended Ongoing Supports Program. MCB is very appreciative of the help and advice that the MRC Extended Ongoing Supports Program has provided and expects that the availability of this resource will increase the opportunities for supported employment for legally blind

consumers who have significant secondary disabilities but do not qualify for on-going supports from another state or private agency.

MCB looks forward to being allowed under the forthcoming WIOA regulations to extend the time that consumers may receive needed supported employment services before transition to extended services. There are some consumers who may need extra time, particularly pre-employment transition consumers.

2. The timing of transition to extended services.

Once the individual has maintained stability on the job for an appropriate period of time, the funding for and provision of extended services transitions to an extended services provider. The rehabilitation counselor continues to track the individual's progress and job stability during the transition period. If the individual maintains stabilization for 90 days or more after transition to extended services, the case is closed successfully. If needed, post-employment services may be provided at any time after closure.

Certifications

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate: Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Name of designated State agency: Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Paul Saner

Title of Authorized Representative: Commissioner, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act;** Yes
2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the designated State agency listed above agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; Yes
3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan*, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education.

Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;** Yes

4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law; Yes

7. The Authorized Representative listed above has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; Yes

8. The Authorized Representative listed above has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; Yes

9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

Footnotes

Certification 1 Footnotes

* Public Law 113-128.

** Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

Certification 2 Footnotes

* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

** No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

*** Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

Certification 3 Footnotes

* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

** Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in *** under Certification 2 footnotes

Additional Comments on the Certifications from the State

Certification Regarding Lobbying - Vocational Rehabilitation

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete

and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization: Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Paul Saner

Title of Authorized Representative: Commissioner

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable) (<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov

Certification Regarding Lobbying — Supported Employment

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization: Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Paul Saner

Title of Authorized Representative: Commissioner

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

Assurances

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: The State Plan must provide assurances that:

1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.

d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).

e. the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds: No

f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: No

g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: No

h. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.

j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.

k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.

m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.

4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services:

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.

b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.

c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above

d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.

g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.

h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.

i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs

- j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State, has developed and will implement,
 - A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
 - B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).

5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:

- a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
- c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.

6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:

- a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.

7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:

- a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that:

the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act

an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Figure 84: Vocational Rehabilitation Certifications/Assurance/Certifications

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS/ASSURANCES/CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The (enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate,) is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, ¹⁰ and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act ¹¹ ;
	The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, ¹² and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act ¹³ ;
	The Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, ¹⁴ and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act ¹⁵ ;
2.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (enter the name of designated State agency) ¹⁶ agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ¹⁷ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ¹⁸ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the

¹⁰ Public Law 113-128.

¹¹ Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

¹² Public Law 113-128.

¹³ Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

¹⁴ Public Law 113-128.

¹⁵ Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

¹⁶ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

¹⁷ No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

¹⁸ Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

	provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ¹⁹ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ²⁰ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind ²¹ agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ²² , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ²³ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan
3.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ²⁴ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ²⁵ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ²⁶ ,

¹⁹ No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

²⁰ Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

²¹ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

²² No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

²³ Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

²⁴ No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

²⁵ Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

²⁶ No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

	the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ²⁷ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan ²⁸ , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ²⁹ , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan
4.	The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
	The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
	The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement
5.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
	The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
	The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Combined State Plan and its supplement carried out by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission are consistent with State law.
	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Combined State Plan and its supplement carried out by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind are consistent with State law.

²⁷ Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

²⁸ No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

²⁹ Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

7.	The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
	The Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement
	The Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement
8.	The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
	The Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services
	The Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services
9.	The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.
	The Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.
	The Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

Figure 85: Vocational Rehabilitation Assurances

The State Plan must provide assurances that:

1.	<p>Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>
2.	<p>Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.</p>
	<p>by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. (j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. (k) the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (l) the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. (m) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.	<p>Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with section 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act. (c) provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Yes/No) (d) determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a) (5) of the Rehabilitation Act. (e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act. (f) comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act. (g) provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act. (h) comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual review, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act. (i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs

	<p>(j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State, (A) has developed and will implement, (i) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and (ii) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and (B) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a) (15) and 101 (a) (25)).</p>
	<p>MRC will do a survey to further identify the needs of transitioning students with disabilities to develop strategies to address those needs. MRC has developed Pre-employment training services for high school students with disabilities which will be implemented as part of MRC's state plan under WIOA.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) The establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (option A or B must be selected): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) is an independent State commission. (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council. (c) Consultation regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. (d) The financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3). (e) The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds. (Yes/No) (f) The shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs. (Yes/No) (g) Statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency is requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portions of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. (h) The descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act. (j) The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act. (k) The compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act. (l) The reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. (m) The submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program: The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5% of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10% of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Provision of Supported Employment Services: The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act. (b) The designated State agency assures that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act ii. an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated

	with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.
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VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES PROGRAM (TANF)

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:

a. Conduct a program designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner) that provides assistance to needy families with (or expecting) children and provides parents with job preparation, work, and support services to enable them to leave the program, specifically cash assistance, and become self-sufficient (section 402(a)(1)(A)(i) of the Social Security Act).

TAFDC is the state's cash assistance program for families with dependent children (including pregnant teens, at any time during the teen's pregnancy, and women in their third trimester with limited assets and income. Eligible family members are defined in 106 CMR 704.305. Massachusetts' goal is to help these families achieve economic mobility through meaningful employment. The Department's Employment Services Program (ESP) offers a variety of work activities including education and skills training, job readiness and employment opportunities to clients delivered by the Department, community-based agencies or Workforce Development Boards (WDBs).

b. Require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance to engage in work (defined by the State) once the State determines the parent or caretaker is ready to engage in work, or once he or she has received 24 months of assistance, whichever is earlier, consistent with the child care exception at 407(e)(2) (section 402(a)(1)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act)

Massachusetts' goal is to help families achieve economic mobility through meaningful employment. To this end, the state completes a comprehensive needs assessment of every client, which evaluates their employment history, educational attainment and other factors. To the extent that resources permit, the state administers programs to meet those needs and address barriers to work, including providing a variety of educational and training opportunities through both funded and non-funded partnerships with community-based providers. Clients who volunteer for state-funded educational and training programs receive in-depth assessments from the providers to enable their programs to address clients' individualized needs. Families are also eligible for childcare, transportation and other employment supports to assist in obtaining and maintaining their employment and achieving their career goals. The TAFDC program in Massachusetts strives to reduce reliance on the traditional welfare system by emphasizing a comprehensive approach to family economic mobility.

The Department continuously determines when an applicant/recipient is required to participate in the work program. Individuals who are determined to be nonexempt and whose children are aged 2 or older must comply with the work program provisions required by 106 CMR 703.150(A) (2), (3), (5)

in order to maintain eligibility. The Department's regulations regarding the work program can be found at 106 CMR 703.150 and the regulations regarding exemptions can be found at 106 CMR 703.100.

Moreover, DTA is committed to working with the WIOA core partners to develop a more seamless customer flow/referral model so that clients who are often the individuals with the highest challenges to employment are well served not just by DTA, but by all of the appropriate parts of the workforce development system. The Commonwealth partners are committed to developing this partnership to support DTA clients and to address the WIOA priority of service for individuals who face challenges to employment.

Exemptions from the Work Program include certain single custodial parents caring for children under the age of two (which encompasses the federal option to exempt parents with children under the age of one). In addition, if a single custodial parent caring for a child under six is required to work under TAFDC regulations, and such parent has demonstrated an inability to locate child care for the reasons specified in Section 407(e)(2) of the Social Security Act, such parent will not be sanctioned for failing to participate in the work program.

c. Ensure that parents and caretakers receiving assistance engage in work in accordance with section 407 (section 402(a)(1)(A)(iii) of the Social Security Act)

Clients who are work program required that fail to participate and do not have good cause are subject to sanctioning. DTA's eligibility system ensures that clients who are not participating or who have not provided verification of their compliance with the work program requirements are sanctioned timely.

Nonexempt parents/caretakers who fail to meet work program requirements under 106 CMR 703.150(A) are mandated to participate in community service. Once mandated, a nonexempt parent/caretaker who fails to work, participate in education and/or training or perform community service for the required minimum number of hours per week or the maximum hours allowed under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), is ineligible for TAFDC. Repeated failure to work or participate in education and/or training, or community service once mandated to do so, results in termination of assistance for the entire household. Massachusetts uses its Full Engagement Workers (FEW) to re-engage individuals when they fail to participate. By doing this, clients fully utilize their time-limited benefit months to reach economic self-sufficiency. Clients must verify their compliance with the work program requirement on a regular basis, and their participation status is tracked on the Department's eligibility system. Regulations pertaining to work program sanctions and good cause for failure to comply with such requirements can be found at 106 CMR 707.200, et seq.

The state's workforce development activities for parents and caretakers receiving TAFDC described above are based on current resources through the Employment Services Program. The WIOA Steering Committee, policy makers and leadership at DTA regularly discuss the need to increase the available resources for education and training programs - focused on career pathways - that can help move the skill set of individuals receiving assistance into the range of

employment that provides self-supporting wages. Successful strategies typically require multi-year education and training that leads to a credential along with family support (public assistance, child care, transportation), coaching at the education and training provider, on-the-job experience (subsidized or internships), and intensive job placement (unsubsidized) support upon completion (potentially through the One-Stop Career Centers). There is more to do in the Commonwealth, however we intend to consider ways to utilize the TANF block grant to expand education, training, employment and workforce activities to build more robust pathways for parents and caretakers receiving assistance.

The Employment Services Program (ESP) and Pathways to Self-Sufficiency

The Department's Employment Services Program (ESP) offers a variety of education, skills training, and employment opportunities to clients delivered by the Department and community-based agencies (please see page 30).

The Employment Services Program (ESP) is an integral part of DTA's efforts to move clients to work and provide meaningful career pathways that support economic mobility. Each year, the Legislature allocates funding for employment services for Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) clients through the ESP line item. The primary goal of ESP is to assist TAFDC clients obtain and maintain employment with career growth potential, resolve barriers to employment, and provide families who receive TAFDC with education, training, and employment supports. Case managers assist TAFDC clients to achieve these outcomes through referral to and collaborative goal setting with programs appropriate for individual skill level and goals. In addition, to employment education and training, ESP also funds transportation for clients enrolled in an eligible activity, learning disability assessments, and HiSET testing. A vital support for caregivers and parents who are participating in an approved ESP activity is access to childcare referrals at no cost to them.

In 2016, the Department launched Pathways to Self-Sufficiency, an assessment and referral tool used to establish economic mobility goals with clients. The full assessment, which takes place shortly after a TAFDC case is established, and at minimum at each case review, identifies a client's strengths and challenges in moving to long-term economic security. This tool provides a means of measuring a client's progress towards their economic goals, refers clients to Employment Service Program activities, provides Employment Service Program support services such as referrals for childcare and transportation, and establishes the client's Pathways to Self-Sufficiency Employment Development Plan. The Employment Development Plan details the assessment, referrals made to employment and training providers and other agencies and serves as a reminder of Department rules and regulations relative to the work program and time-limited benefits.

Some TAFDC applicants are subject to a Pre-Benefit Job Search requirement. Clients are screened to determine whether they must participate as a condition of eligibility. If not exempt, clients are subject to Pre-Benefit Job Search under one of the two following categories:

WORK READY: clients with minimal barriers to employment, a recent work history and, who have both a high school diploma or equivalency and are proficient in English. The penalty for Work Ready clients who fail to comply with this requirement is a case denial/closing

INITIAL JOB SEARCH: clients with some identified challenges to employment but who do not meet exemption criteria. The penalty for Initial Job Search clients who fail to meet this requirement is individual denial/closing.

Clients subject to Pre-Benefit Job Search, must attend a TAFDC Group Orientation and document two additional job search-related activities, such as a job application or attendance at a career fair. These three contacts must be submitted during established application timelines. Clients must also report whether or not they were successful in obtaining employment and if not, to identify why they were not successful. Clients must then report by day 60 of a recently approved application, an additional three job search activities, and again whether or not they were successful in obtaining employment, and if not, why not.

d. Take such reasonable steps as the State deems necessary to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government (section 402(a)(1)(A)(iv) of the Social Security Act)

The State restricts the use/disclosure of confidential information. Current regulations regarding these restrictions can be found at Chapter 66 A of Massachusetts General Law: Fair Information Practices. Furthermore, Governor Patrick issued Executive Order 504 on September 19, 2008, which added additional safeguards regarding the security and confidentiality of personal information.

e. Establish goals and take action to prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies (section 402(a)(1)(A)(v) of the Social Security Act)

Massachusetts historically has had one of the lowest teen birth rates in the country. In 1996, there were 5,758 births in Massachusetts to women between the ages of 15 through 19, representing 28.5 per 1,000 females in that age range. In 2015, the most recent available data, there were 2,140 births among women ages 15-19 years for a rate of 9.4 births per 1,000 females ages 15-19 years, which was the lowest teen birth rate ever recorded in Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts teen birth rate in 2015 was 58% below the 2015 US teen birth rate of 22.3 births per 1,000 female ages 15-19 year.

In order to reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock births, DTA works with the state Department of Public Health (DPH). DPH coordinates family planning and teen pregnancy prevention efforts throughout the Commonwealth. In addition, DPH works with local schools (K-12) to develop sex and health education curricula that incorporate pregnancy prevention efforts.

Additionally, DTA supports the Father Readiness for Adolescents program through referrals from our Young Parents Programs. This innovative program for adolescent boys and girls is a unique combination of teen pregnancy prevention, future life planning, and healthy relationship skill-

building. Easily integrated into existing health curricula, the Father Readiness program introduces students to the challenges and risk factors associated with teen fatherhood, as well as the 5 Essentials of Father Readiness. Using a variety of interactive content, students:

1. Explore the practical, psychological, economic and social demands of becoming a future father.
2. Discuss the role of fathers and mothers in family life and the presence and absence of mentors and their own fathers in their lives.
3. Practice self-reflection, decision-making, planning, and problem solving.
4. Identify strengths, skills and qualities they can develop today.

This program is a contribution toward young boys and men avoiding fatherhood before they understand and feel prepared for the responsibilities and personal demands of the role.

To ensure that these young families remain healthy, DTA also supports the Fatherhood Project Dads Matter in Pediatrics which designs and delivers programs at Massachusetts General Hospital, in Massachusetts, and nationally, focusing on underserved, at-risk populations.

f. Conduct a program designed to reach State and local law enforcement officials, the education system, and relevant counseling services, that provides education and training on the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention programs may be expanded to include men (section 402(a)(1)(A)(vi) of the Social Security Act)

The Governor's Council to Address Sexual and Domestic Violence (The Council) is an interdisciplinary council of approximately 30 members representing advocates, health care, the Attorney General's Office, law enforcement, the courts, and higher education as well as various state agencies. "The Council works to enact best practices to combat issues of sexual assault and domestic violence in order to keep Massachusetts residents safe." The Council is committed to improving prevention efforts, enhancing support for those impacted by sexual assault and domestic violence, and to holding those who perpetrate sexual assault and domestic violence accountable. The Council prioritized the implementation of the provisions of Chapter 260: An Act Relative to Domestic Violence as well as identified five priority areas and launched working groups to address Human Trafficking of Children, Housing and Homelessness, Prevention and Early Education, Veteran and Military Families, and developing standardized assessment tools for law enforcement. The full mission and scope of the Council can be found in Executive Order 563. DTA is represented on the Council by Crystal Jackson, Director of the Department's Domestic Violence Unit.

In addition, the Department's Domestic Violence Unit, comprised of staff with expertise in domestic violence, is represented on the State's Roundtables on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, which operate through the state's District Attorneys and on local High-Risk Assessment Teams, which are comprised of public and domestic violence service providers, law enforcement, district attorneys' staff, probation staff, batterers' intervention programs and other stakeholders to better identify and respond to domestic violence cases that pose the highest risk of lethality.

The Department's Domestic Violence Specialists serve anyone who identifies as a survivor of domestic violence and/or sexual assault (including statutory rape), by developing safety plans and referring them to services in the community, including advocacy, counseling, shelter and Legal Aid, as appropriate. The Domestic Violence Specialists also assist survivors with DTA benefits and housing options, if homeless.

Finally, as stated earlier, the Father Readiness program introduces students to the challenges and risk factors associated with teen fatherhood.

g. Implement policies and procedures as necessary to prevent access to assistance provided under the State program funded under this part through any electronic fund transaction in an automated teller machine or point-of-sale device located in a place described in section 408(a)(12), including a plan to ensure that recipients of the assistance have adequate access to their cash assistance (section 402(a)(1)(A)(vii) of the Social Security Act)

The provisions of Section 408(a)(12) of the Social Security Act require States to maintain policies and practices as necessary to prevent assistance provided under the State program funded under this part from being used in any electronic benefit transfer transaction in any liquor store; any casino, gambling casino, or gaming establishment; or any retail establishment which provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment.

The Commonwealth has enacted a state law to prohibit the use of cash assistance, including TAFDC, in electronic benefit transfer (EBT) transactions at liquor stores, casinos, gambling casinos or gaming establishments, and retail establishment which provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment, as well as other establishments not identified in Section 408(a)(12). Retailers face fines from \$500 for a first offense, \$500 to \$2500 for a second offense and not less than \$2500 for a third offense. See M.G.L. c. 18, § J. In addition, the Commonwealth has prohibited the use of cash assistance held on EBT cards to purchase alcoholic beverages, lottery tickets, gambling, adult oriented material or performances and other items and services (See M.G.L. c. 18, § I). Clients who violate the purchasing provisions must pay the Commonwealth back for the prohibited purchase. For a second offense, the client is disqualified from benefits for two months and must pay the Commonwealth back for the prohibited purchase. For a third offense, the client is disqualified from benefits permanently and must pay the Commonwealth back for the prohibited purchase.

All TAFDC clients were mailed letters about the state law prohibiting the use of cash assistance in specified establishments and for specified items/services. Posters are displayed in all local offices informing clients of the prohibited establishments and purchasing restrictions. The application for TAFDC benefits includes a penalty warning informing client of prohibited items and services as well as the penalties for violations. At application and redetermination, all TAFDC clients are provided a brochure that includes information on prohibited establishments, prohibited purchases and penalties. Retailers are notified about the law and its penalties. Local law enforcement agencies are notified about retailers who are found to have violated such law. In addition, the Department offers posters and training for retailers on the new restrictions.

In an ongoing effort, the Department continues to work with its EBT vendor on blocking the use of EBT cards in prohibited establishments. The Department and its vendor are jointly researching potential prohibited establishments. The Commonwealth provides its EBT vendor with a final list of prohibited establishments monthly; the EBT vendor blocks the designated establishments' Point of Service (POS) device and ATMs on site. This process will be incorporated into the Department's business operations.

The Commonwealth remains committed to ensuring that clients have adequate access to their cash assistance. While most clients access their benefits via EBT card, clients have the option to receive TAFDC through direct deposit to checking or savings accounts or direct vendor payments for rent, utilities, etc. The Department affords all clients the right to designate an authorized payee to act on their behalf in accessing TAFDC when the client is unable to do so for him or herself.

The Department provides all TAFDC clients with information about free and no-cost benefit access options.

Ensure that recipients of assistance provided under the State program funded under this part have the ability to use or withdraw assistance with minimal fees or charges, including an opportunity to access assistance with no fee or charges, and are provided information on applicable fees and surcharges that apply to electronic fund transactions involving the assistance, and that such information is made publicly available (section 402(a)(1)(A)(viii) of the Social Security Act).

All TAFDC clients who receive benefits on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card receive a brochure that advises clients about surcharge-free cash transactions and how to identify surcharge-free ATMs and POS devices. In addition, the brochure advises clients that they are entitled to two free ATM withdrawals in a calendar month, but that additional withdrawals are \$0.75 per transaction. This brochure, along with the EBT card itself, provide clients with a toll-free customer service line that is available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week regarding any questions they have about accessing their benefits.

The Department has also created an EBT cash withdrawal information sheet that is given to applicants and clients in all local offices. This information sheet identifies Massachusetts banks that provide EBT cash withdrawals without surcharges. The Department continues to pursue the expansion of its current surcharge-free options and the availability of low- and no-cost banking options.

In addition, the Commonwealth has partnered with a nonprofit, full-service credit-counseling agency, funded through a large banking institution's nonprofit foundation, to offer financial literacy and credit counseling workshops. These workshops are available to clients at no cost, statewide, to assist in their development of short and long-term financial planning. The workshop curriculum encompasses how clients reduce or eliminate fees associated with using their EBT cards or otherwise utilize their TAFDC benefits through direct deposit or direct vendor payments for rent, utilities, etc. While clients are instructed on how to better budget their TAFDC funds, they are also reminded of the prohibited items, services and establishments, identified under State law and the associated penalties.

h. Ensure that recipients of assistance provided under the State program funded under this part have the ability to use or withdraw assistance with minimal fees or charges, including an opportunity to access assistance with no fee or charges, and are provided information on applicable fees and surcharges that apply to electronic fund transactions involving the assistance, and that such information is made publicly available (section 402(a)(1)(A)(viii) of the Social Security Act)

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In addition, the Commonwealth has partnered with a nonprofit, full-service credit-counseling agency, funded through a large banking institution's nonprofit foundation, to offer financial literacy and credit counseling workshops. These workshops are available to clients at no cost, statewide, to assist in their development of short and long-term financial planning. The workshop curriculum encompasses how clients reduce or eliminate fees associated with using their EBT cards or otherwise utilize their TAFDC benefits through direct deposit or direct vendor payments for rent, utilities, etc. While clients are instructed on how to better budget their TAFDC funds, they are also reminded of the prohibited items, services and establishments, identified under State law and the associated penalties.

i. Indicate whether it intends to treat families moving from another State differently from other families under the program, and if so how (section 402(a)(1)(B)(i) of the Social Security Act)

At this time, the State does not intend to treat families moving into the State from another State differently than other families under the program.

j. Indicate whether it intends to provide assistance to non-citizens, and if so, include an overview of the assistance (section 402(a)(1)(B)(ii) of the Social Security Act)

Only non-citizens who are eligible under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) are eligible to receive TAFDC benefits.

k. Set forth objective criteria for the delivery of benefits and the determination of eligibility and for fair and equitable treatment, including an explanation of how it will provide opportunities

for recipients who have been adversely affected to be heard in a State administrative or appeal process (section 402(a)(1)(B)(iii) of the Social Security Act)

Benefits are provided to eligible applicants and recipients on a statewide basis. The standards for determining eligibility and the amount of assistance are established on an objective and equitable basis in accordance with the Department's regulations. These standards are based on an individual's income, assets, family size and circumstances.

Benefit Reduction: All nonexempt recipients are subject to a 2.75 percent reduction in TAFDC (approximately \$15 per month for a family of three). The Department's nonexempt need and payment standards can be found at 106 CMR 704.415 and 704.425.

Earned Income Disregards: To provide an incentive to work, families subject to the 2.75 percent benefit reduction are permitted to retain or "disregard" more of their earned income than exempt families when determining eligibility. All recipients who work receive a \$200 work-related expense deduction and a 50% earned income disregard which remains in place as long as a family is employed and eligible. The Department's earned income disregard regulations can be found at 106 CMR 704.280 and 704.285.

All Department activities are conducted in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the Massachusetts Constitution. The Department does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, religion, political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, creed, ancestry or Veteran's status in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its programs or activities. An applicant/recipient has a right to a fair hearing as set forth in the Department's regulations at 106 CMR 343.000, et seq.

All benefits to which recipients are eligible are provided with reasonable promptness in accordance with timeliness standards that are included in the Department's regulations. The Department's timeliness standards can be found at 106 CMR 701.500 - 701.530 and 106 CMR 702.160 - 702.180.

1. Indicate whether the State intends to assist individuals to train for, seek, and maintain employment (Section 402(a)(1)(B)(v) of the Social Security Act)—1. providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined under section 1397j of this title); or

2. in other occupations related to elder care, high-demand occupations, or occupations expected to experience labor shortages as, determined appropriate by the State for which the State identifies an unmet need for service personnel, and, if so, shall include an overview of such assistance.

The Department currently enrolls individuals in programs to train for, gain and retain employment in the eldercare workforce. DTA Employment Services Program providers have developed training programs for the long-term care and elder care fields. Programs currently cover certifications for home health aides, certified nursing assistants/aides, pharmacy technicians and medical assistants

as well as Alzheimer's Care Assistant, Phlebotomy Technician and CPR certifications. Because of the growing elderly population, the need for individuals trained to deliver such services has become a critically important factor in terms of meeting the health and social service needs of elders. Growth in the demographic has the potential to lead to increased employment opportunities for individuals who enter this field. The Department encourages its workforce providers to develop programs with a clear career path for clients entering these professions.

m. Provide for all MOE-funded services the following information: the name of the program benefit or service, and the financial eligibility criteria that families must meet in order to receive that benefit or service. In addition, for TANF MOE-funded services (co-mingled or segregated MOE) describe the program benefit provided to eligible families (SSP services do not have to include a description but the Department of Health and Human Services encourages it) (§263.2(b)(3) and §263.2(c) preamble pages 17826-7)

The breakdown of funding sources (either TANF or MOE) for these programs appears on the following reports: (1) the ACF196 for quarterly claims and the ACF204 for the annual supplemental report on MOE. Unless otherwise noted, all programs are funded by comingled funding.

Other Program Administered by DTA That Meets One of the Four TANF Goals

Supplemental Nutrition Allowance (SNA): This program offers a Supplemental Nutrition Allowance benefit to certain SNAP clients who are not receiving TAFDC. Eligible families who are working and receiving SNAP or whose TAFDC cases close due to earnings and who are currently receiving Non Public Assistance (NPA) SNAP benefits only and have an employment status that meets the work participation requirements as outlined in 106 CMR 705.250 will be provided a supplemental nutritional assistance benefit.

EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE (EEC)

Childcare Income Eligible (including Childcare to TAFDC clients)

Childcare services are provided to certain TAFDC families who are employed or participating in an approved activity. Services are provided by EEC as long as the TAFDC recipients are engaged in approved activities or until they transition from TAFDC. Once a family transitions from TAFDC, the family may be eligible for Transitional Child Care (see below). Subject to appropriation, an income eligible childcare subsidy is available to eligible parents for care by a contracted or voucher educator/provider, or in home or relative childcare provider, in accordance with regulations, guidelines and policies established by EEC. (1) Eligibility Criteria. To be eligible for an Income Eligible Childcare Subsidy, parents must meet both income eligibility and service need requirements established by EEC. (a) Financial Requirements. Income eligibility is based on the income and the size of the family. Families headed by caretakers are exempt from financial eligibility guidelines. See 606 CMR 10.00 for DEEC Subsidized Child Care.

Waitlist Remediation

In FY 17 there was no Waitlist Remediation. EEC will have a Waitlist Remediation for FY18 where 2,292 slots are scheduled to be released on a first come first serve basis as part of the department's effort to reduce its waitlist. The purpose of the vouchers is to reduce the waitlist for income-eligible EEC programs. (a) Child Care Resource and Referral Agency. Based on availability and in accordance with EEC enrollment priorities and policies, the CCR&R must: 1. issue a voucher to the eligible parent that may be used toward payment of a voucher child care educator/provider, subject to an eligibility determination; or 2. refer the eligible parent to a contracted childcare educator/provider who has an opening appropriate for the age and needs of the child in need of care; or 3. enter the child on the waitlist for a childcare subsidy. See 606 CMR 10.00 for DEEC Subsidized Child Care.

Transitional Child Care

CHILDCARE FOR TRANSITIONING CLIENTS, TEEN PARENTS AND INCOME ELIGIBLE FAMILIES

A former TAFDC recipient who is working and whose cash benefits end, and whose income does not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, is eligible for Transitional Child Care (TCC) for one year from the date the cash assistance ends through EEC. At the end of the year, if the former recipient is still employed, needs childcare, and is financially eligible, the former recipient may continue to receive subsidized Income Eligible Child Care.

Child Care for Continuing Education: Former TAFDC recipients, who are not employed and who are completing an education or training program are eligible for childcare services from EEC for up to six months after their TAFDC case closes.

Low-income working families who have never received TAFDC assistance and whose income does not exceed 85% of the State Median Income may receive Income Eligible Child Care, if available. Teen parents, whose income does not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, may receive childcare services that provide educational and developmental activities for children and allow them to develop their parenting skills while attending school or developing career skills.

Subject to appropriation, DTA may issue authorizations or referrals for TAFDC recipients seeking childcare financial assistance through the Employment Services Program, as described below. DTA authorizations or referrals for subsidized childcare shall be issued in accordance with the regulations, guidelines and policies established by DTA and in accordance with 606 CMR 10.03, unless otherwise noted. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

Eligibility Criteria. Eligibility for a childcare subsidy through the Employment Services Program shall be determined by DTA and verified by the subsidy administrator based on the parent's TAFDC status, as described in 606 CMR 10.05(3)(a) and (b). (a) TAFDC Families. The written childcare authorization is sufficient documentation that the parent is eligible for a childcare subsidy for each child included in the authorization. Subsidy administrators shall verify the identity of the parent(s) listed on the childcare authorization issued by DTA, in accordance with 606 CMR 10.03(b). Fee Assessment. TAFDC families with written childcare authorizations from DTA shall not be charged any parent co-payment fees. (b) Transitional Families. The written childcare authorization is evidence of family relationship for all children included in the authorization. Subsidy

administrators shall verify the identity of the parent(s) listed on the childcare authorization issued by DTA, in accordance with 606 CMR 10.03(b). Parents must also submit evidence of their income, service need, residence, and their relationship to children or dependent grandparents not included in the childcare authorization.

Universal Pre-K

This program provides expanded access to preschool programs and services to children from the age of 2 years and 9 months until they are kindergarten-eligible, through a system of service delivery options including public, private non-profit and for-profit preschools, child care centers, nursery schools, preschools operating within public and private schools and school districts.

Services To Infants And Toddlers

Services to Infants and Toddlers are comprised of the following three programs, Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE), Educator and Provider Support (EPS) and the MA Quality Rating Improvement System (MA QRIS). These programs provide quality assessment, monitoring and technical assistance for community organizations and programs for families in underserved communities.

For the above programs, the following eligibility rules apply: (a) Family Composition and Size. Prior to issuing a child care subsidy authorization, subsidy administrators shall verify, through documentary evidence, the family size and household composition of the applicant by verifying the relationship of each child younger than 18 years old, or younger than 24 years old, if the child is a full-time student, who resides in the household and is financially dependent on the parent(s) applying for child care financial assistance. (b) Identity. Required documentary evidence shall contain a photo of the applicant and must be readily available to the applicant. Examples of acceptable documentation include U.S. passports; certificates of naturalization; driver's licenses, permits or state identification cards; U.S. military cards; non-U.S. passports; or school identification cards. (c) Residency. Required documentary evidence shall be readily available to the applicant. Examples of acceptable documentation include utility bills; property tax bills; individual income tax returns; mortgage documents or homeowner insurance documents; vehicle registration cards; residential rental or lease agreements; or letters from shelter programs confirming residence in a Massachusetts shelter program. (d) Citizenship or Immigration Status. Required documentary evidence shall be readily available to the applicant. Examples of acceptable documentation include U.S. passports; birth certificates; or reports of birth abroad. Any documents which reasonably establish the citizenship or immigration status of the child must be accepted, and no requirement for a specific type of documentation may be imposed. No child shall be denied childcare financial assistance based solely on an applicant's failure to demonstrate citizenship or immigration status without final review by EEC. (e) Eligibility Periods. Eligibility is determined for periods not to exceed 12 months, and is renewable subject to the family's continued eligibility for childcare financial assistance. (f) Contact Information. In order to remain eligible for a childcare subsidy, parents must maintain current address and telephone number information, if any, with the contracted childcare educator/provider or CCR&R.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (DHCD)

Emergency Assistance (EA) Shelter Program to Non-TAFDC Families: Administered by DHCD, this program provides temporary emergency shelter to income eligible homeless families who are not TAFDC recipients and assists them in finding permanent housing. To be eligible, household gross income is required to be less than or equal to 130% of the federal poverty level, with assets not greater than \$2,500. An EA-eligible family whose income increases and thereby exceeds 130% of federal poverty will remain eligible for shelter benefits for up to 6 months beyond the date at which their income exceeds the standard. Emergency Assistance may be provided, in accordance with the timetable in 760 CMR 67.08, on behalf of a needy child under the age of 21 or a pregnant woman without any needy children and other members of the household provided the following criteria are met. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

HomeBASE

DHCD operates a housing assistance program called HomeBASE. HomeBASE offers time-limited cash payments to families as an alternative to placement in an EA family shelter or a motel. To be eligible for HomeBASE assistance, a family must first be determined EA-eligible by DHCD. A family shall be eligible for Short Term Housing Transition (STHT) assistance if it is a homeless family or a family imminently at risk of becoming homeless that is eligible for temporary emergency family shelter. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

Emergency Assistance Hotel/Motel

Administered by DHCD, this program provides temporary emergency shelter to eligible homeless families receiving TAFDC and assists them in finding permanent housing. To be eligible, families must meet both the TAFDC and EA asset limits and gross income standards (130% of the federal poverty level). An EA-eligible family whose income increases and thereby exceeds this level will remain eligible for shelter benefits for up to six months beyond the date at which the income exceeds the standard. A household is eligible only if: 1. the household is at risk of domestic abuse in its current housing situation or is homeless because the head of household fled domestic violence and the household has not had access to safe, permanent housing since leaving the housing situation from which they fled; 2. the household is homeless due to fire, flood, or natural disaster through no fault of its members; 3. the household has been subject to eviction from its most recent housing due to: a. foreclosure for no fault of the members of the household; b. condemnation for no fault of the members of the household; c. conduct by a guest or former household member who is not part of the household seeking emergency shelter and over whose conduct the remaining household members had no control; d. nonpayment of rent; or e. no fault eviction at the end of a lease or an at-will tenancy. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

Emergency Assistance Case Management

DHCD provides case management services for all families in the Emergency Assistance (EA) system, including both shelters and motels. Case management is also provided to families who move out of EA in order to assist them in maintaining their housing. There are five programs that provide case management to current and former EA participants: Housing Search, Housing

Stabilization, FOR Families, HomeBASE Hotel/Motel Rehousing, and HomeBASE Housing Stabilization. More detailed program descriptions are provided in the chart below. The case management programs for Emergency Assistance (EA) participants provide case management services to financially eligible homeless families within the EA program. Emergency Assistance may be provided, in accordance with the timetable in 760 CMR 67.08, on behalf of a needy child under the age of 21 or a pregnant woman without any needy children and other members of the household provided the following criteria are met. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

Rental Assistance to Families in Transition

This program provides short-term assistance to families at risk of becoming homeless. An Eligible Resident is a Household which is: (1) financially eligible pursuant to 760 CMR 5.00 (Eligibility and Selection Criteria), as determined by the LHA; (2) in need of supportive residential services as determined by or pursuant to regulations or program requirements of the Agency; (3) eligible to participate or participating in a Residential Services Program; (4) not the owner or manager of the eligible property, or a member of the owner's Immediate Family. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

Massachusetts Rental Voucher

This program provides ongoing rental assistance to low-income families and provides permanent improvement in the lives of low-income families by offering both tenant- and project-based rental subsidies. For admission in the MRVP, a Participant's net income, as calculated pursuant to 760 CMR 49.05(7), shall be no more than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level Standard, as promulgated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

Public Housing Operating Subsidy

This program subsidizes the cost of operating state-owned public housing units occupied by TAFDC recipients. Because of the number of low-income residents in some housing authority developments, rents do not generate sufficient income to cover operating expenses and an operating subsidy is required. Income limits for admission of an applicant to state-aided public housing and for participation in the AHVP shall be set at two-year intervals. The income limits shall be the "Low Income Limits", set by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), then in effect, for a similarly sized household in the city or town in which the LHA is located. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (DPH)

Youth-At-Risk Grants

Administered by the Department of Public Health, these grants fund After School Programs which are linked to improved school outcomes, a reduction in drop-out rates and a reduction in out-of-wedlock pregnancies. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (DCF)

Teen Parent Program (TPP)

The Teen Parent Program offers support and guidance to pregnant teens and teen parents who are dealing with pregnancy and parenting issues, while allowing the teen families to remain intact. A collaboration between the Department of Children and Families and the Department of Transitional Assistance, this program provides pregnant and parenting teens a safe and caring environment in which to develop the skills necessary to make healthy choices for themselves and their children, and to lead independent and productive lives. All participants are TAFDC recipients and therefore meet TAFDC financial and non-financial eligibility criteria. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

Support and Stabilization

DCF provides services that strengthen, support and maintain a family's ability to provide a safe and nurturing environment to children and keep them in their own homes whenever possible. Such services are designed to build upon the existing strengths and resources of family members and to enhance the ability of families to better meet their goals and identified needs.

Comprehensive Early Childhood Services include mental health services, family support and education, health and dental screenings, home visits, information and referral, and transportation for at-risk children and their families, where parents have income under 125% of the state median income. The goal of this program is to reduce the stressors that may adversely impact family cohesion and impair the overall promotion of maintaining families.

Safelink Domestic Violence Hotline

DCF funds the Safelink Domestic Violence Hotline. The hotline is operated by Casa Myrna Vazquez, Inc. The hotline's objective is to provide an open and consistent response to callers in need of assistance due to domestic violence. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

Child Protective Services - Investigations

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is responsible for protecting children and strengthening and supporting families. As part of this responsibility, the agency must investigate all reports of child abuse and neglect. Reports are received by the agency, and a social worker is sent to visit the home. Child Protective Services (CPS) investigations offer an important entry point to an effective continuum of services focused on assisting families so that children can remain in the home. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

Referrals to TANF Assistance

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) Random Moment Time Study (RMTS) measures social worker time associated with referring individuals to the Department of Transitional

Assistance (DTA) for public benefits including the state's TANF cash assistance program, TAFDC. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE (DOR)

State Earned Income Tax Credit

The State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a refundable tax credit that is equal to fifteen percent of the federal earned income tax credit claimed by the filer in the same tax year. Taxpayers Who May Claim the Credit: Every employer who participates in the Full Employment Program and continues to employ a participant for at least one full month after any Full Employment Program subsidy for that participant has expired may claim the Employment Credit. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION (DHE)

Scholarship Reserve

The Scholarship Reserve provides financial assistance to Massachusetts students enrolled in and pursuing a program of higher education in any approved public or independent college, university, school of nursing, or any other approved institution furnishing a program of higher education. The scholarship program covers the cost of tuition for courses as well as the standard cost of living at the institution. These costs include all related expenses such as room and board, health insurance, travel expenses, and personal expenses.

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Needs-based Financial Aid Program and Endowment Foundation

The University of Massachusetts (UMASS) provides needs-based financial assistance to Massachusetts students enrolled in and pursuing a program of higher education at one of the UMASS locations: Boston, Lowell, Worcester, Amherst, or Dartmouth. The scholarship program covers the cost of tuition for courses as well as the standard costs associated with attending school. These costs include related expenses such as room and board, health insurance, travel expenses, and personal expenses.

LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (EOLWD)

YouthWorks Youth Employment Program

YouthWorks is a year-round employment program geared toward at-risk, low-income youth across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The program which serves youth, ages 14-21 has expanded

its scope over the last few years to provide year-round employment. The program has increased efforts to serve dropouts and older youth by focusing on serving the “disconnected youth” of the state. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION (DCR)

Summer Employment

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) operates youth employment programs throughout the summer months. The Summer Employment program employs youth to provide peer-led youth recreation and interpretive programs. The programs are aimed at serving underprivileged populations, especially in economically developing areas. The summer and seasonal employment services through the DCR’s MassParks Division employ individuals to provide services and programs at parks and recreational sites across the state during the peak season. Taxpayers Who May Claim the Credit: Every employer who participates in the Full Employment Program and continues to employ a participant for at least one full month after any Full Employment Program subsidy for that participant has expired may claim the Employment Credit. This program is reported as Segregated MOE.

Figure 86: TANF Certifications

TANF CERTIFICATIONS

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must provide a certification by the chief executive officer of that State, that during the fiscal year, the State will:	
1.	Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act);
2.	Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under the State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act);
	Yes
3.	Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that

	local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)- (A) have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and (B) have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services;
	Yes
4.	Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act);
	Yes
5.	Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act);
	Yes
6.	(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).- (i) screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals; (i) refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and (ii) waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence.
	Yes

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

(a) General Requirements²⁷: The State agency must prepare and submit an Employment and Training (E&T) Plan to its appropriate Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Office. The E&T Plan must be available for public inspection at the State agency headquarters. A State agency may include its plan for the SNAP E&T program in a Combined Plan under WIOA but will require FNS approval prior to implementation and must continue to make a copy of the plan available for public inspection. If a State

includes SNAP E&T in a Combined Plan under WIOA, the State agency will detail the following for each year covered by the Combined Plan:

(1) The nature of the E&T components the State agency plans to offer and the reasons for such components, including cost information. The methodology for State agency reimbursement for education components must be specifically addressed;

The mission of the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is to assist and empower low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, improve their quality of life, and achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency. Located within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Department ensures that the emergency and transitional needs of the individuals and families of the Commonwealth are met through a combination of federal- and state-funded programs.

DTA is the single state agency responsible for administering the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Massachusetts. As the designated SNAP agency, DTA manages the State's SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Program, SNAP Path to Work. The program operates statewide in 14 counties served by 22 DTA Local Offices and self-service kiosks located within partner organizations. SNAP clients not participating in the State's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) work program can access important employment services and work supports through the program.

Since 2006, DTA has partnered with Commonwealth Medicine, the consulting arm of the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMass) to offer under and unemployed SNAP-only participants meaningful opportunities to enhance employability through SNAP Path to Work participation. UMass assists DTA by recruiting, subcontracting with and monitoring SNAP Path to Work providers, with the design and printing of SNAP Path to Work promotional material and the design and maintenance of snappathtowork.org. UMass also assists SNAP Path to Work providers with claiming reimbursement for services rendered under the SNAP E&T reimbursement project.

Contracted providers receive partial federal reimbursement of incurred costs related to serving eligible participants as approved by FNS via DTA's annual SNAP E&T State Plan. DTA monitors the successful operation of this program in coordination with UMass.

As of October 1, 2019, fifty-two contracted SNAP Path to Work providers and the statewide network of MassHire Career Centers located across the state have the capacity to help as many as 5720 (duplicate count) low-income individuals gain valuable skills and increase employability through engagement in one or more of the following programs:

Non-Education, Non-Work Components

Supervised Job Search

Supervised job search activity occurs statewide at State approved locations (contracted SNAP Path to Work Provider organizations and MassHire Career Centers). Activities are supervised and tracked

by a SNAP Path to Work Provider. The state does not prescribe the specific method that providers must use to supervise and track client hours. Participation hours are reported to DTA (by the provider) monthly.

These offerings range in duration from 1-4 months and are operationally independent. Typically, Supervised Job Search participants are expected to make at least 12 job contacts or demonstrate 12 hours of effort per month. Activities may be conducted within a coaching or group setting.

Employment counselors may assist SNAP participants with writing/updating resumes, drafting cover letters, completing job applications and preparing for interviews. SNAP participants may also join networking groups. All providers have resources available such as computers, printers and scanners/faxes. SNAP participants may work independently or in close coordination with SNAP Path to Work provider staff.

Job search assistance is also included as part of many SNAP Path to Work vocational skills training programs and is available to statewide via WPP through MassHire Career Centers.

An estimated 862 work ready, job seeking participants will engage in this component in FFY 2020.

FFY 2020 component cost: \$745,335.84 - Average cost per participant: \$864.66.

Job Readiness (Job Search Training)

Job Readiness activity strives to enhance the job readiness of participants by providing instruction in job seeking techniques and increasing motivation and self-confidence. This may include direct training or support activities such as skill assessments, training in techniques for employability, counseling, information on available jobs, occupational exploration, including information on local emerging and in demand occupations, mock interviews, job fairs, life skills, guidance and motivation for development of positive work behaviors necessary for the labor market, or job placement services. Participants learn behaviors associated with job seeking success (e.g. Identification of skills/interests, obtaining interviews, updating resumes and developing good work habits).

Job search training is also included as part of many SNAP Path to Work vocational skills training programs and is available to statewide via WPP through MassHire Career Centers.

This component is offered statewide.

An estimated 1128 job seeking participants will engage in this component in FFY 2020.

FFY 2020 component cost: \$2,368,029.48 - Average cost per participant: \$2,099.32.

Job Retention

Job Retention services are offered statewide and include regular face to face and/or telephonic check ins with the working participant and may include case management, job coaching and supports, most typically transportation assistance, based on the needs of the client. To qualify for job retention services under the SNAP Path to Work umbrella, the participant must have:

- secured employment after or during SNAP E&T participation; and
- received SNAP in the month of or the month prior to enrolling in Job Retention services.

Once enrollment criteria have been met, Job Retention services are allowable for a period of at least 30 and up to 90 days, regardless of the participant's current SNAP status. Participation hours vary.

An estimated 650 participants will engage in this component in FFY 2020.

FFY 2020 component cost: \$464,886.72 - Average cost per participant: \$715.21.

Education Components

Basic/Foundational Skills Instruction (including HiSet/GED)

These programs are offered statewide and provide educational programs or activities that improve basic skills or otherwise improve employability or employment advancement potential including literacy training, high school equivalency test preparation (HiSET/GED), remedial education, and alternative education, college readiness and career preparation, and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs. Enrollment into an educational component will be based on an assessment that a lack of education is the primary barrier to employment or job advancement. At the completion of the component, the participant may be assigned to job search training or supervised job search to facilitate immediate job entry.

The high school equivalency preparation classes prepare clients to take the HiSET/GED test, either taken directly through the provider or through a third-party source approved to administer the exam. The majority of SNAP Path to Work providers offering this component will allow the client to take the test multiple times if needed.

Since there is not a nationally recognized certificate or diploma for receiving ABE services, successful participants will receive a certificate of completion and access to job opportunities. Their progress is monitored using TABE testing. With improved basic skills, many of these participants will move on to other SNAP E&T programs and/or higher education upon completion. Most of these programs also include elements of job readiness as the development of skills is focused around improving workforce opportunities.

State education funds do not cover all secondary and post-secondary education and training programs. SNAP E&T funds are not used to supplant existing educational services. SNAP E&T funds are not used for costs that exceed the normal costs of service provided to persons not participating in the SNAP E&T program or to support training that is normally available to the public at no cost.

An estimated 563 voluntary participants will engage this component in FFY 2020.

FFY 2020 component cost: \$1,441,210.56 -Average cost per participant: \$2,559.88.

English Language Acquisition

As they are independently operated by SNAP Path to Work providers, the English Language Acquisition (ELA) program varies in length from 3-12 months depending on the immediate goal of the client upon completion. Some of the ELA programs focus on refugees with an immediate need for basic English skills and cultural competencies to be established quickly so that the client can find employment. Several of the ELA programs are made up of different levels with attainable and reasonable goals for the client to complete in the time allotted based on their current skill level. While a diploma or certificate may not always be attained upon completion of intermediate level ELA classes, client progress can be measured through advancement from level to level. The majority of the ELA programs are English language for the workplace, and several focus on the language skills needed to advance out of entry-level positions and further a client's career opportunities without language limitation. The majority also include cultural competencies, such as English language soft skills to improve prospects for higher level work and salary. Two of the available programs wrap ELA into a skills training, allowing the client to market themselves as a multi-lingual worker in the medical or banking field, which is desirable for employers and supports the client in achieving both vocational skills and educational skills. Many of the participants in these programs will use the ELA program as a starting point and will later advance into a higher-level education or vocational skills training program to further improve employability.

ELAs are offered statewide. At the completion of the component, the participant may be assigned to job search training or supervised job search to facilitate immediate job entry.

An estimated 420 SNAP participants will engage this component in FFY 2020.

FFY 2020 *component* cost: \$1,262,115.48 - Average cost per participant: \$3,005.04.

Integrated Education and Training (IET)/Bridge Programs

In FFY 2020 two community colleges and one community-based organization offer college transition programs designed to equip adult learners with the academic, college-going and life skills necessary to enter college and complete a post-secondary degree or certificate program and establish a career path. The duration of these programs varies from 3.5 to 5.25 months.

This service is offered to participant living in Bedford, Boston, Hyannis, Lowell and surrounding areas.

An estimated 21 non-traditional adult learners will engage this component in FFY 2020.

FFY 2020 component cost: \$111,823.92 - Average cost per participant: \$5,324.95

Vocational Skills Training

Vocational Skills Training programs aim to improve the employability of participants by providing academic and technical knowledge and skills needed to move into subsequent education or training or directly into employment. Thirty-four contracted providers offer such training in FFY 2020.

A variety of occupational, remedial and entry-level job skills training, customized training, institutional skills training; upgrade training, and vocational education programs are available through the SNAP Path to Work network of providers.

The sixty-six individual Vocational Skills Training programs to be offered through the SNAP Path to Work program in FFY 2020 are operationally independent and vary in duration from 2 weeks to 12 months. Vocational Skills training participants will prepare for a variety of careers, in fields including but not limited to, Pharmacy Technician, Certified Nursing Assistant, Personnel Care Attendant, Phlebotomy, Culinary Arts, Diesel Technician, Commercial Driving, Hospitality, Medical Administration, Construction and Skilled Trades, Human Services and Information Technologies. The majority of the programs result in a certification or license where available. For those that do not have a specific certification in the labor market, supporting certifications are provided so that a client is fully prepared to apply for the position. Examples include CPR/First Aid for Early Childhood careers, ServSafe for culinary careers and OSHA certifications for Skilled Trade, Construction and Weatherization. Some programs also result in earning college credits so that the client can in the future continue to increase their skill level. All of the providers assist with finding jobs at the completion of the program in one of several ways: formal job search and/or job search training, provider relationships, internships, apprenticeships and/or job placement. All skills trainings include at least some job readiness and preparation for applications whether through a formal secondary program or built into the skills training program itself.

An estimated 1327 voluntary participants will engage in this component in FFY 2020.

FFY 2020 component cost: \$6,485,602.80 - Average cost per participant: \$4,887.42.

Work Components

Pre-Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship

The Teaching Kitchen Food Service Job Training Program apprenticeship is available, by application, to graduates of the Teaching Kitchen course. The apprenticeship is a full-time, twelve-week, paid apprenticeship working under the direction of the Executive Chef, Kitchen Manager, and Head Cook in the kitchen at Community Servings. The apprentice contributes to the preparation of over 2,000 from-scratch meals each day at Community Servings. These medically tailored meals are delivered to clients living with critical illnesses. The apprentice assists with preparing meats and produce for cooking, the preparation of hot foods in a high-volume kitchen, and the cleaning, sanitizing, and maintenance of commercial kitchen equipment. Community Servings is in Jamaica Plain, MA.

The HOPE Job Training Program, operated by House of Peace and education, Inc., helps prepare participants little to no or spotty work experience for work in the community through on-site apprenticeships. Job assignments vary based on the goals and interests of the participants. The apprenticeship experience is designed to reinforce attendance, communications, dealing with stress, workplace interpersonal skills, while providing experience that can be added to the client's resume and references. Program participants must also enroll in the HOPE Job Skills classroom training. HOPE is in Gardner, MA,

SNAP E&T funds are not used to pay the salary of apprentices.

An estimated 12 voluntary participants will engage in this component in FFY 2020.

FFY 2020 component cost: \$45,864.84 - Average cost per participant: \$3,822.07.

Work Experience/Training Programs (including OJT)

Operation A.B.L.E. has been providing training and employment services to workers aged 45+ who require job support services to re-enter the workforce since 1982. Through the six-week ABLE Internship Program SNAP participants gain skills upgrading, recent work experience, and current references by working with an ABLE partner employer. Placements are established in a number of industries including healthcare, education, hospitality and the non-profit sector. Participants work four days per week with the fifth day set aside for group 'job clubs.' An agreement is negotiated between ABLE and the employer as a means to structure the experience and to ensure that the placement is in compliance with the training/career plan. Operation A.B.L.E. is in Boston, MA.

During the second half of the Year Up program, students who complete the Learning and Development phase apply their skills and gain valuable experience by interning with one of more than 50 corporate partners across the Boston region, including Bank of America, Partners HealthCare, and Wayfair. These six-month professional internships allow our students to practice the skills they have learned and gain new competencies in a corporate setting to increase their marketability, while leading employers across Boston are accessing a talent pipeline they can train and develop to meet their business needs. For many Year Up Greater Boston students, these internships are their first time in a corporate setting; and the experiences these internships provide students are truly invaluable as they gain on-the-job training and begin their professional careers. During the Internship phase, students return to Year Up Greater Boston for an Internship Seminar course one afternoon per week for additional training and support. The course focuses on college preparation and career development with activities that include updating resumes, perfecting interview skills, and networking. Year Up is in Boston, MA.

ROCA, Inc. utilizes its transitional employment programming as a venue for young people to "learn to work by working." Young people are engaged in subsidized work crew placements, until they can achieve 60 consecutive days of employment. Through this work experience, young people develop both work-related soft skills and the hard skills necessary to succeed in the workplace. ROCA offers programming in Boston, Chelsea, Lynn, Holyoke and Springfield, MA.

SNAP E&T funds are not used to pay the salary of work experience participants.

An estimated 238 voluntary participants will engage in this component in FFY 2020.

FFY 2020 component cost: \$958,261.44 - Average cost per participant: \$4,026.31.

Other Components

Work Participant Program (WPP)

To improve access to job readiness, job search and training opportunities for DTA clients, the Department has partnered with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) and the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) to develop and implement the Work Participant Program (WPP) program.

DTA clients (both SNAP and TANF recipients) can access WPP through a MassHire Career Center (MCC) or by way of a referral from DTA. Participating clients will have an initial assessment and create a Career Development plan with a case manager, who will review the individualized and group services available through the career center depending on location. Services may include job readiness activities, such as resume and cover letter writing, interviewing skills, job search techniques and developing a professional network, or participation in employer recruitment events and self-directed job search. WPP participants will also have the opportunity to apply for WIOA funded training vouchers if it is determined they need further skills to enter or return to the workforce.

Until now, the WPP program has not been supported by SNAP E&T funds. In FFY 2020, SNAP client WPP participation will be partially supported by E&T funding, increasing WPP capacity and SNAP client access to job focused education and training activity and job search support. This relationship also allows eligible WPP participants to access SNAP E&T transportation and job retention supports.

Under WIOA, the MCC's operate programming with an emphasis on reframing the role of local employers to better match job seekers with in-demand, labor market driven jobs in each local area. Combining employer needs with job seekers prepared by the career centers for the local openings provides more local opportunities for DTA clients to find and retain work and reduce reliance on SNAP benefits and other public assistance programs.

An estimated that 1,000 voluntary participants will engage in this component in FFY 2020.

FFY 2020 component cost: \$1,000,000 - Average cost per participant: \$1,000

Case Management services accompany all SNAP Path to Work program activity. SNAP Participant hours in all SNAP Path to Work program activity are tracked/logged by contracted E&T Provider staff. Unless otherwise noted:

- o Part time* participants will participate in this component for a minimum of 7 hours per week;
or
- o Full time participants will participate in this component for a minimum of 15 hours per week.

**Minimum hour requirements adapted from the current Massachusetts Department of Early and Secondary Education standards for HiSET and Adult Basic Education.*

DTA is committed to assisting SNAP participants with education and skills training necessary to increase their ability to obtain unsubsidized employment. To this end, DTA will continue to work with contracted E&T Providers and other workforce development agencies to identify and increase qualifying opportunities (activities that have a direct link to employment) and supports to assist SNAP participants in achieving self-sufficiency.

DTA is reaching out to community colleges, our WIOA and other key providers to develop future strategies to increase investments in SNAP E&T resources in the long-term skill and credentialing acquisition of low-skills, low-income individuals, especially families receiving SNAP. The Department will explore ways to increase SNAP E&T reimbursements through community colleges, enrolling more SNAP participants in post-secondary education allowing the for higher degree attainment and employment prospects.

(2) An operating budget for the Federal fiscal year with an estimate of the cost of operation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan. Any State agency that requests 50 percent Federal reimbursement for State agency E&T administrative costs, other than for participant reimbursements, must include in its plan, or amendments to its plan, an itemized list of all activities and costs for which those Federal funds will be claimed, including the costs for case management and casework to facilitate the transition from economic dependency to self-sufficiency through work. Costs in excess of the Federal grant will be allowed only with the prior approval of FNS and must be adequately documented to assure that they are necessary, reasonable and properly allocated. A State must submit a plan amendment to request budget adjustments at least 30 days prior to planned implementation;

As of December 18, 2019, Massachusetts’ FFY 2020 SNAP E&T plan is federally funded as follows:

Figure 87: Massachusetts’ FFY 2020 SNAP E&T Plan

E&T 100% Grant	\$1,688,106.00
ABAWD Pledge Funds	\$1,610,390.00
Additional E&T Administrative Expenditures (federally reimbursed 50% of incurred costs)	
50 Percent Federal	\$4,364,901.70
50 Percent Federal (pending)	\$2,306,003.00
Participant Supports for Transportation and Other (federally reimbursed 50% of incurred costs)	
50 Percent Federal	\$788,274.16
50 Percent Federal (pending)	\$0.00
Participant Supports for Dependent Care (federally reimbursed 50% of incurred costs)	
50 Percent Federal	\$53,766.14
50 Percent Federal (pending)	\$0.00

(3) The categories and types of individuals the State agency intends to exempt from E&T participation, the estimated percentage of work registrants the State agency plans to exempt, and the frequency with which the State agency plans to reevaluate the validity of its exemptions;

SNAP Path to Work is a voluntary program that serves all eligible SNAP participants throughout the state in partnership with UMass and contracted SNAP Path to Work providers. Regardless of whether or not they are subject to SNAP work requirements described in CMR 362.300-362.340, DTA clients are not penalized for failure to participate in the SNAP Path to Work Program.

(4) The characteristics of the population the State agency intends to place in E&T;

All SNAP applicants and recipients (including those whose SNAP is active at \$0) who do not also receive TAFDC and who can work following job focused education or training, job readiness, job search assistance and/or work experience participation may voluntarily participate in the SNAP Path to Work program.

SNAP clients who are subject to work rules for Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) will have the opportunity to meet the ABAWD Work Program requirement by participating in qualifying programs offered through the SNAP Path to Work program, as well as comparable community-based education and training programs, including WIOA job search, education and training activity, or self-initiated workfare placements. ABAWD participation in education and training programs offered outside of the SNAP Path to Work program are not supported by SNAP E&T funds.

SNAP E&T Providers perform a comprehensive assessment of each interested SNAP participant using educational, skills, and career assessment tools to determine appropriateness for the particular E&T component and service needs. The assessment includes occupational interests, vocational skills and aptitudes, educational attainment levels, English proficiency; basic literacy skills, prior work experience, barriers to employment, and need for support services.

Assessment tools include but are not limited to: TABE Tests, HiSET, Pre-test, ESL Placement Test, Testing of Applied Mathematics, SOLOM (Student Oral Language Observation Matrix), Skills Inventory and Myers-Briggs.

All completed assessment results are shared with DTA Central Office SNAP E&T staff via DTA's online Partner Activity Tracking Hub (PATH system). After review of the assessment information and the activity plan, eligible SNAP participants are approved for SNAP Path to Work participation.

Assessment costs are included in the costs of training program components.

(5) The estimated number of volunteers the State agency expects to place in E&T;

As of October 1, 2019, fifty-two contracted SNAP Path to Work providers and the statewide network of MassHire Career centers located across the state have the capacity to help as many as 5720 (duplicate count) low-income individuals gain valuable skills and increase employability through engagement in SNAP Path to Work program activity.

(6) The geographic areas covered and not covered by the E&T Plan and why, and the type and location of services to be offered;

SNAP Path to Work programming is offered statewide. That said, there are parts of the state where there is little to no activity outside of the WPP program (for example, Western Massachusetts and the Cape Cod areas). DTA will continue provider recruitment efforts, targeting

community colleges statewide and additional community-based organizations (CBOs) in these E&T desert areas. New providers will be invited to begin participating in the program as monetarily and programmatically feasible.

(7) The method the State agency uses to count all work registrants as of the first day of the new fiscal year;

DTA is required to establish the number of work registrants (or those subject to General SNAP Work Rules) on the SNAP caseload on October 1st of each year. The work registrant count is extracted from DTA's BEACON eligibility system data base based on individual SNAP recipient coding.

(8) The method the State agency uses to report work registrant information on the quarterly Form FNS-583;

27 CFR § 273.7(c)(6).

To determine the unduplicated count of new work registrants in Massachusetts during the federal fiscal year:

1. The total number of work registrants on the first day of the federal fiscal year are identified by:

- determining the total population of SNAP participants (applicants and recipients) between the ages of 16 and 59 (including 16 and 59), excluding those who meets exemption criteria identified at 7 CFR 273.7(b)(1).

2. On the last day of each month thereafter the total number of new work registrants for the month is determined by:

- determining the total population of SNAP participants (applicants and recipients) between the ages of 16 and 59 (including 16 and 59), excluding those who meets exemption criteria identified at 7 CFR 273.7(b)(1); and
- comparing to the resulting list to the previous lists for the fiscal year, filtering out anyone who appeared previously, to ensure that individuals who register more than once during the program year are counted only once.

DTA provides an unduplicated count of new SNAP work registrants on the FNS-583 Quarterly Program Activity Report form

(9) The method the State agency uses to prevent work registrants from being counted twice within a Federal fiscal year. If the State agency universally work registers all SNAP applicants, this method must specify how the State agency excludes those exempt from work registration under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(b)(1). If the State agency work registers nonexempt participants whenever a new application is submitted, this method must also specify how the State agency excludes

those participants who may have already been registered within the past 12 months as specified under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(a)(1)(i);

Methodology has been described in response to previous question.

(10) The organizational relationship between the units responsible for certification and the units operating the E&T components, including units of the Statewide workforce development system, if available. FNS is specifically concerned that the lines of communication be efficient and that noncompliance by the participant be reported to the certification unit within 10 working days after the noncompliance occurs;

All SNAP certification activity is conducted by First Available Worker (FAW) SNAP case managers.

The Central Office SNAP Employment and Training Unit is made up of SNAP E&T management and four SNAP E&T Specialists, supported by one SNAP case manager who conducts eligibility work as needed. SNAP E&T Specialists, supported by local office Full Engagement Workers (FEWS) answer client and FAW questions about E&T program participation and refer participants to SNAP Path to Work providers for training. SNAP E&T Specialists also serve as the primary DTA contacts for and provide support to contracted SNAP Path to Work providers.

As Massachusetts operates a voluntary SNAP E&T program, there are no penalties for failing to participate in the SNAP Path to Work program. However, SNAP recipients who are subject to and choose to meet the ABAWD Work Program Requirement through program participation may become ineligible for SNAP if they fail to meet the work rules for any three months in a three-year period.

When a SNAP E&T Specialist approves SNAP Path to Work program enrollment for a person subject to the ABAWD rules, s/he records their participation within DTA's BEACON eligibility system and indicates whether or not the planned activity meets the ABAWD requirement. Each month, BEACON automatically assigns "Strikes" and ineligibility status (if applicable) to those subject to the rules who are not known to be meeting via hours worked, E&T participation, or verified workfare (volunteer) hours.

SNAP Path to Work providers report the participation status and hours of enrolled clients to DTA monthly. When the participation hours of a participant who is subject to the ABAWD rules fall below 20 hours per week, a Strike is applied unless the provider or the client has reported good cause.

(11) The relationship between the State agency and other organizations it plans to coordinate with for the provision of services, including organizations in the Statewide workforce development system, if available. Copies of contracts must be available for inspection;

DTA maintains an Interdepartmental Service Agreements (ISA) with UMASS, who assists DTA with the administration of the SNAP E&T program, providing technical assistance, recruiting new providers, maintaining snappathtowork.org, and subcontracting with most SNAP Path to Work

providers. UMASS provides technical support and assists providers with claims for partial federal reimbursement of incurred costs and monitors provider compliance with federal and state E&T requirements.

DTA also maintains an ISA with the MassHire Department of Career Services, through which WPP services are funded and administered to eligible SNAP participants via the statewide MassHire Career Center network.

(12) The availability, if appropriate, of E&T programs for Indians living on reservations after the State agency has consulted in good faith with appropriate tribal organizations;

DTA has consulted with federally recognized American Indian tribal organizations in Massachusetts regarding the availability of Employment and Training (E&T) opportunities through DTA's SNAP Path to Work program.

The Education Directors of both the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Community and Government Center have been contacted regarding the Department's wish to expand the availability of SNAP Path to Work opportunities that are accessible and responsive to the special needs of American Indians on reservations. DTA plans to remain in contact with both tribal representatives as the State's E&T program expands to ensure that the needs of tribal members are met and continue discussion about the possibility of the tribes partnering with DTA to receive federal reimbursement for E&T services that they provide to tribal members.

(13) If a conciliation process is planned, the procedures that will be used when an individual fails to comply with an E&T program requirement. Include the length of the conciliation period; and

N/A

(14) The payment rates for childcare established in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant provisions of 45 CFR 98.43, and based on local market rate surveys.

N/A

(15) The combined (Federal/State) State agency reimbursement rate for transportation costs and other expenses reasonably necessary and directly related to participation incurred by E&T participants. If the State agency proposes to provide different reimbursement amounts to account for varying levels of expenses, for instance for greater or lesser costs of transportation in different areas of the State, it must include them here.

SNAP Path to Work participation is supported on an as needed basis when available by provision of participant supports (participant reimbursement) including:

- Transportation;
- Dependent Care;

- Educational/Credential Test Fees;
- Books and Supplies; and
- Clothing.

The amount budgeted for participant supports as part of this plan does not reflect all supports that SNAP Path to Work participants may receive. Supports that are paid for using funds that do not qualify for federal reimbursement (e.g. Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) administered child care subsidies funded by TANF monies and the Child Care Development Fund and transportation assistance that may be provided to certain E&T participants through the MBTA Youth Pass Program) are not reflected in the budget. Additionally, some providers provide things that might qualify as supports under other circumstances but issue these benefits to all program participants (included in their standard cost of program operation). For example, if books were to be included in the standard tuition for a program for all participants, regardless of SNAP status or individually identified need, this assistance would not be considered an E&T reimbursement.

SNAP Path to Work participants' need for program supports are addressed by SNAP Path to Work providers on a case-by-case basis as part of the assessment process and as the need arises thereafter. Some SNAP Path to Work participant supports reflected in this plan's budget are funded and issued directly through a SNAP Path to Work provider. Providers with the capability to do so may be partially reimbursed for issued supports, as long as supports are reasonable, necessary, and directly related to participation in the program. DTA does not impose a limit on provider issued participant support costs or dictate the method by which supports must be administered but must approve provider budgets and plans for issuing these supports for the provider to receive E&T reimbursement for these expenditures.

Beginning in February of 2019, SNAP Path to Work Providers began requesting State funded transportation supports on behalf of SNAP Path to Work participants who need it. Contracted providers assess each participant's need and record the request within the PATH system. Approved transportation supports requested on behalf of eligible program participants are made available to participants via the household's EBT card and are based on the county in which the participant lives (ranging from \$90 to \$149 per month, as determined by the average cost of transportation for each county).

The state will continue to explore ways in which we might fund additional supports and to connect E&T participants with existing barrier removing supports that are available outside of the SNAP Path to Work program.

(16) Information about expenses the State agency proposes to reimburse. FNS must be afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed reimbursements before they are implemented.

The participant supports described above have been approved by FNS as part of the FFY 2020 SNAP E&T State Plan.

(b) Able-bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD)28: A State agency interested in receiving additional funding for serving able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) subject to the 3 month time limit, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. §273.7(d)(3), must include the following for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA:

(1) Its pledge to offer a qualifying activity to all at-risk ABAWD applicants and recipients;

The Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, in collaboration with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), and Jewish Vocational Services, Inc. (JVS), pledges to offer qualifying activities to all at risk ABAWDs.

Under the terms of an Interdepartmental Service Agreement (ISA) between DTA and MDCS, \$1,000,000 of DTA TANF funding is currently made available to the career centers to supplement MCC programming for DTA customers through the Work Participant Program (WPP). This funding is used to offset the cost of outreach, service delivery, and regular communication with DTA for a majority TANF participant population (approximately 3,0000 clients). While the program has always served SNAP-only clients, including ABAWDs, DTA and MDCS did not aggressively marketed the program to this population prior to October 1, 2019.

(2) Estimated costs of fulfilling its pledge;

To offset the administrative costs related to potentially serving large numbers of ABAWDs well, DTA has allocated an additional \$1,000,000 in Pledge funds to support WPP program expansion. This funding enables DTA and DCS to more robustly market the program to and serve the SNAP-only population, including ABAWDs. While the expansion aims to increase SNAP client participation in general, the State takes very seriously its promise to offer all ABAWDs who want to participate in qualifying activity the opportunity to do so.

IN FFY 2020 an additional \$610,390.00 in Pledge funds will support E&T activity that was designed to meet the needs of ABAWDs that is offered by SNAP Path to Work Providers outside of the MHCC network.

(3) A description of management controls in place to meet pledge requirements;

All at-risk ABAWDs will receive an invitation to participate in qualifying activity through the SNAP Path to Work program.

Those subject to the ABAWD rules who choose to enroll in WPP will have access to a variety of employment focused activities and supports that are funded through a combination of local, state and federal (including WIOA and E&T) resources.

The SNAP E&T eligibility of WPP participants will be verified by veteran SNAP Path to Work provider, Jewish Vocational Services (JVS) via the PATH system prior to SNAP Path to Work

program enrollment. E&T eligibility is not a condition of WPP enrollment, but only E&T eligible participants will have access to SNAP transportation supports and job retention services through the SNAP Path to Work program.

The participation status and hours of E&T eligible WPP participants will be collected by JVS and entered into the PATH system monthly.

Continued E&T eligibility will be verified on a monthly basis.

JVS, DTA's WIOA Coordinator and SNAP E&T staff will provide training and ongoing technical assistance and support to MDCS staff at the local and state level. All partners will work closely to ensure compliance with state and federal E&T requirements and monitor the efficacy of the program.

(4) A discussion of its capacity and ability to serve at-risk ABAWDs;

28 7 CFR § 273.7(c)(7)

Eligible MA residents can access an array of job search and job focused education and training activity through MassHire Career Centers and satellite locations located throughout the state. (www.mass.gov/files/documents/2019/05/15/2066A_to%20use%2005-15-19.pdf)

Considering the additional employment barriers that many DTA clients experience, to improve access to job readiness, job search and training opportunities, DTA has partnered with MDCS to develop, implement and finance the Work Participant Program (WPP) program (described below).

ABAWDs have had the opportunity to meet the work requirement through the WPP program by participating in WIOA activity for 20 hours per week since the program began. However, the additional administrative burden of identifying those subject to the ABAWD rules, tailoring the activity plan to meet both the needs of the client and the 20-hour requirement and tracking and reporting participation hours to DTA on behalf of ABAWD clients has made it cost prohibitive for the MDCS to commit to providing enhanced services for ABAWDs without additional financial support.

In FFY 2020, SNAP E&T Pledge funding has been made available to MDCS to offset the administrative costs associated with serving additional SNAP-only clients, including ABAWDs under the SNAP Path to Work umbrella.

DTA clients (both SNAP and TANF recipients) can access the WPP program through any MassHire Career Center or by way of a referral from DTA. Participating clients have an initial assessment and create a Career Development plan with a case manager, who will review the individualized and group services available through the career center depending on location. Services may include job readiness activities, such as resume and cover letter writing, interviewing skills, job search techniques and developing a professional network, or participation in employer recruitment

events and self-directed job search. WPP participants also have the opportunity to apply for WIOA funded training vouchers if it is determined they need further skills to return to the workforce.

Should an ABAWD choose to meet their requirement through the WPP program, the MHCC case manager will assist them in developing a plan for 20 hours per week of activity.

SNAP E&T eligible WPP participants who secure employment may qualify for SNAP Path to Work job retention services.

Jewish Vocational Services, Inc. (JVS) has been a SNAP E&T provider for over a decade and has partnered with DTA to design and actively engage ABAWDs in qualifying E&T services since 2016. They also manage the MassHire Downtown Boston Career Center and, over the course of the last year, have been braiding E&T and career center services to meet the needs of ABAWDs and other SNAP participants. In FFY 2020, JVS will partner with career centers statewide to provide technical assistance and support hybrid SNAP E&T WPP programming.

At a minimum, all at-risk ABAWDs will be sent an invitation to access qualifying WPP services via the MHCC that serves their home area.

SNAP-only clients, including ABAWDs, who voluntarily access WPP services will be flagged by MHCC staff as WPP Expansion program participants in their MOSES system.

Career center staff will have SNAP-only clients sign a *Permission to Share Information (PSI)* form and send it and a barrier assessment determination to contracted SNAP Path to Work Provider, Jewish Vocational Services, Inc. (JVS) who will verify SNAP E&T eligibility and enroll eligible participants in the SNAP Path to Work program using the PATH system. Assessment and activity plan information will be accessed by JVS via MDCS' Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) for the purpose of SNAP Path to Work enrollment.

Each month, the career centers will send JVS the participation status and hours of enrolled participants. JVS will enter this data on the PATH system and request DTA transportation supports on behalf of those who need it. Additionally, JVS will record outcome data on PATH and provide job retention Services as applicable.

ABAWDs may also elect to participate in qualifying activity offered by any of the other SNAP Path to Work providers located statewide, via comparable programming or to fulfil the work requirement through work or self-directed workfare.

Information about the size and special needs of its ABAWD population; and

It is estimated that there will be an average of 6,000 SNAP recipients subject to the ABAWD rules on the MA SNAP caseload in a given month during FFY 2020. Of these approximately, 26% will be at-risk of becoming ineligible for SNAP due to noncompliance with the rules, prompting an invitation to participate in WPP programming. Based on low ABAWD participation in existing SNAP Path to Work programming DTA expects approximately 1,000 ABAWD enrollments in WPP or other

SNAP Path to Work programming in FFY 2020. Despite this estimate, the state is prepared to serve more ABAWDs should more choose to avail themselves of the offer.

(5) Information about the education, training, and workfare components it will offer to meet the ABAWD work requirement.

SNAP clients who are Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) will have the opportunity to meet the ABAWD Work Program requirement by participating in qualifying programs offered through the SNAP Path to Work program, as well as comparable community-based education and training programs, including WIOA job search, education and training activity, or self-initiated workfare placements. ABAWD participation in education and training programs offered outside of the SNAP Path to Work program are not supported by SNAP E&T funds.

Approximately half of the SNAP E&T activity offered under the SNAP Path to Work program umbrella meets the definition of qualifying for ABAWD rule purposes. That is, the activity can be participated in at least 20 hours per week and the majority of program hours are education or skills training activity or the programming is considered WIOA programming.

(c) Optional Workfare²⁹: State agencies or other political subdivisions must describe in detail in the plan how the political subdivision, working with the State agency and any other cooperating agencies that may be involved in the program, will fulfill the provisions of 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m). If a State opts to operate an optional workfare program or modify an existing optional workfare program, through a Combined Plan under WIOA, it must provide the following: (1) State agencies or political subdivisions submitting a workfare plan must submit with the plan an operating budget covering the period from the initiation of the workfare program's implementation schedule to the close of the Federal fiscal year for each year covered by the Combined Plan. In addition, an estimate of the cost for one full year of operation must be submitted together with the workfare plan for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan.

N/A. Massachusetts operates a comparable workfare program.

(2) If workfare plans are submitted by more than one political subdivision, each representing the same population (such as a city within a county), FNS will determine which political subdivision will have its plan approved. Under no circumstances will a SNAP recipient be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program. If a political subdivision chooses to operate a workfare program and represents a population which is already, at least in part, subject to a SNAP workfare program administered by another political subdivision, it must establish in its workfare plan how SNAP recipients will not be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program.

29 7 CFR § 273.7(m)

30 7 CFR § 273.7(m)(8)

N/A. Massachusetts operates a comparable workfare program.

(d) Voluntary Workfare³⁰: State agencies and political subdivisions may operate workfare programs whereby participation by SNAP recipients is voluntary. In such a program, the penalties for failure to comply, as provided in 7 C.F.R. §273.7(f), will not apply for noncompliance. The number of hours to be worked will be negotiated between the household and the operating agency, though not to exceed the limits provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(5)(ii). In addition, all protections provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(6)(i) shall continue to apply. Those State agencies and political subdivisions choosing to operate such a program shall indicate in their workfare plan how their staffing will adapt to anticipated and unanticipated levels of participation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA. FNS will not approve plans which do not show that the benefits of the workfare program, in terms of hours worked by participants and reduced SNAP allotments due to successful job attainment, are expected to exceed the costs of such a program. In addition, if FNS finds that an approved voluntary program does not meet this criterion, FNS reserves the right to withdraw approval.

N/A. Massachusetts operates a comparable workfare program.

(e) Comparable Workfare³¹: The State agency or political subdivision must provide a description of its program, including a methodology for ensuring compliance with 7 C.F.R §273.7(m)(9)(ii) for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA.

31 7 CFR § 273.7(m)(9)

32 7 CFR § 273.7(c)(8)

33 7 CFR § 273.7(c)(8)

DTA operates a self-directed (comparable) workfare program that is not supported by E&T funds. A SNAP recipient who is subject to the ABAWD rules may elect to meet the work requirement by volunteering at a non-profit, public, or quasi-public organization for a number of hours equal to the ABAWDs portion of the household's monthly SNAP grant divided by Massachusetts' minimum wage. Clients are encouraged to contact Central Office SNAP Path to Work staff prior to starting volunteer work to confirm that the selected organization qualifies as a workfare site. One way that a client may elect to show proof of compliance with the ABAWD Work Program Requirement is by submitting verification of completed volunteer hours. Volunteer work that is completed without prior approval must be validated before ABAWD Work Program compliance is recorded.

DTA has established relationships with nearly 100 non-profit, public, or quasi-public organizations that have agreed to host ABAWD volunteers. Those seeking volunteer opportunities may locate potential organizations via snappathtowork.org, contact Central Office SNAP Path to Work staff via the SNAP Path to Work Line for assistance. Workfare placements recommendations are made based on the client's location, language, experience, transportation needs, and Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) status.

(f) Process³²: The State agency must submit amendments to the SNAP E&T segment of the Combined Plan for FNS approval at least 30 days prior to the planned implementation in order to receive federal SNAP E&T funding for the activities not covered by the approved Combined Plan.

(g) Plan Modifications³³: If FNS determines that the performance of a State agency with respect to employment and training outcomes is inadequate, FNS may require the State agency to make modifications to the State E&T plan to improve the outcomes.

Funding Disclaimer: Funds may not be available when SNAP E&T portions of a Combined State Plan under WIOA are approved. FNS's obligation after approving a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is contingent upon the availability of an appropriation from which payment can be made. Any FNS funding resulting from an approval of a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is subject to FNS receiving sufficient funds (in the Program Financial Control System for FNS) to fund this and all prior approved SNAP E&T plans submitted as part of a Combined State Plan in their entirety in the time and date order received. Federal reimbursement to States for 50 percent of State administrative expenditures and for participant reimbursements is subject to the above conditions.
29 7 U.S.C. 2025(h)(5)(E) as amended by Agricultural Act of 2014 .

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

(a) The TAA program is a required partner in the One-Stop delivery system, established under section 121 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Therefore, given that the TAA program is part of the broader workforce system and a key goal for the TAA program is to ensure that trade-affected workers are able to successfully return to work, *ETA strongly encourages States to integrate their TAA program activities in concert with other workforce system core and partner programs that may also address the needs of trade-affected workers.* WIOA Sec. 103(3)(A)(B). Consistent with the Governor-Secretary Agreement, the States agree to use funds obligated under the TAA Annual Cooperative Financial Agreement (CFA), to carry out the TAA program, including: 1) ensuring integration of the TAA program into its One-Stop delivery system; 2) using the centers in this system or network as the main point of participant intake and delivery of TAA program benefits and services; and 3) ensuring the terms of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the Local Workforce Investment Boards, as established under WIOA section 121(c) will apply to the assistance provided by other One-Stop partners to TAA participants. (Trade Act Sec. 239 (a) as amended by WIOA section 512 (hh))

Describe the State's process for operating the TAA program that ensures coordination and integration with WIOA core and partner programs. Provide examples, if available, of how the co-location of Wagner-Peyser in MassHire centers and the addition of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), have improved access to these services for trade-affected workers.

Since July 2007, the Trade Programs have been integrated into the customer flow of a career center. In Massachusetts TAA individuals are identified as dislocated workers and are treated as such.

TAARRNEG, a component of the MOSES database, assists in tracking benefits and services to potential and eligible TAA workers. Referrals are made to the career center of choice upon layoff date. The state also compiles a list of those workers who have filed UI claims against the company from the impact date to present through interfaces with the Massachusetts UI Online system and receives updates to those lists to provide notice to individual workers regarding the TAA Program.

Training is regularly conducted for all career center staff. All Trade policies are disseminated to staff and posted through Workforce Issuances for the career centers and the public to research and obtain.

The Massachusetts Trade Unit operates on a team concept that promotes statewide consistency in the provision of TAA services. The Trade Unit's business plan includes process improvements on a number of existing initiatives as well as the review of existing and the development of new processes and procedures. All services and processes are continually evaluated and improved as part of a continuous improvement strategy. This strategy continues with core and required partners under WIOA.

(b) States must develop and manage resources (including electronic case management systems) to integrate data, including co-enrollment data, provided through different agencies administering benefits and services to trade-affected workers in order to ensure consistent program administration and fiscal integrity, as well as reliable fiscal and performance reporting. (WIOA section 103(b)(3))

Describe how the State will use TAA funding for infrastructure, other shared costs, and the promotion of the development of integrated intake, case management and reporting systems.

The Trade Unit oversees and monitors the timeliness of local One-Stop Career Center assistance to customers with the application process for UI benefits, training services, and other related program allowances provided in conjunction with other federal and state programs including access to services, (i.e. testing and initial and comprehensive assessment) and case management services consistent with state policy.

The following services are offered to all Trade Adjustment Assistance eligible customers:

- Rapid Response services
- Trade information and services follow up (Trade Orientations either onsite at the company or at the MassHire Career Center locations)
- Individual career counseling, use of assessment tools (i.e. TORQ) and testing (Career Ready 101/WorkKeys)
- Case management
- A full menu of workshops and access to LMI type resources (i.e. O*Net, MassCIS),
- Training assistance

- Proactive job development services

Trade will continue to utilize and allocate case management and reemployment funds to local areas. As directed to local areas, in addition to covering staffing costs for career counselors, the “employment and case management services” funding may also be used for: assessment tests, skills transferability analysis, peer counselors, development and provision of labor market information, maintenance and enhancement of electronic case management systems to allow for improved case management services, information on available training, including provider performance and cost information; and, any other staff costs related to case management. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive.

- (c) Except for States covered by the regulatory exemption 20 CFR 618.890 (c) or to perform non-inherently governmental functions, States must engage only State government personnel to perform TAA-funded functions undertaken to carry out the TAA program, and must apply to such personnel the standards for a merit system of personnel administration applicable to personnel covered under 5 CFR part 900, subpart F. (20 CFR 618.890)

Describe how TAA program-funded benefits and services are approved by merit-staffed employees in accordance with 20 CFR 618.890.

Although Trade customers flow through and receive access to benefits and services at the local career center level, all applications and requests for benefits, both TAA training, waivers from training, job search and relocation allowances, RTAA and TRA, are submitted via MOSES or UI Online and a determination is issued by central merit-based staff located at MDCS or DUA, respectfully. There are also multiple interfaces between the two systems to allow accurate and timely processing.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program Assurances

The State Plan must include assurances that:	
1.	On an annual basis, the CSA will execute TAA Cooperative Financial Agreements and UI Funding Agreements for each fiscal year during the four-year State planning cycle.

Massachusetts Response:

On an annual basis, MDCS and DUA, respectively, will continue to execute and adhere to the conditions within the TAA Cooperative Financial Agreements and UI Funding Agreements for each fiscal year during the four-year State planning cycle.

JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS

The Jobs for Veterans' State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to 54 State Workforce Agencies, (including DC, PR, VI and Guam) to hire dedicated staff to provide Individualized Career Services to Veterans and eligible persons with significant barriers to employment (SBE); and to assist employers fill open positions with veteran job candidates.

The JVSG Program supports the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist, (DVOP) and Local Veteran Employment Representative, (LVER) positions. DVOP Specialists provide Individualized Career Services to Veterans with significant barriers to employment, (SBE) prioritizing services to veterans who are; homeless, service-connected disabled, Vocational Rehabilitation Program participants, and Veterans that are economically and educationally disadvantaged. The JVSG Program is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula determined by the total number of Veterans seeking employment in Massachusetts compared to the total number in all states. The JVSG Program operates on a fiscal funding year, (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported using the ETA-9173 Report quarterly (using four "rolling quarters") in a Program Year basis. The JVSG Program is part of the Massachusetts Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined Four Year State plan. JVSG grant recipients are required to provide Priority of Service to Veterans and covered persons in accordance with 38USC 4215. Massachusetts Proudly Serves those who served by providing Priority of Service to Veterans. The term qualified job-training program means any workforce preparation, development, or delivery program or service that is funded in whole or in part by Department of Labor. The term Priority of Service means with respect to any qualified job training program, that Veterans and covered persons receive priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) also requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a Combined State Plan narrative, which includes:

(a) How the State intends to provide employment, training and job placement services to Veterans and eligible persons under the JVSG;

All customers who appear for services at the MassHire Career Center (MCC) are asked if they are a Veteran. If the customer identifies as a Veteran, they are immediately informed of their Priority of Service status. MCC staff first offer the Veteran a spot in the next Career Center Seminar (orientation) the main portal into the Massachusetts MassHire Workforce Development and Career Center System.

This orientation provides all customers including Veterans information on, and access to, the full array of services, programs and activities available at or accessible from the MCC. As part of the orientation the Veteran will complete a self-assessment of their work search strategies, if appropriate, complete the Career Readiness 101 assessment, complete a job profile with a career counselor and establish the next appropriate steps in their Career Plan. If it is determined that the Veteran has an SBE during the initial assessment or triage, the Veteran is referred to the DVOP for Individual Career Services.

If the Veteran customer prefers not to attend a CCS, they are provided with information on the full array of services available and scheduled for the next appropriate service. If they asked to speak with a Veteran representative (DVOP), they are also be referred to that Veteran representative.

The primary role of the DVOP staff is to guide Veterans with significant barriers into employment who are most in need of Individualized Career Services. Refer to VPL 03-19 Designation of Additional Populations Eligible for DVOP Services, 03-14 changes 1 and 2, Expansion and Clarification of Significant Barriers to Employment, VPL 03-14 JVSG Program Reforms and Roles and Responsibilities of staff serving Veterans. For those Veteran customers who do not face significant employment barriers, the Commonwealth relies heavily on its WIOA partners (particularly Wagner-Peyser) to provide the services typically sought by such “job ready” individuals.

All eligible Veterans seeking employment receive Individualized Career Services from DVOP or MCC staff, through the framework of Career Planning, which is consistent with NVTI training. The responsibility of serving these “most in need” Veterans falls primarily on grant funded DVOP staff. Massachusetts will continue to “case manage” Veterans from the above categories by a DVOP whenever possible (based on the state staffing plan and taking into consideration the best interests of the individual Veteran).

According to the Massachusetts One Stop Career Center Activity Report (OSCCAR) for PY19, 56% of the Veterans receiving an approved service at the MCCs either had a service-connected disability or were economically or educationally disadvantaged. Prioritizing services to these targeted Veteran categories are facilitated by specifically “flagging” such “at risk” Veteran customers within the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) database.

LVER staff advocate for employment and training opportunities with business, industry and community-based organizations in order to secure gainful employment for SBE and Veteran customers. The LVER will establish regional job search workshops that include Veterans; promote credentialing and licensing opportunities for Veterans, and job driven apprenticeship opportunities for Veterans. The LVER is responsible for improving access into the appropriate employment and training service for Veterans within our employment service delivery system. The Commonwealth LVERs will work closely with efforts of the Governor’s Workforce Skills Cabinet, MassBizWorks and Core Partners to advocate for employment and training opportunities with business, industry and community-based organizations, and conduct job development activities in order to secure gainful employment for Veteran customers. This association can also assist with marketing and support of the Department of Labor VETS Hire Vets Medallion Program, (HVMP) throughout Massachusetts. The LVER will outreach to federal contractors and training providers, and coordinate with the Office of Federal Contracting Compliance (OFCCP), to ensure that Veterans are receiving priority in employment opportunities by federal contractors.

(c) The manner in which DVOP specialists and LVER staff are integrated into the State's Employment service delivery system or One-Stop delivery system partner network;

The Commonwealth's MassHire Career Centers are fully and seamlessly integrated with the full array of WIOA Title I, Wagner-Peyser and other key workforce partner services co-located under one roof. The goal is to as quickly as possible, deliver the desired and appropriate services. Integration also means that initial services provided to eligible Veterans are primarily provided by staff other than DVOPs.

The initial assessment identifies the individual's "job readiness". If the Veteran is not disadvantaged, (SBE) services are provided on a priority basis by MCC staff. If individualized services are appropriate, a case plan is developed and the Veteran is assisted directly by the DVOP or referred to supportive services as appropriate.

As an example of integration, a Veteran in need of additional training/schooling to be more employable is "fast tracked" through the eligibility determination and enrollment process. In such a situation, the Veteran's primary case manager may well be another MCC staff member that will provide case management rather than the DVOP.

This integration applies to other MCC partners as well, including Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, state colleges and universities. At the state level, and working throughout the system, key partnerships exist with Veterans Administration hospitals and counseling centers. The VA is represented at local MCC Veteran events (job fairs, information sessions). DVOP staff also outreach to VA hospitals and centers on a regular basis. The Commonwealth has designated a DVOP as the Individualized Services Coordinator for the Vocational and Rehabilitation Program (VR and E). This individual is co-located with VA's state level VR&E coordinator. The VR&E/ISC team conducts regional training sessions for all DVOP staff and additional training for regional VA counselors on the VR&E regulations and reporting requirements, as needed.

A second key partnership exists with the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Services (DVS). Through this agency, each Commonwealth town and municipality has an assigned Veterans' Services Officer to provide a wide range of benefits and services to Veterans. Cross training and relationship building at the state and local level have enhanced our ability to quickly address the needs of Veterans.

Both the VA and the DVS regularly participate in local, regional and statewide Veterans' programs, events and training sessions.

Outreach and linkage to those Veterans most in need of individualized services is an ongoing top priority. Local DVOPs have direct contact and coordination with homeless Veteran shelters (HVRP grantees) to provide direct services and training program opportunities leading to gainful employment and self-sufficiency. Included in these outreach efforts are broad-based marketing and promotion of Veteran-oriented events, job fairs and education/training programs.

Linkage to employers occurs in a number of ways. LVERs will be regionally aligned with MCC business services teams to address Veterans' employment opportunities in an integrated, full-service manner. Utilizing available tools such as Work Opportunity Tax Credit and state training

grants, the teams promote the benefits of hiring Veterans. There is a direct focus on federal contractors as well, assisting them with posting their openings through the Career Center system.

Massachusetts makes a concerted effort at the regional and local level to link training vendors, employers and Veterans. Programs in in-demand careers such as “biomedical” and advanced manufacturing are being designed and run specifically for Veterans.

(d) The Incentive Award program implemented using the 1% grant allocation set aside for this purpose, as applicable;

Massachusetts will utilize the 1% set-aside Performance Incentive Award funding for this four-year period. The incentive will be used to reward One-Stop Career Centers that lead the state in demonstrated services to Veterans. Application for the nominations for the incentive awards begins in August of each year. Nominations are reviewed and winners are selected in September. All funds are obligated by September 30, of each year and funds are expended by December 31 of each year. Incentive Award report is submitted in 4th quarter each year.

The award recognizes the entire staff of a MassHire Career Center, not just a Veterans’ unit or Veterans’ staff, which demonstrates excellence and dedication in the provision of quality employment, training and placement services to United States Veterans and other eligible persons.

The award recognizes a MassHire Career Center that has made a substantial contribution or effort to:

1. Improve and modernize employment and placement services, as well as training opportunities for Veterans and other eligible persons.
2. Reward and celebrate excellence in the provision of “Priority of Service” and integration of services to Veterans and other eligible persons at the MCC.
3. Improve performance outcomes for Veterans and other eligible persons.
4. Establish strong working partnerships with other Veteran organizations and/or the community at large to improve services to Veterans and other eligible persons and;
5. Design and develop innovations, approaches, and supportive services etc., in short best practices that demonstrate the MCCs commitment to excellence in provision of quality employment and training services to Veterans and other eligible persons.

Completed nominations are reviewed and ranked by Veteran Employment, Training, and Central Program Units. Monetary Incentive Awards are made annually to the highest scoring MCCs that made a concerted, measurable effort to attain high standards in the provision of services to Veterans most in need. The individual amounts may be divided as in the following example:

GOLD: \$12,000
SILVER: \$9,000
BRONZE: \$6,000
RISING STAR: \$3,000

Funds are awarded to the lead operators of the recognized MassHire Career Centers for specific center needs such as computer hardware/software; resource room or library materials; transfer to training accounts; or other office-wide uses.

A portion of the Incentive Awards supports MDCS awardee attendance at the National Association of State Workforce Agency Veterans Conference.

Under this plan, service priority for JVSG staff will be targeted to:

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities;
- Veterans Between the Ages of 18-24;
- Recently-separated Veterans who Exited Military Service within the last 36 months and have not worked for the last 27 weeks
- Homeless, as defined in Section 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302(a) and (b) as amended;
- An offender, as defined by WIA Section 101(27), who is incarcerated or has been released from incarceration;
- Lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate;
- Low-income (as defined by WIA at Sec. 101(25)(B).
- Wounded Warriors in military treatment facilities and their family caregivers,
- Vietnam and Vietnam Era Veterans

The Commonwealth issued [MassWorkforce Issuance 100 DCS 15.100.1 Implementing Veterans' Priority of Service](#), on November 6, 2019.

“Local Boards, One-Stop Career Center Operators, Core Partners and other local providers of Federally-funded employment and training programs/services will assure the provision of Veterans’ priority of service for all “covered persons” in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act...”

The policy also requires that local workforce areas assure that:

“Veterans’ priority of service will be implemented and provided *at the point of entry* for each federally-funded employment and training program.”

Massachusetts provides training on the implementation of Veterans’ Priority of Service. Training is provided to DVOPs, LVERs, MassHire Career Center Directors and Operations Managers, MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Center Staff, Core Partners and other workforce partner

personnel to further assure full and effective implementation of Veterans' priority of service requirements at the local level.

The training emphasizes:

- Identifying “the point of entry” of federal employment and training programs in order for covered persons to take full advantage of priority of services.
- That staff must assure that at the initial contact point (point of entry) covered persons are made aware of:
 - their entitlement to priority of service;
 - the full array of employment, training, and placement services; and
 - any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs or services.
- That local policies and procedures must ensure:
 - monitoring and evaluation of priority of service will be incorporated within monitoring policies and procedures; and
 - all reporting requirements will be met.

Furthermore, Priority of Service is also included as part of the agenda of every technical assistance visit conducted in the field; part of the annual plan submitted by each local workforce development area and is a key component of our proposed incentive awards program.

Every Veteran (covered person) job seeker is immediately notified by MCC staff of their potential eligibility and rights through Priority of Service. Every customer entering a MassHire Career Center is asked if they are a Veteran. After Veteran status is determined and documented on their membership form in our MOSES database, the Veteran is informed of their entitlement to priority of service. A Priority of Service indicator is shown in MOSES for consistent documentation methodology for the required notification of POS entitlement. The MassHire Department of Career Services and MassHire Career Center websites have an electronic notification about Priority of Service as well as contact information for state workforce agency staff.

Massachusetts uses its Massachusetts One-Stop Employment Services (MOSES) job seeker and employer database to track and report the progress of Veteran customers' journey through the Massachusetts MassHire Workforce Development System.

MOSES tracks all service provision both basic career services and individualized services provided to all customers across all Core Partner programming. Services tracked include assessment, case management, employment and training services; and other direct and support services available from local government and/or community-based organizations in order to assure that Veterans who have a service connected disability and/or are economically or educationally disadvantaged will receive the services they need (i.e. occupational/educational training, financial assistance, job

development opportunities) to find suitable employment. MOSES has a robust reporting mechanism to breakdown and report out on all measures.

A copy of the VETS 501 listing DVOP and LVER staff and vacancies including mandatory training completion dates.is in an attachment to the Massachusetts Combined State Plan.

The Commonwealth is prepared to provide any information requested and to work with all Veteran populations that may be designated by the Secretary as a targeted population.

Attachment O: JVSG Staffing Directory

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**MASSACHUSETTS STATE QUALITY SERVICE PLAN OCTOBER 1, 2018
– SEPTEMBER 30, 2020
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STATE PLAN NARRATIVE

A. OVERVIEW

In July of 2013 Massachusetts launched UI Online, a web-based, self-service benefits system designed to improve the customer service experience and overall service delivery to UI customers. For the last five years, we have been working to improve and enhance the UI Online system in order to deliver on its promise. Much of the improvement we have seen is attributable to both more effective incorporation of the system into our business processes and improvement in the functioning of the system. While we have benefitted from our staff becoming more accustomed to these changes and improved communication with our claimants, including in their primary language, more work must be done. During FY19, we will be conducting an internal review of our online system to determine, over the long-term, the best pathway forward for our program and the services we deliver to our customers. While that work is underway, in parallel, we will be executing to our strategic plan.

This Plan focuses on:

- **Improving the Measurement and Management of our CAPS;**
- **Focusing on the core UI program fundamentals;**
- **Maintaining the progress we have made; and**
- **Targeted, prioritized plans to get better**

Mass DUA's values, philosophy, and vision are captured in our Mission Statement:

Our job is to get it right the first time, and to do so timely, while:

- ***Delivering friendly and professional service to all of our customers;***
- ***Protecting the UI Trust Fund, and combating fraud in all forms;***
- ***Reliably assisting claimants with temporary income replacement and re-employment efforts;***
- ***Helping businesses grow and prosper in Massachusetts; and***

- ***Equipping our team with tools and training to empower our staff and challenge them to be the best.***

Like many UI programs nationally we are faced with reduced resources due to a strong economy. In March of 2016, we announced a reduction in force and closed two of our call center offices. During that time, DUA engaged Accenture to assist in the review of our call center operations, tax processes and UI system operations. Their work helped quantify needed remedies, advocate for service delivery changes and gave the agency a roadmap for ongoing improvement and planning for a more flexible workforce.

Today, we continue to implement a number of the recommendations made by Accenture. However, by the end of calendar year 2018, we anticipated closing a third call center location, as the lease agreement in that location is expiring. The recent reduction of our administrative funding, and unclear funding future, has presented us with some challenging financial and management decisions. We will continue to operate two call center locations, and are pleased to be begin working with Zelus, who will be assisting us with a business process redesign and call center optimization effort. This work began in September of 2018 with the intent of implementing additional strategies in FY19.

In March of 2017, our organization experienced the sudden and unexpected passing of our former UI Director. This loss impacted the DUA team in a profound way both personally and professionally. After taking the time to mourn this loss, we have since regrouped, changes have been made at key leadership positions, and the important work that we do is moving forward. DUA has a new UI Director as well as new senior leadership in the Benefits, Tax, and Legal areas. The reconstituted leadership team is working together as a cohesive unit and delivering results. DUA has had two large project successes to build from.

November of 2017, DUA migrated its UI Online system and Data Warehouse to the cloud, becoming the first state with a comprehensive tax and benefits system to do so. The migration was highly successful, with only minimal disruption to our customers during a planned and communicated cutover window. We now provide our users with a more reliable and secure platform to conduct business and deliver services.

Second, in the Spring of 2018, DUA implemented a new state mandated employer tax called the Employer Medical Assistance Contribution Supplement assessment. The new assessment required the drafting and filing of new regulations as well as the building of new functionality in the UI Online system. This work was completed on time and, in line with our Mission Statement, was done right the first time. Our collections are strong and our successful customer service delivery model in this area is being replicated across the UI Tax teams. This project, while complicated and challenging, presented an opportunity for our newly restructured team to work on a project with a tight statutorily defined timeline and show that by working together we can deliver results.

Going forward, by working together, we are confident that we can improve our program performance to a level that the people of Massachusetts both deserve and expect. We have no intention of continuing on as a high priority state. We have the experience, commitment, and plan to become a high performing state. Changes have been made, and more are coming. Business

process redesigns to make timely first payments and timely non-monetary determinations have been implemented with further optimization, increasing scrutiny, and deeper evaluation imminent. Significant projects are already underway in the Revenue Enforcement and Program Integrity areas. A brand-new building to house call center and hearings operations is being designed for our Brockton location, with construction scheduled in late calendar year 2019. We are optimistic about our future, both in the near and long term. We have a plan to achieve and sustain success. It is outlined herein.

FY 2020 Update:

As we begin the second year of the two-year cycle, and continue all of the work outlined in our year one submittal, we take this opportunity to provide an update on four major initiatives underway at DUA.

First, DUA has completed the internal review of our online system referenced above. During that exercise, we discovered that the opportunity exists to streamline the user experience for our customers and thus, we have embarked on a new strategic direction. On August 16, 2019, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development published a Request for Information (RFI) to begin the process of examining future possibilities. The purpose of the RFI is to gather information from consultants and advisors in the following areas: a) strategically redesigning business processes to maximize effectiveness; b) delivering a recommendation for a customer-focused multi-agency technology system; and c) creating a data management strategy and plan that results in valid data on an ongoing basis. A copy of the RFI was shared with members of both the USDOL National and Regional offices shortly after publishing.

Second, DUA is nearing the completion of a major technology project in our existing UI Online system that will significantly improve our Revenue Collections and Enforcement effort. These improvements include the implementation of both the Federal and State Tax Intercept programs, among a number of other functionality upgrades. Most of the work on this project was completed in August, with remaining items scheduled for deployment in early Autumn 2019.

Third, DUA began a new UI Online technology improvement project aimed at improving our timely first payment and time lapse metrics via smarter workflow assignment logic. The intent of this work is to align system workflow assignment logic with state and federal performance goals, increase visibility into and accountability for the completion of tasks, and to provide improved reporting to support management decision making. It is anticipated that this project will be completed by the end of FY 2020.

Fourth, DUA is deeply engaged with the NASWA Integrity Center in a combined effort to reduce the UI Improper Payment Rate in Massachusetts. Members of the Integrity Center have made multiple on-site visits with the DUA team and have delivered an extensive set of recommendations for consideration. These recommendations range from policy changes to training initiatives to technology improvements. These recommendations were formulated into an action plan to be

executed in the upcoming year. Final signoff of the plan is complete, and the project work is underway.

B. FEDERAL EMPHASIS (GPRA GOALS)

Improving State Capacity to Administer and Operate the UI Program Effectively

We have a mission statement at DUA which drives our priorities. Timely First Pay, Timely Hearings, Employer Registration, Overpayment Detection and Collections Metrics are a few of the many agency-wide standards for success included in the Management Goal and Performance Reviews for every manager at DUA. All Managers are all being measured based on the success of the whole, as well as their individual contributions.

To emphasize the importance of program performance, in Massachusetts, the Director of our UI Performs Department was reassigned and that department now reports directly to the UI Director. The UI Performs Department is responsible for leading our BAM, BTQ, TPS, and Data Validation effort. In addition, a new Director of Benefit Performance, with many years of UI program experience, was hired from the USDOL Regional Office to bring a new perspective to our team. These two departments now conduct regular and mandatory crosswalk meetings to evaluate program performance, make effective use of available data sets, and provide program improvement recommendations to the UI Director.

In addition, DUA quickly and enthusiastically embraced the UI State Self-Assessment Tool. We have dedicated an experienced and knowledgeable full-time supervisor to this work and embedded this person within our UI Performs Department. We are well on our way to completing all fifteen functions by the April 2019 deadline, with nearly half of the work already submitted. The Self-Assessment work was made a priority by senior leadership with full cooperation an expectation. Operational improvements have already been identified, particularly in the initial claims functions, and more good work is anticipated. We have invested in this tool, and results are already being realized.

In 2016 DUA worked with Accenture to develop a capacity model of claims-taking and adjudication, so we can use flexible staffing in the future, to better deal with seasonal needs. This capacity model has been helpful during the annual peak periods in our business cycle and we will continue to use it in the foreseeable future. In September of 2018 we began working with Zelus to add onto the work already done with Accenture and further examine how we can do more with less in a dwindling funding environment. We continue to emphasize the importance of making payment when due, and our upcoming business process redesign initiative will be conducted with that goal at the forefront.

In August of 2017, at our request, we engaged with the NASWA UI Integrity Center and asked members of their team to perform on site Integrity Services. Four experienced UI subject matter experts visited with our team over the course of four days to examine our BPC and Tax Collection

departments. At the end of calendar year 2017, the NASWA team delivered a comprehensive report to the UI Director complete with actionable and realistic goals for program improvement. We have since turned that report into a project plan, with items prioritized and implementation timelines determined. Today, we are marching forward with this plan, with the recent implementation of a credit card payment option for claimant overpayments a notable success.

We communicate regularly with other states and we will continue to collaborate with peers to find best practices across our organization. This continuous expansion of our professional networks and contacts has led to a recent partnership with the states of Florida and New Mexico on a disaster recovery agreement where, in the event of a disaster, we have agreed to assist one another with claim intake. A copy of this agreement has been shared with the USDOL Regional Office and we would be pleased to discuss with others how we arrived at this agreement. These collaborations are often inspired by and initiated through conversations and conferences with NASWA, the UI Integrity Center, ITSC, the Regional Office and others. They are invaluable and DUA will continue to be engaged in these opportunities.

Staff training continues to be an area of much discussion and we are exploring different ways to be successful. An internal, fully comprehensive, centralized training department continues to be our need and our vision. Much of our internal training has historically been focused on initial claims and adjudication training programs and we are in the process of fully updating our adjudication handbook. While those trainings are important, the UI program is made up of many interconnected parts, and training should be offered in all areas. In June of 2017 we hosted on site Fraud Investigator training offered by the UI Integrity Center, and earlier this year sent additional team members to the in-person Fraud Investigator training in New Hampshire. We are pleased to see more online course offerings through the National Integrity Academy and expect to continue to take advantage of those certificate programs.

As agencies evolve, staffing changes are needed and retirements inevitable. DUA has begun the process of identifying junior leaders, providing them with project leadership and promotional opportunities. Rosalin Acosta, Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, implemented a “Chat on 21” initiative where, on a monthly basis, her agency heads are asked to select a member of their organization to meet with the Secretary for an informal chat, ask her about the Secretariat vision, and so on. DUA has leveraged the Chat on 21 initiative to provide junior level performers with executive level exposure. This initiative has been very well received and provides potential junior leaders with an opportunity they might not otherwise experience for many years down the road.

Improving Prevention, Detection and Recovery of UI Improper Payments

Massachusetts is deeply engaged with the NASWA UI Integrity Center and views the UI Integrity Center as a critical partner to our success in this area both in the immediate as well as on a going forward basis. We are in regular attendance at the NASWA National Integrity Conference, have participated on the planning committee for the conference, and recently were asked to be a guest panelist. As stated previously, we have already taken advantage of on-site Integrity Services, have both hosted and attended Academy classroom trainings, and were an early sign on state for the

Suspicious Actor Repository, or Data Hub. We are very much at the table for all UI Integrity Center conversations and enjoy regular contact and communication with our regional liaison.

In addition to our work with the UI Integrity Center, we are in the process of reviewing and implementing updates to the weekly certification questions offered online and via the IVR. Claimant compliance with our states work search requirements is an area of focus, and our expectation is that reworking some of the language in the questions will capture more results and diminish overpayments.

Recent outreach efforts with organizations like the Association of Unemployment Tax Organizations, ADP, Equifax, and others have opened lines of communication and provided opportunities to reintroduce important topics like adequacy and failure to timely respond. We have had some recent success with Equifax in particular with respect to timely response, and future conference calls are scheduled with members of AUTO to spread a broader message, provide opportunities for feedback and the exchange of ideas. Massachusetts is not currently participating in the State Information Data Exchange System but remains open to a dialogue on that subject as we evaluate our online system in the coming year.

Revenue Enforcement has been prioritized as the major area of focus for our organization during the second half of calendar year 2018 and into 2019. The tax portion of the UI Online system was implemented in December of 2009. Since its inception, there have been pieces of that functionality that have required improvement. We will be investing significant agency resources to this area and have set out a ten part project plan to improve enforcement overall. These include a major upgrade to the tax UI Online system functionality, participation in both the State and Federal tax intercept programs, multiple licensing enforcement partnerships within the Commonwealth, and a number of other critical projects designed to improve collections and accounts receivables. We have already implemented a credit card payment option, instituted a court judgement program through our legal department, and partnered with multiple sheriff counties on an incarceration data initiative.

Improving Program Performance

DUA believes in accountability and we share our results routinely with the Regional Office, as well as the Mass Secretary of Labor, to show where we are in our metrics. We report these metrics to our team often, including some on a daily basis in stand-up meetings across the claim centers.

As stated above, DUA is also a strong proponent of the UI Performs programs. We have both invested in those programs and raised their profile within our organization. There is a natural connection between the BAM program and BPC. Leadership in those areas now meets regularly to improve our program. We have a Data Validation Steering Committee which includes the UI Director. Bi-weekly meetings are held, DV progress is tracked, and numerous enhancements relative to DV have been implemented in the UI Online system in recent months. We have a strong appreciation for the Data Validation program and are committed to being measured so we know how to get better.

Importantly, we incorporate learning from the BAM and BTQ programs, as well as TPS and DV, into our operations. BTQ is linked to our Policy, Training and Call Monitoring programs, to ensure a full

picture to best learn and train. We have placed an importance on the UI State Self-Assessment Tool where we are both proud of our progress are actively using the tool to improve.

DUA acknowledges its current high priority status and cares very deeply about program performance improvement. The State Quality Service Plan, and the Corrective Action Plans in particular, are compiled through the efforts of many people across the organization. To validate its investment in the SQSP process, Massachusetts participated as a pilot state for the new CAPS workbook when it was introduced several years ago. Our quarterly CAP updates are routinely submitted on time and we welcome additional technical assistance from our colleagues at the regional office as we work on our joint commitment to performance excellence.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

DUA is party to every local workforce MOU on WIOA and has signed onto the Combined Plan for Massachusetts. While admittedly challenging to participate actively in all the planning sessions of the 16 Workforce Boards, DUA is working to ensure both our voice is heard and our concerns are met in these discussions. We are dedicated to the program and will continue to be a primary partner in all the MassHire Career Centers.

We worked with our partners to ensure we met the requirements of wage matching for their WIOA reporting, in accordance with Federal and Massachusetts law and regulation. DUA signed MOUs with WIOA partners for data sharing and ensured we provided the data needed for our partners to comply with WIOA reporting requirements.

DUA has a long history and a current continued commitment to provide walk-in service across the Commonwealth, within career centers. Beyond the requirements of WIOA, UI services are available at career centers plus one UI-only walk-in center in Boston.

This year, we reduced the amount DUA funded to those career centers and our future funding levels are uncertain due to recent administrative funding reductions. Our existing service delivery model is under review, with important conversations upcoming during the fall of 2018. We continue to believe that a deeper integration between UI and Reemployment Services is needed and are excited about some of the innovative ideas that are on the table for discussion internally.

We are continuing our work with the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) and other WIOA partners on a common intake system, which will allow registration for work along with the beginning of the claims process. With nearly 80% of our initial claimants using UI Online, we are prime candidates to integrate our claimants with MDCS for an electronic registration and assessment system. In the coming year, we anticipate introducing online resume builder job matching software to UI claimants.

A law change in 2016 allowed DUA to more freely share information with MDCS, to help them achieve their goals. While confidentiality rules apply, this strengthened our partnership with our sister agency, and makes collaboration with MDCS for WIOA much smoother. The career centers in Massachusetts are currently in the midst of an exciting and game changing rebranding initiative.

Under the new brand, called MassHire, all career centers will have a singular name bringing unity and a joint vision to a large and integral workforce system.

Other places we have and will continue to partner with MDCS in the spirit of many of our joint programs include: Workshare, RESEA, TRA/TAA, Rapid Response, and the Training Opportunities Program (Section 30) that provides extended UI benefits in conjunction with MDCS approved trainers. We continue to employ a DUA/MDCS Integration Manager, who co-leads bi-weekly DUA/MDCS meetings, further underscoring the value of our partnership and recognizing the important work we can only achieve together.

Reemployment of UI Claimants

Massachusetts has a strong RESEA program and we are expanding our efforts in this area, as referenced above. Our work in a common intake system, while available for WIOA, is inspired by our desire to get job seekers connected with MDCS immediately, as part of an integrated benefit process.

A recent law change in Massachusetts extended the application period for Section 30, to 20 weeks from 15. This highlights a work-around which we want to remedy. A redraft of the Section 30 regulations is nearly complete, with approval from the DUA Advisory Council anticipated as of the fall of 2018.

Claimants should not wait 15 or 20 weeks to understand if they need training to close a skills gap, but the best way to get them into training or back to work fast is to reduce the amount of time it takes to move from DUA to MDCS and into the training or job market. Online skills assessments, integrated resume development, and immediate LMI are just a few of the ways we are looking to expand services for UI job seekers. We are also taking a secretariat wide view of our reemployment goals, and in the last year engaged the American Institute for Full Employment. They performed an on-site visit, interviewed team members working on the RESEA program, and delivered a report containing program recommendations. That report is under review at the secretariat level with a review of our UI and career center service delivery model underway.

Improving Data Validation and Federal Reporting

As mentioned above, DUA has placed a high level of importance on the work being performed by our UI Performs Department. The Director of the UI Performs Department reports directly to the UI Director, and the UI Director attends bi-weekly Data Validation Steering Committee meetings to track DV progress.

DUA understands the value of having clean and reliable data, not only for internal but also for external stakeholder use. In the last year, we have hired additional resources to work on system updates required by and discovered through the Benefits and Tax Data Validation programs. A new

project manager was brought in to facilitate improvements to the UI Online system and our Data Warehouse. With the recent retirement of our SUN System Coordinator, we are considering new and innovative ways to backfill that position to better leverage the work that the UI Performs Department is producing and the significant amount of data that is being processed.

DUA is fulfilling its duty to implement a DV program and report results.

Addressing Worker Misclassification

Massachusetts participates in CUE (Council on the Underground Economy) activities, with a sole focus on uncovering and remedying worker misclassification. DUA works on referrals from a number of sources, including the IRS, OSHA and RMV. Further, our focus on this over the years has yielded excellent results in our tax audits.

We have undergone changes in leadership in our tax area, including a new Boston Audit Supervisor, a new Manager of Audit and Revenue Enforcement, and a new Director of Revenue. Through all these changes, we continue to improve the efficiency of our audits, and have provided our audit staff with updated laptops and other equipment. We are proud to have achieved a level of sustained success in this area.

Strategic Goal – Make Timely Benefit Payments

Target: 87.0 percent of intrastate first payments for full weeks of unemployment compensation will be made within 21 days from the week ending date of the first compensable week.

This is a fundamental tenet of UI, and making payment when due remains our primary goal. The Accenture recommendations, stated earlier, offered a service delivery model focused on TFP teams with adjudicators empowered to work all the issues on the claim. By moving to this model, DUA saw gains in our timely first payment metric, and sustaining these gains is the top item on our agenda. We will continue to tweak our model while continuing to make long term investments in our existing online system. We are excited about our upcoming business process redesign engagement, where timely first payment will be the objective, and additional procedural recommendations to achieve our goals are anticipated.

In our call center environment, where most of our non-monetary issue resolution work is being performed, we have placed a renewed emphasis on the role of the call center supervisor. Each call center supervisor is responsible for running a team, and the supervisor is being held accountable for the overall performance of their team. Important duties like coaching and teaching have been re-prioritized and are no longer being left to subordinate junior supervisory staff. One on one coaching sessions, remedial development plans, and the use of other such tools are part of the expectations we have for our call center leadership.

While we focus on timeliness, we are committed to preserving our improvements in quality. Any sustainable process to ensure timeliness must also ensure quality standards are met. There must be a balance. To that end, we are overhauling our adjudication handbook in order to provide our adjudication staff with current, updated policy information and clear instruction. The BTQ process

will continue to be used as a tool for adjudication quality improvement and improved communication around that program is a must.

We instituted a policy change to our pre-date processes, which was identified as a cause for missing a timely first payment. We also implemented robo-calls reminding claimants to certify for weekly benefits, as we found at one point that more than 10% of timely failures were attributable to people not claiming the weeks. While some of those have helped, there is more to do.

More specifics of our Plan can be found in the Corrective Action Plan and Narrative for First Payment Promptness.

FY 2020 Update:

We are pleased to share two notable and significant updates on our progress from last year.

First, while continuing to maintain an eye toward future possibilities, DUA has indeed kept its commitment to continue to invest in our existing online system. In June, we signed a new Task Order with our maintenance contract vendor to begin a project aimed at improving our Timely First Payment and Time Lapse metrics. The original design of the UI Online adjudication issue assignment logic prioritizes the oldest unassigned issues first. This design makes it challenging to achieve the 87.0 strategic goal. Today, and in line with the recommendations previously received via our engagement with Accenture, our team manually reassigns work to our adjudication staff, fighting the original design of the system, in order to meet Timely First Payment and Time Lapse dates. While this has led to gains, it comes with switching costs and inefficiencies. The Automated Issue Assignment project will update the UI Online system to enhance the business logic to classify an adjudication issue in defined categories. This project will change the current logic to 'drop' ready-to-work issues into an adjudicator's inbox based on date-driven categories. This will allow DUA to automatically align work assignments with State and Federal goals and will help ensure that issues are assigned to the most qualified adjudicators. Additionally, all issues on a given claim will be assigned to the same adjudicator, bringing a claim-based, versus issue-based, approach to claim processing.

Second, we completed our Call Center Optimization engagement with Zelus Consulting, and currently are in various stages of implementing some of their recommendations. Our focus, initially, and due to an expiring lease, was on successfully relocating our Call Center team from our Lawrence location to our Boston location. This transition is complete and, while the move was difficult, today our call center operation is more cohesive and less siloed than before. Once behind us, we began filling long-needed positions on our adjudication teams, which we believe will increase our ability to make timely benefit payments over the long term. Zelus recommended building out a forecasting model and defining our long-term forecasting goals. The forecasting model will help us annualize seasonal patterns and staffing alignment, assist with staff out-of-office time management, and help us strategize for the mitigation of workflow item buildup during seasonal volume spikes. This work is underway, and the first iteration of the model is expected to be delivered in October. Also underway is the development of a contact center management fundamentals training program for supervisors and managers. This work is being spearheaded by the Massachusetts Human Resources Division and has a deliverable target date of early calendar year 2020.

Strategic Goal - Detect Benefit Overpayments

Target: Overpayments established will be at least 61.9 percent of the estimated detectable, recoverable overpayments.

Like most states, detectable overpayment failures are most frequently worksearch failures, and as such Massachusetts is taking steps to remedy this problem. Nearly 80% of claimants use UI Online to file claims. Most also use UI Online to claim benefits each week. DUA is interested in behavioral science, and specifically the use of nudging, and will be bringing in a User Journey resource effective October of 2018 to begin an effort in this area. We are also in the midst of reviewing our weekly certification questions, as we believe changes to the phrasing of our questions will reduce overpayments.

As mentioned throughout, DUA will continue to remain engaged with the UI Integrity Center on future offerings while we implement the many recommendations, they made in their report delivered in December of 2017. Please see our Integrity Action Plan for additional insights.

FY 2020 Update:

DUA has been heavily engaged with the NASWA Integrity Center and views them as a critical partner to our success in this area. As noted in the Overview section above, the NASWA Integrity Center has been on-site at our invitation on multiple occasions during the last year. The Center has recently delivered over twenty recommendations that we believe will improve our UI program, including reducing overpayments. As part of this engagement, we have been working with a Behavioral Insights vendor. Current behavioral intervention recommendations under discussion include claimant email reminders about weekly work search requirements, tailored advice on earnings requirements, and emphasizing work search requirements and engagement with material in our claimant guide. Our plan will be finalized in September, with some recommendations targeted for completion as early as October.

We have completed our review of our weekly certification questions. System changes are in development and were promoted into the UI Online and IVR systems before the end of calendar year 2019.

We also completed several User Journey mapping exercises for jobseekers, employers, and Third Party Agents. User Journey mapping means charting, step by step, everything a person has to go through in order to achieve an objective. The User Journey work is being used to inform DUA in many ways, including our agency future state vision, but so far has led to the development and implementation of two products. First, we developed benefit calculators to assist claimants with accurate reporting of wages as well as helping them estimate potential benefits. Second, we developed a Quick Guide for claimants to use as an immediate resource upon job separation. The Quick Guide uses clear and plain language to inform claimants of the work search and weekly certification requirements. Both the benefit calculators and the Quick Guide can be accessed on the Mass.gov website. We will also be providing a printed version of the Quick Guide in our Walk-In Center as well as all of the MassHire Career Centers. Since both products are new, it is too early to determine whether or not they have impacted this measurement. To read more about our User Journey work, please visit the Massachusetts Digital Service blog at

<https://medium.com/massgovdigital/mapping-user-journeys-for-a-better-workforce-system-in-massachusetts-6080b1d07006>.

It should be noted that our performance level is not currently being truly measured due to the reporting deficiencies relative to the ETA 227 report. Please see the Reporting Deficiencies section for a further update on our progress on the ETA 227.

Strategic Goal - Establish Tax Accounts Promptly

Target: 89.0 percent of status determinations for new employers will be made within 90 days of the end of the first quarter in which liability occurred.

Massachusetts has failed to reach the target of 89% of new employer status determinations resolved within 90 days of the first quarter in which liability occurred largely due to employers failing to register in a timely manner. We have implemented several strategies designed to prompt employers to register with DUA and begin paying contributions when they are due.

DUA utilizes the following cross-matches with other state agencies to obtain information on possible employers subject to registration:

- Newly registered corporations (and LLC's) from the Secretary of State's office
- All new and transferred liquor licenses issued by the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission
- Corporations with active licenses from the Department of Licensure
- Quarterly reviews to identify employers that have filed withholding tax with the Department of Revenue, but are not registered with DUA
- DUA has an agreement with the Massachusetts Lottery Commission to cross reference the list of current lottery vendors to verify registration as an active employer if subjectivity applies
- DUA is working towards an agreement with the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles to cross-reference the list of current businesses holding commercial license plates to verify registration of an active employer if subjectivity applies.

DUA has new leadership in place at multiple levels within our tax department, including a new Director of Revenue. While establishing tax accounts promptly is an important goal, and our performance numbers are a notch below where we want them to be, our initial effort in our tax area will be centered on making long overdue improvements to our revenue enforcement and collections area. DUA has embarked on a ten point plan to improve our accounts receivable, which includes a significant financial and resource investment into repairing revenue enforcement functionality in the UI Online system. We will be improving the UI Online system, implementing the Treasury Offset Program for employers, a State Tax Intercept program for employers, and a number of other tools aimed at improving our bottom line. These projects were expected to be completed in early calendar year 2019.

While this work is ongoing, DUA will also be working on improvements to the Employer Registration process to reduce downstream manual work in our Economic Research and Finance departments to ensure these are accurately and efficiently handled by DUA.

FY 2020 Update:

The Massachusetts *Percent of Employer Tax Liability Determinations Made Timely* is currently at 88.08% compared to the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) Targeted Level of 89.6%, a variance of 1.52%. Employers register their accounts in the UI Online system and are issued a tax liability determination at the time of registration, provided that they indicate that they have met the thresholds for tax liability.

If the employer indicates that they have not met the threshold at the time of registration, they do not receive a determination of liability at the time of registration. Once the employer submits wages, and provides notification that they have met the threshold, a liability determination would be issued. In the event an employer does not provide notification, a quarterly review of all non-liable accounts that submitted wages is manually completed by staff and determinations are issued to those accounts that have met the threshold. Since this review process is manual it can impact the timeliness of our Employer Tax Liability Determinations.

Massachusetts will continue to strive to increase our percentage of Timely Employer Tax Liability Determinations to the meet or exceed the targeted goal of by implementing the following steps:

1. Introduce a monthly review of non-liable accounts that have submitted wages and issue determinations to those accounts that have met the liability threshold.
2. Continue with the quarterly review of non-liable accounts that have submitted wages and issue determinations to those accounts that have met the liability threshold.
3. Continue working toward an online automatic system validation of Employer Liability Determinations post registration.

Strategic Goal – Employment Rate at 2nd Quarter After Exit

Target: TBD

Massachusetts DUA and MDCS agencies are working together to maximize success in this area. Directionally we are aligned, and DUA is committed to helping drive some practices and policies which encourage the robust interaction of our claimants with MDCS and their nearly 30 career centers, as early as possible in the claim. Further, we want to see technology leveraged to make that interaction efficient and focused for both the staff and the claimant – to minimize paperwork and maximize re-employment assistance.

Our long partnership in the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program and REA programs have demonstrated the commitment we share in getting job seekers back to work. DUA has taken a larger role in that, helping ensure the program is truly owned by both agencies, and sanctions for failure are meaningful.

We are working together on a common electronic front door, allowing and encouraging claimants to get registered for work immediately. With nearly 80% of claimants filing online, we feel strongly that large segments of our population can be well-served by a more rigorous electronic system, not just for registration, but for assessment, resume development, labor market information and job

matching. Much of this can and is done today, but a common intake between MDCS and DUA will ensure ease of access for those able to leverage the technology.

We are also working to transition to a profiling model, and away from a screening process, and have requested assistance from both the Regional and National Offices in order to achieve this goal. A profiling model, appropriately weighted and measured, allows us to deliver a more targeted approach to identifying those requiring more intensive services in order to return to work.

C. PROGRAM REVIEW DEFICIENCIES

N/A

D. PROGRAM DEFICIENCIES

N/A

E. REPORTING DEFICIENCIES

1. ETA 227 - The coding changes needed to make the ETA 227 report tie correctly remain outstanding. DUA acknowledges the importance of this report and the seriousness of the report deficiency. Over the course of the last year, DUA has engaged with both the USDOL Regional and National Offices, as well as colleagues in the State of Florida, to explore interim solutions until the programming changes could be implemented. Those discussions did not result in a successful transmission of the missing reports by DUA. Significant programming changes are needed to our UI Online system in order to accurately report the ETA 227 data. DUA hired a developer to assist with this effort and the work needed to make the ETA 227 accurate should be completed during the strategic plan period.

FY 2020 Update: With the assistance of the USDOL National Office, the ETA 227 reports for Q3 of 2015, Q4 of 2015, Q1 of 2016, and Q2 of 2016 were recently successfully loaded into the Sun System. The loading and submission of all subsequent reports are now imminent and were expected to be completed by the end of September 2019.

Additional FY 2020 Report Deficiency:

2. ETA 191 - Financial reports are completed by the Finance Department, a shared services unit within the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). The ETA 191 reports were not prompt on various occasions due to EOLWD transitioning to a new bank during the year, which required the realignment of data collection points as well as data quality checks. The bank transition is over and the process has fully stabilized. Reporting is now being done timely.

Additional FY 2020 Report Deficiency:

3. ETA 2112 - Financial reports are completed by the Finance Department, a shared services unit within the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). The ETA

191 reports were not prompt on various occasions due to EOLWD transitioning to a new bank during the year, which required the realignment of data collection points as well as data quality checks. The bank transition is over and the process has fully stabilized. Reporting is now being done timely.

F. CUSTOMER SERVICES

N/A

G. OTHER

N/A

ASSURANCES

The State Administrator, by signing the SQSP Signature Page, certifies that the state will comply with assurances as outlined in ET Handbook 336, 18th Edition: Unemployment Insurance (UI) State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) Planning and Reporting Guidelines, Chapter 1, Part VII: Assurances.

Assurance of Contingency Planning

In 2012 an independent consultant was engaged to modify the IT Contingency Plan. This modification took into account the changes to contingency planning with the new system architecture. This work was completed in June of 2012. This plan is reviewed and updated to reflect system modifications and personnel changes; the most recent update was in April, 2017.

Assurance of Automated Information Systems Security

In 2011, an independent consultant was engaged by DUA to perform a risk assessment. This assessment was completed in July 2012 and consisted of an assessment of the UI Benefits system, an assessment of the UI Online Revenue system, an assessment of the EOLWD Telephony system, and an assessment of the UI Fraud Prevention and Detection System involving National Directory of New Hires.

DUA also reviews the SSP and updates accordingly. DUA last reviewed and updated the plan in September of 2017.

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

Introduction

Under the designation of Governor Charles D. Baker, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) is responsible for the development and submission of the Massachusetts Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) 2020-2024 State Plan. The State Plan presents an opportunity for the Commonwealth to build new partnerships as well as strengthen existing ones, create more

employment opportunities and establish more employer-outreach partners and training locations in the state.

This State Plan aligns closely with the recommendations of the Governor’s Council to Address Aging in Massachusetts submitted in December 2018. These recommendations include increasing awareness of the value of older workers and encouraging employers to support older workers and working family caregivers.

- **Recommendation 1.** Partner with employers to strengthen businesses’ support of family caregivers in the workplace
- **Recommendation 2.** Educate older adults on the benefits of working longer
- **Recommendation 3.** Introduce an auto-IRA program to increase retirement savings
- **Recommendation 4.** Establish an Age-Friendly Employer Designation program
- **Recommendation 5.** Promote value of older workers with businesses
- **Recommendation 6.** Support training for career centers to better serve older job seekers

In Massachusetts, SCSEP is a partnership of the state SCSEP program (MA-SCSEP), national SCSEP grantees located in Massachusetts, and MassHire, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development’s workforce development system.

MassHire Career Centers provide career guidance, training and job referrals, as well as assistance to businesses in finding qualified workers, applying the principles of a person-centered system of practice. It aims to align service resources that give customers access to the full benefits of MassHire and WIOA partnership and ensure they receive services in a way that may help them achieve individual goals.

There are two national SCSEP grantees in Massachusetts: Operation A.B.L.E., Inc. and Senior Service America, Inc. EOEA currently operates MA-SCSEP in Berkshire, Essex, Hampden, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk and Worcester counties through three subgrantees. All Massachusetts SCSEP programs support its two-fold goal, as conveyed in the Older Americans’ Act:

- Enable older low-income job seekers to develop the skills and self-confidence to obtain unsubsidized jobs, become financially self-sufficient and increase quality of life.
- Provide meaningful community service at on-the-job training sites, as a means to improve a participant’s self-sufficiency, perform meaningful civic service, and to strengthen communities.

EOEA envisions a broader supportive role for SCSEP and the aging services network in advancing the interests of older workers in their local economies.

In 2020 EOEA will evaluate current program delivery and ensure compliance with state procurement rules.

(a) Economic Projections and Impact

(1) Discuss long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may

provide employment opportunities for older workers. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

Overall Trends in Massachusetts Economy:

there are some geographic areas that have higher rates of unemployment, including areas in Hampden and Essex counties.

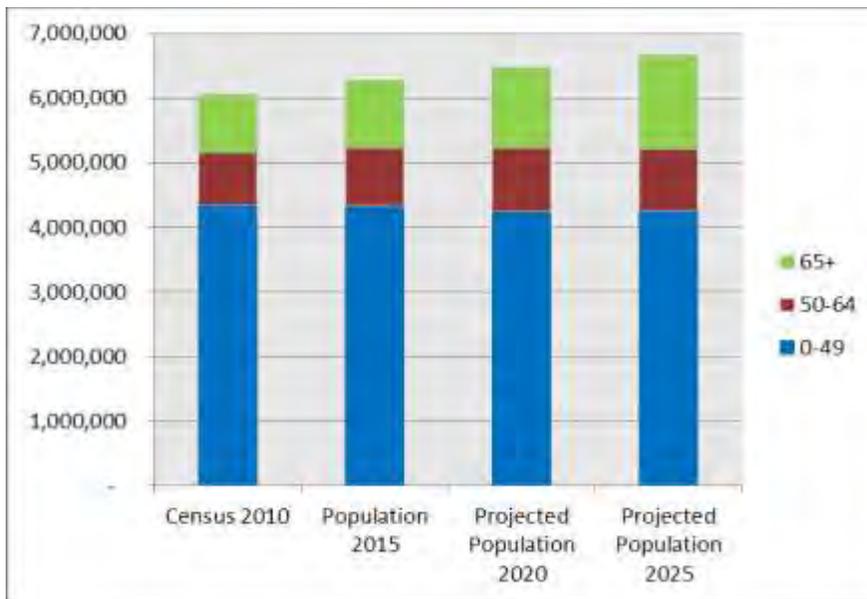
Older Workers in Massachusetts:

There are approximately 200,000 people - 29% of the population-age 55 and older in Massachusetts, up from 26% in 2010. This percentage is projected to rise to 34 percent by 2025.³¹ Over 15% (32,000) of these individuals were unemployed and seeking assistance from the MassHire system in 2019, comprising 24% of its case load.

The chart below demonstrates the projected Massachusetts population by age group.

Figure 88: Projected Massachusetts population by age group

³¹ UMass Donahue Institute Economic and Public Policy Research, retrieved from <http://pep.donahue-institute.org/> on November 8, 2019

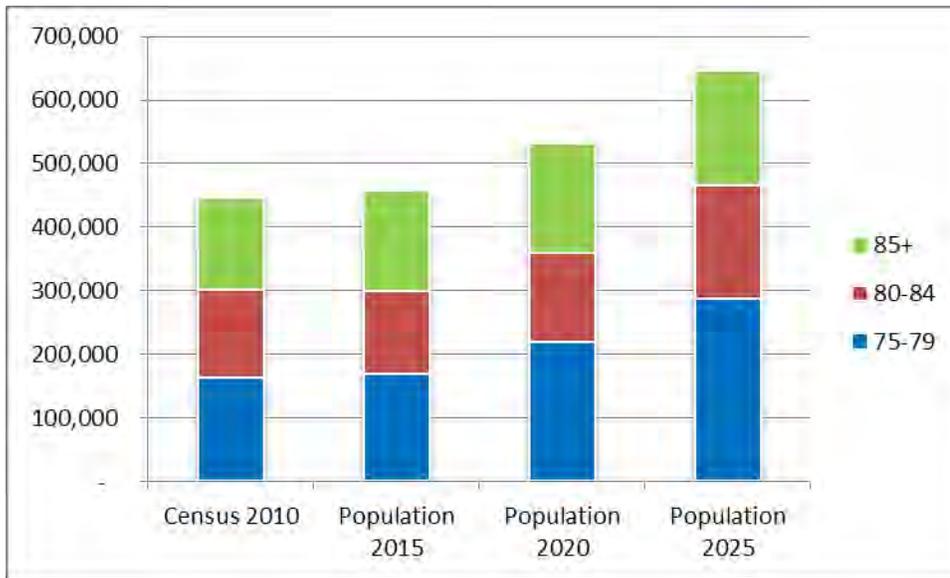


While the median household income (**\$74,167**) remains higher than the national median (\$61,937), the cost of living in Massachusetts is significantly higher.³² According to the University of Massachusetts Gerontology Institute’s Elder Economic Security Standard Index (Elder Index), 60% of older adults living alone, and 30% living in two-person households, cannot afford the basic necessities of life such as food, housing in a safe community and health care. While most rely on Social Security benefits as a key component of their incomes, the Elder Index finds that Social Security alone is not sufficient to meet their basic needs.³³

³² US Census data

³³ https://www.umb.edu/demographyofaging/elder_economic_security

Figure 89: Projected number of older adults, ages 75+



The population age 75 and over is rapidly growing in Massachusetts, from 7% in 2015 to 11% projected for 2030.³⁴ According to the Elder Index, this age group faces the greatest difficulty in meeting basic needs, so it is not surprising that they comprise a growing segment of Massachusetts' workforce system. Based on MassHire data, there has been a growing participation rate of job seekers over the age of 75 that use the MassHire Career Centers over the course of the last three fiscal years.

³⁴ University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, Massachusetts Population Projections. Retrieved from <http://pep.donahue-institute.org/> on November 13, 2019.

See Figure 92. Job Seeker ages 75+ (by numbers)

- (2) Discuss how the long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained and the types of skill training to be provided. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

SCSEP participants' characteristics:

Massachusetts SCSEP participants are over 60% female (see Figure 90). Less than 70% have a college degree (See Chart 5). Additionally, Charts 7 describes the U.S. Department of Labor's identified barriers to employment with poverty being the most predominant factor (88%).³⁵

³⁵ DOLETA SPARQ PY18 Data for State and National Grantees

Figure 90: Gender by numbers

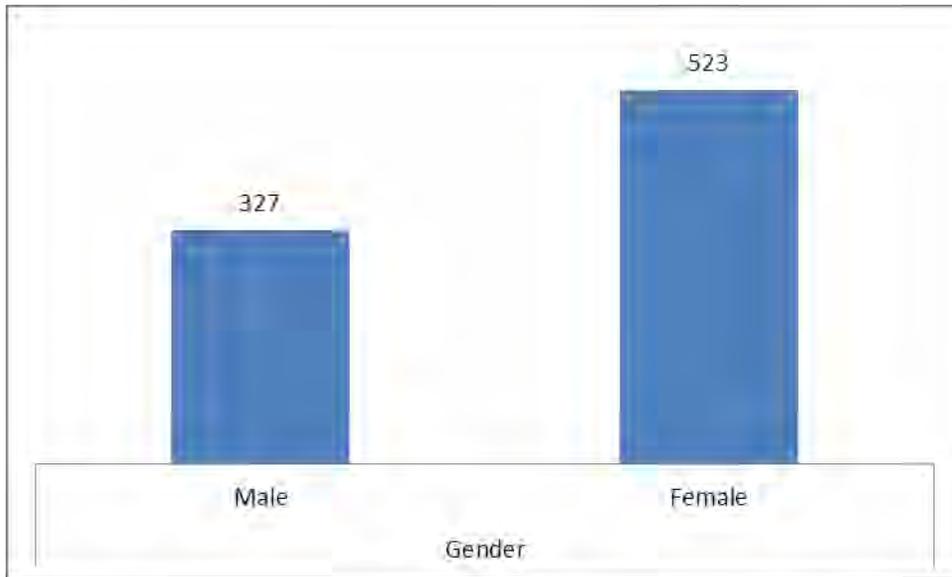


Figure 91: Education Level of MA-SCSEP Participants (by numbers)

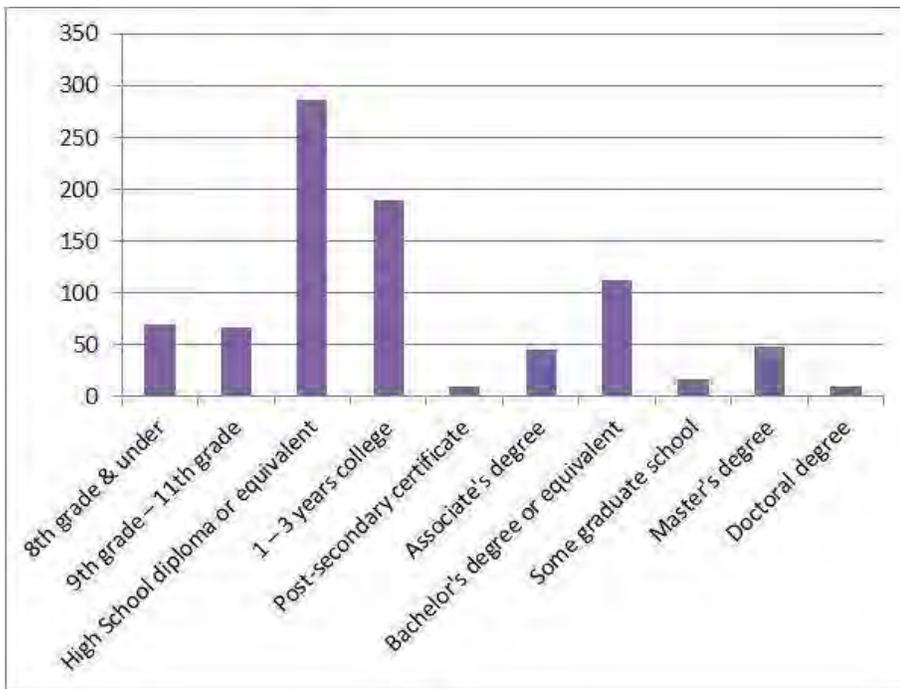


Figure 92: Enrollment Age of SCSEP Participants (by numbers)

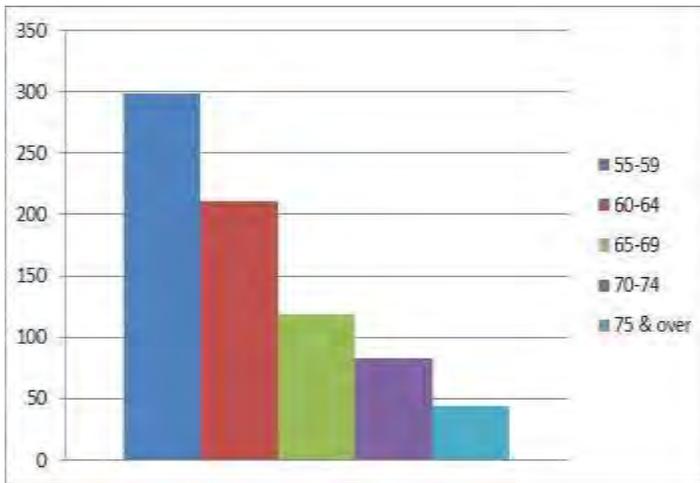


Figure 93: Barriers to Employment (percent)

94% of Massachusetts SCSEP participants are individuals with low employment prospects. The majority lives at or below the federal poverty rate and relies on public assistance.

Barrier to employment*	Percent of Individuals
Family income at or below the poverty level	88
Receiving public assistance	74
Failed to find employment after using WIA Title I	37
Individuals with disabilities	28
Homeless or at risk of homelessness	25
Individuals with limited English proficiency	22
Individuals with severely limited employment prospects in areas of persistent unemployment	20
Veterans (or eligible spouse of Veteran)	8
Displaced homemakers	2
Individuals with low literacy skills	6
Individuals residing in rural areas	2
Individuals old enough for but not receiving SS Title II	4
Individuals with severe disability	1
Individuals who are frail	1

*As identified by the U.S. Department of Labor

While the majority of SCSEP participants are highly motivated to find employment, this motivation may be compromised as full-time employment may limit eligibility for public benefits. The loss of subsidized housing, for example, may create a need for a participant to move to an unsubsidized housing in a location further away from work. Stable, affordable housing and employment have been found to be closely linked, with individuals who live

closer to their jobs being more likely to maintain employment.³⁶ Cost of transportation is another common barrier to job retention. SCSEP helps participants navigate these confusing and conflicting incentives by providing guidance and referrals to a wide network of public benefits specialists and options counselors for decision support and information regarding eligibility and available resources to facilitate their employment.

MA-SCSEP participants often have gaps in their work histories or outdated job skills. Typically, participants with gaps in work history combined with low educational attainment are assessed and placed in entry-level positions. Many require basic skills training to be eligible or competitive for these positions.

Other participants have been unable to find employment due to barriers that may include age discrimination, physical limitations or limited access to the MassHire system due to lack of public or private transportation.

SCSEP staff report the following typical skill profiles for SCSEP participants:

- *Computer illiteracy and lower level of education.* SCSEP helps with low levels of computer skills by referring them to low-cost or free computer literacy classes in addition to their community service assignment. Workers with low levels of education are referred to adult basic education and GED completion assistance programs.
- *Late-onset physical limitations.* Participants who may have been previously employed in labor, construction, and production industries may have physical or other health limitations that prohibit or impair their performance of physical duties. These participants are assessed and placed for training on jobs that are less physically demanding.
- *Cognitive, mental or behavioral health needs.* Participants with more complex mental or behavioral health needs, cognitive impairment or traumatic brain injuries have additional barriers to employment. These people are referred to the host agencies that provide more individualized supportive services to help them realize their full potential.

(3) Discuss current and projected employment opportunities in the State (such as by providing information available under §15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 491-2) by occupation), and the types of skills possessed by eligible individuals. (20 CFR 641.325(c))

While many jobs across Massachusetts require a college degree, many positions in the healthcare industry or food and hospitality services do not. Home Health Aides or community health workers, for example, are not required to have a bachelor's degree. EOEA will continue to

³⁶ Matthew Desmond and Carl Gershenson. 2016. Housing and Employment Insecurity among the Working Poor. *Oxford Journal*.

work with MassHire and National grantees to:

- Identify available jobs and training or certificate needed;
- Identify the most effective training providers;
- Identify interested participants and place them into the relevant training;
- Increase on-the-Job training assignments with private industry.

Given the educational and work experience of MA-SCSEP participants and the projected occupational growth, the most likely unsubsidized jobs will still be entry-level positions. The following table identifies key occupations areas that hold promise for employing MA-SCSEP participants and the types of skills training that could prepare them for unsubsidized employment.

Figure 94: Occupations and Skill Training.

Occupation	Example Training
Food Preparation and Serving	ServSafe Food Handler Program
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	Green Building Maintenance
Healthcare support	Personal Care Attendant, Home Health Aide, Respite Education and Support Tools

(b) Service Delivery and Coordination

(1) A description of actions to coordinate SCSEP with other programs.

(A) Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA one-stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. (20 CFR 641.302(g), 641.325(e))

Coordination with MassHire:

On the statewide level, EOE has been leading the MassHire efforts to provide services to older workers since 2016. The umbrella WIOA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by fourteen state agencies outlining the provision of services and coordination of efforts to serve most-in-need individuals. A copy of it is included with this Plan.

The programs that serve the largest numbers of older job seekers through MassHire are the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service, Adult and Dislocated Worker Act programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance and Unemployment Insurance Program, all of which are co-located at MassHire Career Centers. In the past four years, EOE has also been co-located and working closely with the MassHire Career Centers to raise awareness of mature

workers' assets and challenges and the capacity of SCSEP to train and place qualified workers. EOEA will continue to work closely with MassHire and all WIOA partners to address the needs of mature workers in the state.

In the next four years, EOEA will develop and provide current information and training for MassHire staff regarding facts and myths surrounding older adults in the workforce, and the value they bring both to the workplace and the economy. In addition, EOEA will continue developing materials on how to promote the advantage of multigenerational work environment.

While MassHire services become more automated or web-based, many older workers may still need in-person and intensive staff-assisted services that include job coaching and employment services. To help increase job seekers' supportive services, EOEA will work with MassHire to develop new types of workshops for older customers to address their unique skills, such as reliability, loyalty and dedication to the job.

On the local and regional level, MA-SCSEP and National grantees developed MOUs, shared infrastructure cost agreements and became active members of all 16 MassHire Workforce Boards (MWB) in their service areas. MA-SCSEP and National Grantees work closely with the WIOA one-stop delivery network. Since the beginning of WIOA implementation in 2016, the following major accomplishments were achieved on the local level:

- Local MOUs were designed and developed to outline customer flow and identify shared customers for all local areas. SCSEP staff is actively engaged with MassHire Workforce Boards and established close working relationships with all MassHire Career Centers. As an outcome, the number of referrals to SCSEP changed from 0 to 100 during the most recent fiscal year.
- MA-SCSEP staff are collocated in all MassHire Career Centers in state service area.
- The MassHire South Shore Workforce Board created one of the first customer flow and referral subcommittees and Operation A.B.L.E was an active participant along with other local and state partners. As a result, eight more boards established similar procedures.
- In Worcester County, SCSEP staff provides Older Workers Workshops for all older job seekers.
- In Berkshire County, MA-SCSEP staff is working with MassHire team on every shared customer through in person meetings and on joint older workers Job Fairs.

In the next four years EOEA will continue to deploy the most effective strategies to help MA-SCSEP participants obtain unsubsidized employment.

EOEA will also support and promote local practices, and help organize Job Fairs and similar events, aiming at older workers and the local employers.

Coordination with other training services:

Because most older workers are not SCSEP-eligible and there is a waiting list for SCSEP slots, EOEA will support local efforts to provide job training for high demand, high return occupations. Workers who have been laid off but have extensive experience, for example, may not be eligible for SCSEP, but may benefit from retraining through an apprenticeship. MA-SCSEP will join efforts with MassHire to help identify and refer eligible individuals to apprenticeship programs.

EOEA will continue to support and promote training programs designed specifically for older learners. For example, University of Massachusetts (UMass) is the first university system to join the Age-Friendly University (AFU) Global Network that originated at Dublin City University, earning the designation for its campuses in Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth, Lowell and the UMass Medical School in Worcester. UMass provides an age-friendly campus and supports adults who want to pursue second careers and other learning opportunities. EOEA will help refer older workers to these and other similar institutions for on-line and in person training opportunities.

- (B) Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities being carried out in the state under the other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(h))

Coordination with Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs):

Access to the full array of supportive services available through other OAA programs is ensured for all program participants. EOEA will continue to work with the AAAs, ASAPs and other service providers to coordinate access to the full array of social services. MA-SCSEP sub-grantees will continue to refer participants to the local AAA and ASAP information and referral specialist and/or caregiver specialist, State Health Insurance Information Program (SHIP) program, and other services. Several ASAPs are also SCSEP host agencies.

EOEA recently conducted a short survey of AAAs regarding older adult employment needs. The survey specifically analyzed if AAAs provide work- or training-related transportation, and indicates that AAA planners receive few or no requests for transportation of older workers to their jobs or training. Several expanded notes indicate that transportation services today are mostly provided for medical appointments.

In the next four years, EOEA will increase collaboration with AAAs to assess and understand the employment needs of communities they serve. EOEA will begin to cultivate to a possible role in assisting elder workers in attaining transportation to training and employment-related activities through AAA networks.

In addition, EOEA will share information, develop connections and referral

mechanisms between AAA and the MassHire offices.

- (C) Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. (20 CFR 641.302(i))

Coordination with Councils on Aging (COA):

EOEA will continue to work with other state-wide networks that support older job seekers. For example, the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging (MCOA) oversees job seekers networking groups throughout the state. A skilled group facilitator/career specialist leads these eight-session workshops. EOEA will continue to work with MCOA to further connect their efforts with the MassHire system. In particular, EOEA plans to coordinate with COAs to:

- Promote job openings at COAs.
- Promote the employment of older workers to local businesses, both public and private, and promote their use of MassHire to post jobs and recruit workers.
- Write and speak about the benefits of hiring older workers in their newsletters and public events.
- Include older workers' issues in their marketing and outreach efforts.
- Ensure that the information and referral staff at COAs are aware of MassHire training programs and can make appropriate referrals to employment and training programs there.

Coordination with the Massachusetts Lifespan Respite Coalition:

Composed of 22 state and community service providers, the Massachusetts Lifespan Respite Coalition (MLRC) provides education and training to professional and informal caregivers, and advocates for resources for caregivers. Many MLRC member agencies provide training and access to the respite worker jobs. EOEA will continue to participate in regular MLRC meetings to ensure that SCSEP participants have access to respite companion training and respite companion job opportunities.

To address the needs of older adults

Referrals to the Rewarding Work directory will be made for those trained SCSEP participants interested in becoming a respite companion or respite worker.

Coordination with Dementia Friendly Massachusetts:

Dementia Friendly Massachusetts is a grassroots movement to make public and

private services and spaces more accessible and welcoming to people with dementia and their caregivers. Some people living with dementia continue to work and volunteer in their communities. As part of their efforts to retain valuable older workers, workplaces are now challenging the idea that nothing can be done to support people working with this condition. In fact, there are excellent examples around the world of “dementia friendly” workplaces where simple adjustments have been made to jobs to accommodate people working with dementia.³⁷

Dementia Friendly Massachusetts will develop a plan to educate MassHire staff and Massachusetts employers about dementia and the caregivers’ needs. The goals are to spread awareness of the signs of dementia among recruiters and employers; educate employers on how to redesign jobs to support people working with dementia; and inform employers of community supports and services available for both caregivers and employees concerned about memory loss. As organizations work to ensure that they benefit from the life experience of their older workers and retain their employed caregivers, employers establishing dementia-friendly workplaces will be part of the solution.

(D) Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.302(j))

EOEA will continue to engage with the local universities and research institutions to better understand the economic trends and best practices that support community development in low- and moderate-income communities.

There are several other agencies in Massachusetts that provide meaningful part-time jobs to older job seekers. EOEA will work with Encore Boston Network and Empower Success Corps (ESC Discovery). A new strategy to provide a co-referral of older job seekers will be further explored and established.

(E) Actions to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the one-stop delivery system and the steps the state will take to encourage and improve coordination with the one-stop delivery system. (20 CFR 641.335)

In 2020-2024, EOEA will continue to work with the MassHire Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Centers to increase the percentage of older job seekers provided with skill-based training. This will allow for higher job attainment.

EOEA will provide technical support and guidance on how to increase referrals of MassHire consumers over the age of 55 to intensive job development and coaching services.

EOEA will develop a referral system to other agencies that can assist with obstacles to employment to those job seekers that have caregiving responsibilities, including the

³⁷ Tamkin P (ed) (2017), Darkening skies? IES Perspectives on HR 2017, Report 510, Institute for Employment Studies.

Family Caregiver Support Program, Lifespan Respite Coalition and others.

EOEA will lead state-wide efforts to use the person-centered approach and enhance staff ability to help all customers. EOEA will continue to promote a number of specific tools, such as Motivational Interviewing and Coaching for older job seekers. Within the person-centered framework, EOEA will identify data needed to measure achievement of goals through monitoring the performance of MassHire Career Centers on the services to older workers on:

- Workers assessments (skills, personal preferences, work history)
- Individual service planning and program referrals
- Service monitoring by case management (through integrated systems)
- Quality reviews of MassHire customer survey results
- Access to MassHire employer surveys and focus groups to determine benefits of working with MassHire (trained workforce, tax benefits, bond, etc.)
- Older workers durational time of unemployed

As needed, EOEA will develop new strategies in response to low performance findings and incorporate these plans into the local MOUs and other strategic planning.

(F) Efforts to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.

Massachusetts has areas of the state with low density of population, limited public transportation services, limited public housing, low access to health services and scarcity of jobs. EOEA will work with other state and regional agencies to help identify best practices for equity and improve access to employment and training services for older low-income job seekers living in these areas.

(2) The state's long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment. (20 CFR 641.302(e)) (May alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of strategic plan.)

EOEA will work with MassHire system to develop better strategies for linking the older worker population with businesses that are searching for skilled workers by arranging for increased outreach efforts. A key step will be to work with MassHire Biz Works, an employer services team. MassHire Biz Works offers businesses resources, guidance and connections to all state-wide resources in order to help them grow and thrive. EOEA and MassHire Biz Work will partner to help businesses recruit mature workers.

EOEA will also develop a way to provide information for businesses on how to consider adopting alternative work arrangements and phased retirement programs to attract and retain mature workers.

EOEA will continue to provide feedback to the public workforce development system about quality of referrals and services received at the local MassHire Career Centers.

- (3) The State’s long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP. (20 CFR641.302 (c))

EOEA through its aging network and partner agencies, serves all residents of the Commonwealth, reaching out to minority communities through local community service agencies, minority newspapers, and faith-based organizations. The new immigrant populations in the Commonwealth include, but are not limited to, Hispanic, Portuguese, Somali, Haitian and Vietnamese.

EOEA will continue to collaborate with the Office of Refugees and Immigrants to increase awareness about the resources of the agencies that have culturally competent and linguistically diverse staff to help MA-SCSEP sub-grantees by:

- Identifying and recruiting Host Agencies that serve minority populations;
- Intensify efforts in reaching out to minority- and immigrant-owned businesses that would provide unsubsidized placements for the participants.

- (4) A list of community services that are needed and the places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and location of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs. (20 CFR 641.330)

The most effective way to ensure best service to MA-SCSEP participants is finding an appropriate Community Service Assignment. A good match between the individual participant and a host agency strengthens the individual’s civic engagement as well as their ability to become self-sufficient, provides much needed support to organizations which benefit significantly from increased civic engagement, and strengthens the communities that are served by such organizations.

Community service needs are met in a variety of ways that include providing services to the general community and the senior community.

Figure 95: Community Service Assignments

DATA FROM PY18	PARTICIPANTS
Services to the General Community	610
Services to the Elderly Community	266

Although SCSEP participants provide a valued service to communities throughout Massachusetts, the unmet community service needs change, and new challenges still exist.

To address the issue of unmet community service needs, EOEA will strengthen relationship with the Massachusetts Service Alliance to better understand and serve those needs. Massachusetts Service Alliance provides federally and state funded volunteer services and has up-to-date data on the areas of the greatest community need.

MA-SCSEP and national sub grantees will explore the possibility of convening a workgroup to identify unmet community needs, share best practices in recruitment of host agencies to meet those needs. This type of effort is anticipated to result in a positive impact for all involved.

MA-SCSEP and the representatives of national sub grantees will work collaboratively to complete the following activities:

- Gather information from assessment reports which identify unmet needs for community service in different areas of the Commonwealth, specifically addressing designated populations in particular locations. These reports may come from such sources as AAAs, county assessment reports and regional planning.
 - Compile and analyze research results and develop a plan of action which will be disseminated to all SCSEPs.
 - Initiate and execute the plan of action to recruit host agencies and place participants at host agencies to meet community service needs.
- (5) Massachusetts' long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program. This may include recommendations to the Department as appropriate. (20 CFR 641.302(k))
- (6) Massachusetts' strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants' entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). (20 CFR 641.302(f))

MA-SCSEP will maximize and improve the level of performance by closer collaboration efforts with all WIOA partners, and by developing a stronger Person-Centered System. EOEA will prioritize information sharing, and developing a cross knowledge distribution and skill development with all partners. The goal will be to establish a consistent communication between all WIOA partners and MassHire front line staff that work with and serve older workers.

(c) Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution

- (1) A description of the localities and populations for which projects of the type authorized by title V are most needed. (20 CFR 641.325 (d))
- (2) A list of cities and counties where the project will be conducted. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate where the positions changed from the prior year. Describe current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution. The State's long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:
- (A) Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.
 - (B) Equitably serves rural and urban areas.

- (C) Serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(a), 641.365, 641.520)
- (3) The ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the State. (20 CFR 641.325(a))
- (4) The relative distribution of eligible individuals who:
 - (A) Reside in urban and rural areas within the State
 - (B) Have the greatest economic need
 - (C) Are minorities
 - (D) Are limited English proficient
 - (E) Have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))
- (5) A description of the steps taken to avoid disruptions to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365; when new Census or other reliable data become available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason. (20 CFR 641.325(i), 641.302(b))

Figure 96 shows a profile of Massachusetts General Population the distribution of eligible individuals who are afforded priority service as provided under the Older Americans' Act, section 518(b): the relative distribution of—“(i) eligible individuals who are individuals with greatest economic need;“(ii) eligible individuals who are minority individuals; and“(iii) eligible individuals who are individuals with greatest social need;

Figure 96: Massachusetts: Profile of General Population 2010. (Based on the U.S. Census Bureau)

Total Population	6,789,319	100.0%
55 - 64 Years	901,717	13.3%
65 - 84 Years	894,411	13.2%
85+ Years	155,340	2.3%
Veteran Status		
Civilian Population - 18+ Years	5,075,535	
Civilian Veterans	325,299	6.4%
Disability Status of the Civilian		
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized	6,713,702	
With a Disability	781,740	11.6%
Population 18 - 64 Years	4,321,499	
With a Disability	389,450	9.0%
Population 65+ Years	1,012,172	
With a Disability	330,631	32.7%
Language Spoken at Home		
Population 5+ Years	6,426,464	
Speaks Only English	4,940,967	76.9%
Language Other Than English	1,485,497	23.1%
Speaks English "Less Than Very Well"	582,948	39.2%
Spanish	564,401	8.8%
Speaks English Less Than "Very Well"	231,354	41.0%
Other Indo-European Languages	562,877	8.8%

Speaks English Less Than "Very Well"	196,256	34.9%
Asian and Pacific Islander Languages	267,678	4.2%
Speaks English Less Than "Very Well"	126,622	47.3%
Other Languages	90,541	1.4%
Speaks English Less Than "Very Well"	28,716	31.7%
Percent of Families and People Whose Income in the Past 12 Months is Below the Poverty Line		
Total Population	727,546	11.1%
Under 18 Years	198,980	14.6%
Related Children Under 18 Years	193,444	14.3%
Related Children Under 5 Years	57,700	16.2%
Related Children Under 5 - 17 Years	141,280	13.6%
Population 18+ Years	528,566	10.2%
18 - 64 Years	437,834	10.5%
65+ Years	90,732	9.0%
People In Families		8.0%

Figure 97: PY19 Equitable Distribution

County	Total Population	SCSEP eligible number of people	State Grantee	National Grantees
Barnstable	215,769	7,220	0	35
Berkshire	129,288	5,380	22	22
Bristol	548,922	17,960	0	86
Dukes	16,766	655	0	3
Essex	748,930	23,360	24	99
Franklin	71,599	2,445	0	11
Hampden	463,783	17,995	27	77
Hampshire	157,822	3,860	0	16
Middlesex	1,518,171	35,120	41	156
Nantucket	10,142	405	0	1
Norfolk	675,436	14,360	16	94
Plymouth	497,579	11,315	13	46
Suffolk	730,932	32,225	14	163
Worcester	801,227	21,935	20	93
Statewide Total	6,586,366	194,235	177	902

Source U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Non-employer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits, Consolidated Federal Funds Report Last Revised: Thursday, 07-Jun-2012 13:34:52 EDT

EOEA will continue to work with the National Grantees to analyze the Low/Moderate Income (LMI) data, SCSEP population needs, underserved locations in the state, rural and urban areas populations and their specific challenges to obtain and retain unsubsidized employment.

Figure 99: SCSEP Assurances

SCSEP ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:	
1.	Where SCSEP is included in the Combined Workforce Plan, the State established a written policy and procedure to obtain advice and recommendations on the State Plan from representatives of the State and area agencies on aging; State and local boards under WIOA; public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the State, except as provided under section 506(a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b); Social service organizations providing services to older individuals; Grantees under Title III of

	<p>OAA, Affected Communities, Unemployed older individuals, Community-based organizations serving older individuals; business organizations; and labor organizations.</p>
	<p>The Massachusetts Senior Community Service Employment Program (MA-SCSEP) has been an active member on the Commonwealth’s Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Steering Committee tasked, in conjunction with the State Board and Governor’s office, to participate fully in the development of the Combined State Plan that provides the framework for the State’s strategic and operational vision of the workforce system specifically as it relates to provision of quality employment and training opportunities for Older Workers. Each committee member has been asked to assure that “their network” of customers, providers, vendors and advisors are made fully aware of the public comment process which will include three to four public meetings throughout the Commonwealth. Those comments will be reviewed and added as appropriate into the plan and responses to the comments will be published as well.</p> <p>The Commonwealth assures that the draft combined plan will be fully vetted by the public and each core required partner, including representatives of the area agencies on aging, State and MassHire Boards under WIOA, public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the State, except as provided under section 506(a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b), social service organizations providing services to older individuals; grantees under Title III of OAA; affected communities, unemployed older individuals, community-based organizations serving older individuals, business and labor organization.</p>

APPENDIX I: PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

APPENDIX I: PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

Performance Indicator	Title I – Adult Program Core Partner: MassHire Department of Career Services			
	Program Year: PY 2020		Program Year: PY 2021	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	86.5%		86.5%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	78.0%		78.0%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$5,400		\$5,500	
Credential Attainment Rate	73.0%		73.5%	
Measurable Skill Gain	40.0%		40.0%	

Performance Indicator	Title I – Dislocated Worker Program Core Partner: MassHire Department of Career Services			
	Program Year: PY 2020		Program Year: PY 2021	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	86.0%		86.0%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	85.0%		85.0%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$7,900		\$8,000	
Credential Attainment Rate	65.0%		66.0%	
Measurable Skill Gain	40.0%		40.0%	

Performance Indicator	Title I – Youth Program Core Partner: MassHire Department of Career Services			
	Program Year: PY 2020		Program Year: PY 2021	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment* (Second Quarter after Exit)	81.0%		81.0%	
Employment* (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	74.0%		74.0%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$3,500		\$3,600	
Credential Attainment Rate	70.5%		70.5%	
Measurable Skill Gain	50.0%		50.0%	

* For Title I Youth programs, employment, education or training

Performance Indicator	Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program Core Partner: Adult Community Learning Services			
	Program Year: PY 2020		Program Year: PY 2021	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	42.0%		43.0%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	43.0%		44.0%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$6,000		\$6,250	
Credential Attainment Rate	25%		26%	
Measurable Skill Gain	Pending		Pending	
Performance Indicator	Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Program Core Partner: MassHire Department of Career Services			
	Program Year: PY 2020		Program Year: PY 2021	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment	65.0%		65.0%	

(Second Quarter after Exit)				
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	65.0%		66.0%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$6,200		\$6,300	
Credential Attainment Rate ²	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gain ²	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Performance Indicator	Vocational Rehabilitation Program Core Partner: Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission			
	Program Year: PY 2020		Program Year: PY 2021	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) ¹	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) ¹	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) ¹	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Credential Attainment Rate ¹	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Measurable Skill Gain	20.0%		20.0%	

Performance Indicator	Vocational Rehabilitation Program Core Partner: Massachusetts Commission for the Blind			
	Program Year: PY 2020		Program Year: PY 2021	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) ¹	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline

Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) ¹	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) ¹	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Credential Attainment Rate ¹	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Measurable Skill Gain	25.0%		25.0%	

Performance Indicator	All WIOA Core Programs			
	Program Year: PY 2020		Program Year: PY 2021	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers ³	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Additional State Indicators of Performance To Be Reported by Each Partner Agency ⁴
1. Number and percent of customers enrolled in training and exited who were employed in a training related job 2 nd quarter after exit.
2. Number and percent of veterans employed in the 2 nd quarter after exit
3. Number and percent of individuals with language barriers at registration employed in the 2 nd quarter after exit.
4. Number and percent of individuals with a disability who were employed in the 2 nd quarter after exit.
5. Number and percent of individuals receiving TANF and SNAP benefits who were employed in the 2 nd quarter after exit.
6. Number of older workers (50+) who were employed in the 2 nd quarter after exit.
7. Number of new businesses served.
8. Number and percent of businesses registered with MassHire Career Centers or served by Partner agencies that hired customers.

Establishment of Performance Goals:

Proposed (Expected) levels of performance must be submitted by each partner agency as part of the State Plan. Proposed expected levels will be negotiated with the relevant federal agencies (Department of Labor and Department of Education) to determine the approved performance goals for Program Year 2020 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) and Program Year 2021 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022). Subsequent rounds of negotiations will occur for Program Year 2022 and Program Year 2023. Goals are updated in the State Plan as they are approved or modified.

Notes:

1. Baseline indicators are those for which the partner agency will collect and report data, but are not required to propose an expected level of performance for PY 2020 or PY 2021. All Partners will be required to propose expected levels in PY 2022 and PY 2023.
2. The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skills Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program.
3. The Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. States are not required to submit an expected level of performance for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021.
4. States identify additional indicators of performance in their plans. Each partner agency will collect data on these indicators and results will be reported quarterly.

Attachments

A	Cost of Living and Affordability
B	Occupations: Typical Education Categories
C	O*NET Knowledge Skills and Abilities and Occupation Profile Example
D	Massachusetts Industry Profiles
E	MassHire Charter
F	Universal Design Principles
G	Draft High Quality Youth Program Standards
H	WIOA State Plan Metrics Definitions
I	Statewide Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
J	Listing of MassHire Career Centers and Locations
K	2017 Census of Agriculture State Profile for Massachusetts
L	Integrated, technology-based job seeker flow chart at for Career Centers (with Core Program partners)
M	Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
N	Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA)

ATTACHMENT A: COST OF LIVING AND AFFORDABILITY

The Council for Community and Economic Research measures cost of living based on a composite of price information from participating cities and metropolitan areas in each state. In each state, median housing prices were compared with median family incomes and mortgage interest rates, an analysis made by Moody's Analytics using U.S. Census Bureau data.

ATTACHMENT B: OCCUPATIONS: TYPICAL EDUCATION CATEGORIES

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides the typical education requirement for hundreds of occupations. In this document, the assignments for this category are grouped as follows:

BA+:

- Doctoral or professional degree
- Master's degree
- Bachelor's degree

Sub-BA:

- Associate's degree
- Postsecondary non-degree award
- Some college, no degree

HS or Below:

- High school diploma or equivalent
- No formal educational credential

ATTACHMENT C: O*NET KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES AND OCCUPATION PROFILE EXAMPLE

O*Net Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

[forthcoming]

Occupation Profile Example

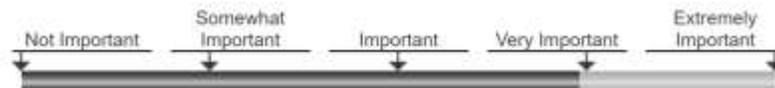
39-9021.00 - PERSONAL CARE AIDES

Importance

74 

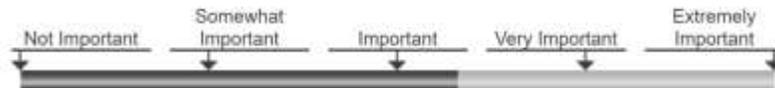
Knowledge

Customer and Personal Service — Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.



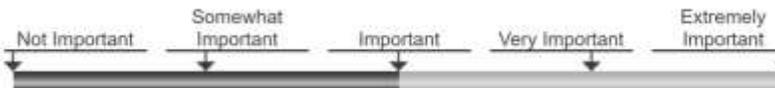
58 

English Language — Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.



50 

Psychology — Knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral disorders.

Importance

72 

Skill

Service Orientation — Actively looking for ways to help people.

66 

Social Perceptiveness — Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.

63 

Active Listening — Giving full attention to what others are saying, taking time to understand their points, asking questions, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.

56 

Speaking — Talking to others to convey information effectively.

53 

Monitoring — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.

Importance

66 

Ability

Oral Comprehension — The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.

66 

Oral Expression — The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.

63 

Problem Sensitivity — The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.

53 

Deductive Reasoning — The ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.

53 

Near Vision — The ability to see details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).

ATTACHMENT E: MASSHIRE CHARTER

VISION MassHire envisions a better future for people and businesses of Massachusetts through meaningful work and sustainable growth.

MISSION MassHire creates and sustains powerful connections between businesses and job seekers through a statewide network of employment professionals.

VALUES

COLLABORATION MassHire believes in the power of partnership and streamlined integration of services to achieve effective and timely results for those we serve.

RESPECT MassHire is committed to understanding and valuing the diverse, unique requirements and professional goals of the businesses and people we serve.

RELIABILITY MassHire creates trust and reliability by consistently delivering high quality professional services at each location and in every interaction.

INGENUITY MassHire leverages flexibility, expertise, and knowledge to successfully meet our mission, regardless of new challenges and circumstances.

ESSENCE “I feel like a valued, professional partner of MassHire.”

POSITIONING MassHire is an essential catalyst for professional and economic growth across the Commonwealth.

PROMISE MassHire promises to champion prosperity, connecting employers with talent and job seekers with tools, services, and connections to achieve meaningful and sustained employment.

PERSONALITY “I am your trusted partner in achieving your personal and business goals. I embrace your needs as my mission and offer a welcoming, professional experience at every point in our journey together. I believe in you as I do in myself. Things change quickly... I GET IT. You can always depend on me to offer guidance, resources, and support. If you want a job, seek to fortify your business for the long-term, or need a quick response to a pressing need, I can help. “Let’s get to work!”

ATTACHMENT F: UNIVERSAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following. The examples for MassHire are provided by the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMASS Boston.

Principle One: Equitable Use

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

Guidelines:

- Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
- Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users.
- Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users.
- Make the design appealing to all users.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

- During orientation, ask all customers if they need assistance completing registration rather than only individuals you think may have a disability.
- Make information on all services available to all customers, and avoid assuming that certain customer groups or customers may or may not be interested in certain services.

Principle Two: Flexibility in Use

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Guidelines:

- Provide choice in methods of use.
- Accommodate right- or left-handed access and use.
- Facilitate the user's accuracy and precision.
- Provide adaptability to the user's pace.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

- Provide options for a career interest inventory that can be completed on-line, on paper, or through answering questions through an interview.
- Provide a range of options for inputting information in a computer including a keyboard, trackball or a mouse.
- Provide information through both on-line self-directed methods, as well as in group workshop settings.

Principle Three: Simple and Intuitive

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level. Eliminate unnecessary complexity.

Guidelines:

- Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
- Be consistent with user expectations and intuition.
- Accommodate a range of literacy and language skills.
- Arrange information consistent with its importance.
- Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

- In an interviewing workshop, when talking about potential interview questions, role-play answers to questions, then promptly give suggestions about how interviewees might improve their answers.
- Provide information in multiple languages.
- Use touch screens with graphics for inputting information in a kiosk or computer.

Principle Four: Perceptible Information

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

Guidelines:

- Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.
- Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings.
- Maximize "legibility" of essential information.
- Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e., make it easy to give instructions or directions).
- Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

- During trainings and workshops, present information verbally and in writing, and incorporate graphics to illustrate information, so individuals can receive information in the manner that best suits them.
- In the resource room, for all signage, use graphics and pictures combined with text. Use color to correspond to different types of information (e.g., job listings printed on different color paper from workshop notices; job listings for different job categories contained in different color binders).

Principle Five: Tolerance for Error

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

Guidelines:

- Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors: the most used elements are most accessible; hazardous elements are eliminated, isolated, or shielded.
- Provide warnings of hazards and errors.
- Provide fail-safe features.
- Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

- In the resource room or library, configure most computers so that customers cannot inadvertently change settings, while having a couple of computers with a more flexible configuration so that users can more easily access the built-in accommodation features, and change these as necessary for their specific needs.
- Have computer procedures set up that ensure automatic back-up of job seeker resume, cover letters, job listing research, etc., avoiding accidental deletion.

Principle Six: Low Physical Effort

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.

Guidelines:

- Allow user to maintain a neutral body position.
- Use reasonable operating forces.
- Minimize repetitive actions.
- Minimize sustained physical effort.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

- Provide adjustable chairs, desks, and tables for workstations and classrooms.
- Avoid storing paper resource materials in file drawers that can be heavy and difficult to open. Use notebooks or other alternatives instead which are more accessible.
- Set up Macros on computer keyboards for standard cover letter and resume text.

Principle Seven: Size and Space for Approach and Use

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Guidelines:

- Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user.
- Make the reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user.
- Accommodate variations in hand and grip size.
- Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

- Plan group meetings and workshops in a room large enough for a sign language interpreter and so that individuals who use wheelchairs have ample space to turn around.
- Design the front desk area so there are sections where the counter height is appropriate for customers who are standing, as well as a section that is lower so individuals in wheelchairs can interact with staff on a face-to-face level, and easily reach documents and materials.

ATTACHMENT G: DRAFT HIGH QUALITY YOUTH PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Developed by the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board Youth Committee (February 2018)

1. Work-based learning experiences

- Structured exposure to work opportunities

2. Robust case management

- Caring adults who provide support, coaching, and on-going feedback to build self-efficacy

3. Access to support services

- Connect to resources to enable participation such as childcare and transportation

4. Employer Engagement

- Demand-driven program design and structure to lead to job placement and career opportunities

5. Employability (“soft”) Skills Development

- Job readiness skills: communication, teamwork, problem solving, etc.

6. Occupational or Academic Skills Progression

- Enhances literacy and numeracy skills to ensure career growth

ATTACHMENT H: WIOA STATE PLAN METRICS DEFINITIONS

Statewide Metric	Definition
Shared Customer	A customer that received services from MassHire and one or more partner agencies.
Customer Diversity	Demographics of customers (e.g. race/ethnicity, age, gender, and disability)
Entered Employment*	A customer who is in unsubsidized employment.
Median Earnings*	The wage paid to hired customers that falls in the middle of the earnings distribution; half earned less - half earned more.
Employment Retention*	A customer who remains employed during consecutive quarters.
Credential Attainment*	A recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent including valid industry-based credentials.
Educational Advancement*	Progression in the enrollment and/or completion of postsecondary education, and occupational skills trainings.
Career/wage “pathway”	Progression in a shared customer’s educational advancement, credential attainment, employment and wages over time.
Apprenticeship	A work-based training program that has been registered with the Massachusetts Division of Apprenticeship Standards.
Work Based Learning	An educational strategy that aligns classroom and workplace learning with academic, technical and employability skills in a work setting. (Examples include internships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, etc.)
Businesses Served*	A business customer that has received a service from MassHire or a partner organization.
Repeat Businesses*	A business customer that has received a service from MassHire or a partner organization in multiple time periods.
Referred applicants hired	A jobseeker customer referred to a job posting of a business customer who was subsequently hired by that business.
Business Customer Satisfaction	A measure of how a business customer feels the workforce system met their business need(s).
Time to employment	The amount of time between an unemployed customer’s first service with the workforce system and their hire date.
Job Posting	An employment opportunity published and distributed by workforce system partners.

**Denotes a performance metric that is also reported to the federal government by MassHire and partner agencies.*

ATTACHMENT I: STATEWIDE PARTNER MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

I. Introduction to MOU

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. This MOU articulates agreement among all state-level workforce system partners to fulfill the WIOA mission and principles by implementing the 2020 Massachusetts’ WIOA Combined State Plan.

A. WIOA Principles

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) strengthens the United States public workforce development system through innovation, alignment and improvement of employment, training, and education programs, and promotes individual, local, and national economic growth. WIOA stresses three principles for the workforce system:

1. Program Alignment

- a) Unified strategic planning across a wide range of partners and programs (defined in Section III A and B of this MOU)
- b) Enhanced the role of State and Local Workforce Boards in developing and implementing a WIOA State Plan

2. Effective Service Delivery

- a) Engagement of businesses and alignment of education and training activities through career pathways
- b) Partnerships and investments in the One-Stop Career Center delivery system

3. Increased Accountability

- a) Common, federally designed WIOA measures across WIOA titles I, II, III, IV as identified by the federal government
- b) State-designed performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of education and workforce programs
- c) Accountability and transparency through reporting and evaluations

B. Vision for the Massachusetts Workforce System – An Integrated System

All Massachusetts residents will benefit from a world-class, modern, integrated system of education, workforce, and business services that supports *career pathways* for individuals and leads to a more informed, educated, diverse, and skilled workforce that meets the Commonwealth’s businesses’ demands and sustains a diverse labor force and thriving economy.

MOU partners will work to:

- **Design career pathways** aligned with business demand across federal, state and community-based partners
- **Improve employability skills *and* transitions to postsecondary education and training** for individuals with barriers to employment including: under-educated, limited English proficiency adults, individuals with disabilities, youth and young adults
- **Assist low-income individuals and families to achieve economic self-sufficiency** through labor-market driven credentialing, and employment, and leveraging supports and services provided by the broader partner network (MOU signatories)
- **Meet the needs of both job seekers and businesses** who engage in the public workforce system
- Build an integrated, statewide technical assistance team to support problem resolution and continuous quality improvement and oversight to local MOU teams to **ensure that all regions (local MOU teams) are operating collaboratively and effectively.**

II. Purpose of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The Purpose of the MOU is to:

1. **Articulate a coordinated vision for organizing the Massachusetts public workforce system** to produce the best possible outcomes for shared customers youth, job seekers and businesses.
2. **Establish agreement at the state level to design partnerships and coordinate service delivery systems through the MOU partners** (both WIOA required partners and non-WIOA partners identified in Section III A and B of this MOU) to ensure that Massachusetts businesses and job seekers, including those individuals with disabilities, low-income status, education or language barriers, Veterans and other individuals “shared” by the MOU partners achieve/demonstrate measurable and better access and outcomes in the areas of education, training, job placement, wages, and economic mobility.
3. **Affirm the definition and set of shared infrastructure costs as provided in MOU sections VI. D-E**, to support partnerships and service delivery between the required WIOA partners (identified in Section III. A of this MOU), specialized centers such as Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Area Offices, and/or affiliated centers, and the local MassHire Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Centers in local areas as authorized by WIOA.
4. **Guide the continued development of local area partnerships and local MOU agreements** (as required by WIOA Section 121(b)/WIOA Regulations 20 CFR Part 678.500) on how services can be connected, integrated or enhanced by sharing staffing, resources or jointly designed services in ways that improve outcomes for shared customers – youth, job seekers and businesses.
 - a) This MOU confirms the framework for local MOUs as outlined in the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Joint Partner Local Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) – 2nd REVISION](#). This policy will be updated during Fiscal Year 2021.
 - b) If local WIOA required partners cannot execute an MOU that meets the statewide expectations outlined in the local MOU policy, the state WIOA required partners will finalize the agreement for the local area through an approved dispute resolution process as provided for by the MassHire State Workforce Board and the Governor. Departments administering WIOA funding and departments administering programs that are required One-Stop Career Center partners (listed in Section III. A of this MOU) shall have input into the development of the dispute resolution process.

III. Massachusetts Workforce Partners (MOU Partners)

- A. The WIOA required partners are defined by WIOA in SECTION 121 (b)/WIOA Regulations 20 CFR Part 678.400 as mandatory partners in the One-Stop Career Centers and are included in the State Combined Plan, including:
 1. **The Adult Program (Title I of WIOA)**, as part of the MassHire Department of Career Services (DCS), Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), programs authorized under Title I, including Job Corps, YouthBuild, Native American programs, and Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers programs;

2. **The Dislocated Worker Program (Title I)**, as part of the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), EOLWD;
3. **The Youth Program (Title I)**, as part of the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), EOLWD;
4. **The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program** (Title II), as part of Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Executive Office of Education (EOE);
5. **The Wagner-Peyser Act Program** (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III), as part of MDCS, EOLWD;
6. **The Vocational Rehabilitation Program** (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV), as part of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS);
7. **Federal-state unemployment compensation program**, as part of the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA), EOLWD;
8. **Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs** (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)), as part of MDCS, EOLWD;
9. **Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program** (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.) as part of MDCS, EOLWD;
10. **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program** (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) as part of Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), EOHHS; and
11. **Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**, (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C.2015(d)(4)), as part of DTA, EOHHS;
12. **Senior Community Service Employment Program** (Programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

B. Additional non-WIOA partners included in the state team and suggested for local area consideration in the development /continuation of the local MOU.

1. Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
 - a. Massachusetts Office of Business Development
 - b. Department of Housing and Community Development
2. Executive Office of Education,
 - a. Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Educational Act of 2018, Chapter 70, Chapter 74 funded programs
 - b. Department of Higher Education
3. Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services
4. Department of Transportation
5. Department of Corrections
6. Commonwealth Corporation
7. Community Based Organizations
8. Business associations
9. Philanthropy

C. Role of MOU Partners and the State MOU

The State MOU was initially established as part of the Massachusetts 2016 WIOA Combined State Plan with input from MOU Partners (defined above), stakeholders and the general public. The role of the state-level MOU is to improve outcomes for job seekers and business customers by organizing resources, services, and structures through a “customer” lens rather than the bureaucratic administration of federal or state resources. The State MOU is designed to outline areas of agreement that help the Commonwealth implement WIOA including:

- Focus on Business-Driven Services
- Priority of Service for Individuals with Barriers to Employment
- Streamlining Workforce Structures (Workforce Boards, Service Delivery, etc.)
- Partnerships Across WIOA Programs
- Regional Planning
- Performance Metrics Across All Partners (including new state-driven metrics)

In addition, the State MOU is intended to further Massachusetts-driven strategic initiatives to enhance the workforce system including:

- Integrating the MassHire Vision, Mission and Values
- Pursuing the goals and strategies of the 2020 WIOA Combined State Plan
- Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.
- Improving career mobility and employment outcomes for youth
- Supporting business growth and sustainability, elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.
- Ensuring Massachusetts has a world-class service delivery system by integrating use of modern tools and techniques.
- Developing statewide data sharing initiatives to facilitate program and partner integration (e.g. Workforce Connect).

The MassHire Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Centers will continue to convene the various local WIOA partners to leverage relationships with the business community and enhance a coordinated approach to outreach and service delivery. Most importantly, connecting outreach activities to employment outcomes of job seekers across the partners is a significant task for a truly “integrated” system.

In addition, the Partners will implement “priority of service” requirements to ensure that individuals with barriers (including individuals who are low-income, have limited education or technical skills, limited English proficiency, Veterans, ex-offenders, recipients of public assistance or face other barriers to employment such as disabilities, homelessness, etc.) are able to access critical employment and training services through the MassHire Career Center system and WIOA partner programs. In order to shift MassHire Career Center practices to develop a priority of service, all MOU Partners (listed in section III. A and B of this MOU) must work together with MassHire Career Centers to:

- Refine the local definition of Shared Customers between MOU Partners in the local MOU to foster a clear understanding of how multiple providers, services and resources should support an individual person or business;
- Implement the local area’s MassHire Career Center Customer Flow and service practices across partner agencies, including embedding universal design principles to ensure the accessibility and availability of services to Shared Customers;
- Utilize robust technology tools to scale-up practices and provide more significant supports for individuals with barriers to employment, including basic skill assessment, remediation, and career development tools; and
- Track and evaluate the outcomes for individuals who face barriers to employment.

IV. MOU Agreements: State Partners and Guidance for Local Areas

- A. All of the state-level MOU Partners agree to the following activities at a STATE LEVEL:**
- 1. Participate in the process to develop a WIOA Combined State Plan** and subsequent updates to the plan, including reviewing, commenting, and approving the appropriate operational planning elements of the Combined State Plan that impact programs and funding that serve shared customers;
 - 2. Commit to develop a shared understanding of partner systems and policies** and to identify and remove barriers for participation (state and local level) in the MassHire system. Define and share information on:
 - a) Populations served by partner systems
 - b) Eligibility criteria of partner systems
 - c) Resources available to businesses.
 - 3. Identify individuals to serve on local MassHire Workforce Boards** best representing each of the Core WIOA Program partners (defined as including Title I, II, III, IV, TANF/SNAP and other partners) and non-required partners as appropriate
 - a) The local Chief Elected Official (CEO) designated by the Governor consults with the Adult Basic Education (ABE) state director to ensure ABE is properly represented on the local Board. If there are multiple ABE programs in a region, the CEO develops a process for ABE program directors to nominate a representative to serve on the local Board with input from the state ABE Director.
 - 4. Identify individuals that best represent the MOU Partners (listed in Section III. A and B) to participate in the state’s certification process of local Workforce Development Boards** to ensure MassHire Boards properly consider and serve their interests.
 - 5. Identify individuals that best represent their WIOA required partner(s)** (listed in Section III. A) to serve on the local area Lead Operator competitive selection process to ensure MassHire Career Centers properly consider and serve their interests.
 - 6. Commit to the development of joint, statewide policies and programs across Core WIOA Programs and other youth workforce partners that build service pathways for**

youth to develop employability and career navigation skills, and expand Work Based Learning and career pathways for youth and young people. The United States Departments of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services have agreed that Career Pathways are:

A series of connected education and training strategies and support services that enable individuals to secure industry relevant certification and obtain employment within an occupational area and to advance to higher levels of future education and employment in that area.

7. **Participate in business initiatives and strategies** that are coordinated across the system (including the work of MassHire BizWorks and the Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet, MRC employer partnerships, the Workforce Training Fund, the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Funds and others).
8. **Continue to define and build an online, common intake and referral portal to work** across the data systems of MOU partners (defined in Section III. A and B as appropriate) to facilitate referrals, registration, assessment, career planning and data reporting for “shared” customers. The MOU Partners will continue to have representatives on a committee that works together to design the business requirements for an online tool.
 - a) MOU partners will develop policies regarding referrals among agencies for prioritizing enrollments (e.g., when there is a waitlist).
9. **Design state and regional training for front-line staff who are delivering services for each WIOA program partner.** Critical training areas include:
 - a) Program eligibility criteria for services and referral processes for the WIOA Core Program (Section III. A and B)
 - b) Business services offered by each MOU partner
 - c) Labor market information on high-demand industry and careers produced by the MassHire Department of Career Services and Department of Unemployment Assistance
 - d) Best practices for serving WIOA priority populations, including but not limited to disconnected youth, youth with disabilities, low-income individuals, individuals with limited education, limited English language skills, older workers, Veterans, etc.
 - e) Evidence-based models for integrated education and training, career pathways, wrap-around/college and career readiness support services to the list of cross-training topics
10. **Continue to implement a uniform methodology for calculating infrastructure costs and shared resources within local MOUs,** including in-kind staff contributions such as MRC vocational rehabilitation counseling staff time or Adult Basic Education out-stationing. Each partner will negotiate with the local area on the type of activity and the type of support provided.
 - a) See Section VII A and B for detail on calculations for state and local area cost-sharing mechanisms.

All MOU Partners agree to revise the Joint Partner MOU Policy that includes guidance regarding who should participate on the local MOU planning teams, as well as the required MOU content that demonstrates local partner commitment and activity toward building an integrated workforce system. **MOU Planning Teams are led by the local MassHire Workforce Board and CEO and** comprise individuals who are empowered to represent the MOU partner agency or organization for the purpose of developing and executing the local MOU, modeled on the state MOU.

- B.** State MOU partners agree to support local MOU Planning Teams to ensure local areas are demonstrating reasonable progress toward meeting the required local MOU provisions as required in the Joint Partner MOU Policy. MOU support includes reviewing and providing written feedback on MOUs submitted by local areas, providing training and technical assistance to local areas through a Joint Partner MOU Support Team, facilitating peer-to-peer learning by sharing successes and best practices from local areas, and regular review and feedback on the local MOU. State MOU partners agree to facilitate connections with existing planning teams (e.g. Adult Career Pathway working groups, regional planning, etc.) to ensure strategic alignment with other planning and activity taking place in the region.

In accordance with the Joint Partner Policy on Local MOUs, MOUs outline steps to address the following items:

1. A strategy and process to share information on the labor market.
2. The development of **career pathway maps and/or service flowcharts** for youth 16-24 across WIOA Youth programs, local MassHire Career Centers, adult education (Title II)/DESE, TANF/DTA, MRC/MCB, YouthWorks, and other key partners in the local area to collaboratively leverage resources for the purpose of expanding access to credentials and work-based learning for target populations, including:
 - i. Unemployed individuals (including those served by the Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA))
 - ii. Low-skilled, low education individuals
 - iii. People with disabilities
 - iv. Individuals with Limited English Proficiency
 - v. Veterans
 - vi. Youth
 - vii. Businesses

IV. Timeline and Amendments for State MOU

A. Duration

1. The effective date is July 1, 2020

2. WIOA Sections 121(c) (v) require that the MOU be reviewed not less than once every 3-year period to ensure appropriate funding and delivery of services, also including effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility.

B. Amendments

1. A Partner on the MOU can request an amendment to the MOU, or the MassHire Performance Committee can make a recommendation to MassHire State Workforce Board and Governor for amendments or renewals.
2. The MassHire State Workforce Board's MassHire Performance Committee shall review the State MOU once every year to ensure appropriate funding, delivery of services, and achievement of outcomes.
3. The annual infrastructure cost agreements specified in WIOA section 121(h) and referenced in this MOU shall be published in a Joint Partner Policy.

V. Governance of Shared System

A. Accountability

1. The Governor bears ultimate accountability for governance of federal programs authorized under WIOA.
2. The MassHire State Workforce Board (State Board) will provide guidance and direction to the workforce system through WIOA State Plan.
 - a) The MassHire Performance Committee will ensure fidelity to the Plan and oversight of cross-system integration and operation.
 - b) All WIOA Core Program Partners and partners on the MOU will execute the MOU through agency directors and designated staff in the Joint Partner Policy group (or similar body), work groups, and MassHire State Workforce Board meetings.

B. Data and Outcome Reporting Across Partners

1. WIOA Core Program Partners will work together to develop separate, agency-specific data matching agreements and MOUs between partners to measure the outcomes of customers utilizing workforce system and core partner services and evaluation studies on the impact of education, workforce and health and human service investments.
2. Under the large umbrella of the workforce system, the MassHire State Workforce Board and the Department of Unemployment Assistance will work with other critical, non-WIOA partners to develop separate, agency specific data matching agreements relevant to understanding education, workforce and economic development outcomes and meeting the data requirements of state-designed WIOA measures developed by the partners included in the State Plan. For example, the Executive Office of Education and the Department of Higher Education, Massachusetts Department of Corrections (state prisons), Department of Public Safety (oversees jails – County Houses of Corrections), Commonwealth Corporation, etc.

VI. Local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Sec. 121(c) and WIOA Regulations 20CFR Parts 678.500-510 require that a Memorandum of Understanding be executed between local

MassHire Workforce Boards and required WIOA partners in the MassHire Career Center (listed in Section III.A of this MOU).

The State WIOA required partners (Section III. A of this MOU) agree that staff or programs operating in a region will be identified to participate in the development of the Local Memorandum of Understanding (Local MOU). The Local MassHire Workforce Board will act as the convener of MOU negotiations and together with partners will shape how local MassHire Career Center services are delivered.

A. Process

The Local MassHire Workforce Board will convene representatives of WIOA required and non-WIOA partners (Section III. A and B of this MOU) in the local area and other stakeholders to develop shared service strategies for job seekers and businesses and identify related shared customer flow.

Local strategies will include but not limited to operational and service workflows, related referral processes, coordinated staff development and training, marketing and community integration, co-locations of staff (physical or virtual) and the nature and provision of related infrastructure and shared costs.

These strategies will be designed locally to meet the service, resource and technology needs of the center and take into consideration the individual characteristics, service needs and resources of each of the WIOA required partners.

Strategies should be both data and demand-driven to further support the development of local service strategies and the needs of businesses and job seekers.

The MOU will include agreements on the specific infrastructure and shared program costs including the method by which revenue and costs will be supported by each partner. Refer to section VI. D. for the definition of shared program and infrastructure costs.

Cost calculations will take into consideration the proportionate share of use by each partner consistent with budgets, mandates and program limitations and must be spent solely for purposes allowable according to the partner authorizing statutes and other applicable legal requirements, including Federal cost principles.

[Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Joint Partner Local Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) – 2nd REVISION](#) details the Local MOU requirements, including:

- A description of the process to develop an MOU;
- A description of the priority populations identified by the MOU Partners;
- A description of the continuum of services available for each priority population;
- A description of the continuum of services available for businesses;
- Access to technology and materials that are available through the MassHire Career Center service delivery system;
- Coordinated staff development and training;
- Assurances of participation of required WIOA Partners (at a minimum, partners described in Section III. A of the MOU);

- A plan to fund joint costs:
 - Funding of infrastructure costs
 - Funding of shared services and operating costs of service delivery system
- Duration of the MOU;
- Assurances covering local MOU review, revisions, and other provisions agreed to by local areas.

The MOU may include other provisions agreed to by all parties that are consistent with all partner programs, services and activities authorizing statutes and regulations.

The MOU must include all requirements as set-forth in the most up-to-date WIOA MOU policy guidance. In addition, the local MOU will reflect an agreement of the MOU partners to jointly review the WIOA mandated performance metrics for the region or metrics negotiated as part of any shared and infrastructure contract costs between a local area (MassHire Board) and the mandated One-Stop Career Center partner, including incentive and penalties.

Although the local MassHire Workforce Board (with agreement of the Chief Elected Official and WIOA required partners) may enter into a separate agreement between each partner or group of partners under the purview of WIOA, the State Core Partners require that a single “umbrella” MOU be executed to address the issues relating to the MassHire Career Center service delivery across all WIOA required partners unless sufficient evidence can be provided as to why a local area cannot develop an umbrella MOU.

The MOU is fully executed when it contains the signatures of the MassHire Board, WIOA required partners (Section III. A of this MOU), and the Chief Elected Official (CEO) and the time period that the MOU is in effect.

C. Interim Plan or Local MOU impasse

If necessary, an interim infrastructure funding agreement may be put in place, however must be finalized within 6 months of the signing of the MOU. If it is not finalized within that timeframe, the local MassHire Board must notify the Governor as described in WIOA 121 (h) and the WIOA regulations 20 CFR Part 678.725) and the state infrastructure mechanism will trigger.

The local MassHire Workforce Board must report to the State Board, Governor, and the appropriate WIOA required state agencies if MOU negotiations with WIOA required partners have reached an impasse. The local MassHire Workforce Board and partners must document the negotiation and efforts that have taken place in the MOU negotiations.

The Governor, State Board, or a state official acting on their behalf may consult with the appropriate Federal agencies to address the impasse related to issues other than infrastructure costs.

Impasses related to infrastructure costs must be resolved using the State Infrastructure cost funding mechanism.

D. Infrastructure and Shared Cost Funding

WIOA sec. 121(h), sec. 121(i), WIOA Regulations 20 CFR 678, Subpart E 20CFR 700 -760) require that One-Stop Career Centers partners must contribute jointly to fund infrastructure costs, as well as use a portion of the funds available to support their programs, activities and services operated through a local MassHire Career Center consistent with the proportional burden, program mandates and limitations and the state infrastructure-cost default funding caps, should local consensus not be reached.

These support costs are defined as shared and infrastructure costs. The proportion of the shared and infrastructure costs paid by each WIOA required partner (Section III. A of MOU) must be in accordance with Federal cost principles, which require that all costs must be allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the program and all other applicable legal requirements.

The Core Partner funding of costs is intended to:

- Maintain the one-stop delivery system to meet the needs of the local areas;
- Reduce duplication by improving program effectiveness through the sharing of services, resources and technologies among Partners;
- Reduce overhead by streamlining and sharing financial, procurement, and facilities costs;
- Encourage efficient use of information technology;
- Ensure that costs are appropriately shared by one-stop partners by basing contributions on proportionate share of use, and requiring that all funds are spent solely for allowable purposes; and
- Ensure that services provided by the MassHire Career Center are allowable under the Partner's program.

Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA)

The Parties of this MOU agree that all required partners have a joint funding responsibility to support and maintain an effective local integrated service delivery system. In addition, all parties to the MOU recognize that infrastructure costs are applicable to the all required Partners. As such, a State One-Stop Career Center Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) has been set by the Governor, after consultation with the CEOs, MassHire Workforce Boards, the MassHire State Board, and WIOA Required Partner Agencies that determines the WIOA required partner infrastructure contributions. This infrastructure funding agreement is updated annually, and published as a Joint Partner Policy Issuance on the [WIOA State Partner Infrastructure Contributions](#).

All parties to this agreement acknowledge that the Local MOU herein serves the purpose of the infrastructure funding agreement (IFA) as required by WIOA. The infrastructure funding agreement as described will be revisited on an annual basis and periodically reconciled against actual costs incurred and adjusted accordingly to ensure that it reflects a cost allocation methodology that demonstrates how infrastructure costs are charged in proportion to relative benefits received.

Infrastructure funds contributions are based upon a methodology where infrastructure costs are charged to each partner in proportion to relative benefits received and consistent with the partner's programs' authorizing laws and regulations including Federal cost principles, and other applicable legal requirements. The IFA is apportioned annually at the state level based on the percentage of shared customers served in each local workforce area. On annual basis, State Partners establish a

methodology that will ensure costs are allowable, reasonable, necessary and allocable. WIOA Section 121 (h) and WIOA Regulations 20 CFR Part 678.735 include the limitation for the required partner (Section III. A of this MOU) contributions, based on a percentage of their Federal funding allocation. These limitations do not apply at the outset to the local funding mechanism, instead are a cap on required contributions determined by the Governor if consensus is not reached at the state or local level between the local board, chief elected officials and WIOA required partners. In addition, the IFA includes timelines regarding notification to the Governor for not reaching local agreement that will trigger State- Infrastructure Funding Mechanism.

As appropriate, State Partners will enter into Inter-agency Service Agreements (ISAs) or Contracts with the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), as the designated State Workforce Agency (SWA), to issue the local allocations. Local MassHire Boards will ensure all allocations are incorporated into the local integrated budget during the annual planning process. MDCS will monitor the spending of all shared and infrastructure costs and Local partners agree to meet regularly to discuss integrated service delivery strategies and the shared and infrastructure funds needed to actualize services. On an annual basis, local partners will provide suggestions and recommendations to state level partners for adjustments to shared and infrastructure funding.

Shared Costs Funding Mechanism

The WIOA required partner (Section III. A of MOU) developed agency-specific guidelines to be utilized during local MOU negotiations to assist in determining each WIOA required partner (Section III. A of MOU) programs' proportionate share of shared costs (shared costs are defined in VI. E. 1.). These guidelines shall be consistent with the individual Partner's mandates, budgets and program limitations and take into consideration the default caps on required contributions delineated in WIOA 121 (h) and WIOA Regulations 20 CFR Part 678.735. Once contributions are identified locally via successful MOU negotiations or at the state level if local consensus fails, the method of transferring negotiated partner funds to the one-stop system may be via direct contract from the partner to the local area or to the area via funds transferred from the partner to EOLWD, as appropriate.

E. Cost Defined

1. Shared Costs

Shared costs are costs jointly identified by the MassHire Workforce Board, MassHire Career Centers and each WIOA required partner (Section III. A of MOU) to provide services to shared customers (co-enrolled participants) across program staff and facilities. MassHire Career Centers and WIOA required partners on the local MOU will develop the appropriate activities for the shared customer pools. Activities and services including but not limited to:

- Intake
- Needs assessment
- Basic skills assessments
- Identification of appropriate services to meet needs
- Referrals to other One-Stop Career Center partners
- Business services.

- Support for programs to invest in or create access to assistive technologies

Shared costs WIOA 121 (i) and WIOA Regulations 20 CFR Part 678.760) must be determined as part of the Local MOU and may include cash and non-cash resources.

2. Infrastructure Costs

MassHire Career Center infrastructure costs are defined as non-personnel costs necessary for the general operation of the center, including:

- Facility and rental costs
- Utilities and maintenance
- Equipment (including assessment-related and assistive technologies for individuals with disabilities)
- Technology to facilitate access to the MassHire Center (including planning and outreach)
- Common MassHire delivery system identifier costs (signage and other identifier-related)

Infrastructure costs are funded through a State MassHire Career Center infrastructure funding agreement set by the Governor, after consultation with the CEOs, MassHire Workforce Boards and the MassHire State Board that determines the WIOA required partner contributions.

VII. Signatories

By signing this agreement, all parties agree that the provisions contained herein are subject to all applicable Federal, State and local laws, regulations or guidelines. By signatures affixed below, the parties specify their agreement:

Secretary Rosalin Acosta
*Executive Office of Labor and Workforce
Development*

Secretary James Peyser
Executive Office of Education

Secretary Marylou Sudders
*Executive Office of Health and Human
Services*

Secretary Michael Kennealy
*Executive Office of Housing and Economic
Development*

Director Alice Sweeney
MassHire Department of Career Services

Commissioner Jeffrey Riley
*Department of Elementary and Secondary
Education*

Director Richard Jeffers
Department of Unemployment Assistance

Commissioner Amy Kershaw
Department of Transitional Assistance

Commissioner Toni Wolf
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Commissioner David D’Arcangelo
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Secretary Elizabeth Chen
Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Secretary Francisco Ureña
Department of Veterans’ Services

Theresa Rowland, Interim President and CEO
Commonwealth Corporation

Commissioner Carlos E. Santiago
Department of Higher Education

Director Patrick Mitchell
Division of Apprenticeship Standards

Commissioner Carol Mici
Department of Corrections

Jennifer Maddox, Interim Undersecretary

Marian Walsh, President and CEO

*Department of Housing and Community
Development*

Operation ABLE

Christine Garland, V.P. of Workforce
Development
Senior Service America, Inc

VIII. Definitions

1. **Administrative Entity:** Entity(ies) designated by the CEO to coordinate and administer WIOA activities and services within a local area on the local behalf and in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, rules, policies, plans, and the terms of this MOU.
2. **Chief Elected Official:** Identified in WIOA Section 3 Definitions (9) as the chief elected officer of a unit of general local government in a local area or the individual(s) designated under a local agreement pursuant to WIOA Section 107(c)(1)(B).
3. **Career Services:** The services which shall be available, at a minimum, to individuals who are adults or dislocated workers through the career center delivery system in each local area. The career services that must be provided as part of the career center delivery system are listed in WIOA Section 134(c)(2).
4. **Combined Plan:** Per WIOA Section 103, a state may develop and submit a combined plan for the core programs and 1 or more of the programs and activities defined in Sec. 103 (a) (2).
5. **Common Measures:** Primary indicators of performance,” for its six core programs
6. **Core Partner:** An entity that carries out one or more of the programs or activities identified under WIOA Section 121 (b)(1) and is required under that Section to participate in the career center delivery system and to make the career services under its program or activity available through the career center system
7. **Cost Allocation:** Per 66 Fed. Reg. 29639, cost allocation is the measurement of actual costs in relation to the benefit received in order to determine each partner’s fair share of career center operating costs.
8. **Fair Share:** The portion of career center operating costs allocated to each partner in proportion to the benefits the Partner receives from participation in the career center system.
9. **Fiscal Agent:** An entity appointed by a local area’s CEO in accordance with WIOA Section 107 (d)(12)(B)(i)(II) and (III) to be responsible for the administration and disbursement of WIOA and other funds allocated for workforce development activities in the local area. WIA Section 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(II) provides that designation of a fiscal agent does not relieve the CEO from his/her liability for any misuse of grant funds.
10. **Governor’s Massachusetts Workforce Development Board (MWDB):** Enacted by the Massachusetts Governor and Legislature on December 2, 2015, the Board will assist the Governor in creating an integrated statewide strategic plan for workforce development which will link workforce policies, education and training programs, and funding streams with the economic needs of Massachusetts and its regions and in complying with the provisions and requirements of WIOA Section 101. The new legislation can be found here: <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2015/Chapter142>
11. **In-Kind Contributions:** 66 Fed. Reg. 29639-29640 defines these types of contributions as donations from third parties that are not to be confused with contributions to the career center by partner programs of such things as space, equipment, staff, or other goods and services for which the partner program incurs a cost. In-kind contributions may include funding from philanthropic organizations or other private entities or through other alternative financing options, to provide a stable and equitable funding stream for on-going career center delivery system operations. WIOA 121(c)(2)(A)(i).
12. **Local Area:** A local workforce investment area designated by the Governor, under section 106, subject to sections 106(c)(3)(A), 107(c)(4)(B)(i), and 189(i).
13. **Local Workforce Development Board (local board):** The board created by the CEO pursuant to WIOA Section 107 with responsibility for the development of the local plan and for oversight of the workforce development activities in the local area.
14. **Additional Partner:** Per WIOA 121 (b)(2), an entity that carries out a program not identified as required

under WIOA that is approved by the LWDB and the CEO may be included as a career center partner in a local area.

15. **Massachusetts Career Center Delivery System:** The career center delivery system is essentially a collaborative effort among public agencies, non-profit organizations, and private entities that administer workforce investment, educational, and other human resource programs to make the variety of services available under those programs more accessible to eligible job seekers and businesses.
16. **Massachusetts Career Center Operator:** An entity or consortium of entities designated in accordance with WIOA Section 121(d) to operate a career center site and to perform career center service delivery activities in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, rules, policies, plans, and the terms of this MOU.
17. **MassHire BizWorks:**
18. **Resource Sharing:** Per 66 Fed. Reg. 29639, Resource Sharing is the cash and/or resources each partner will contribute to fund its fair share of costs for operation of the career center system. This can include “in-kind” contributions from third parties to partner programs. The LWDB, CEO and career center partners may fund the costs of infrastructure off career centers through methods agreed on by the LWDB, CEO and career center partners through Resource Sharing.
- Shared Customers:** Those job seekers that are receiving services through the MassHire system and one additional MOU partner, as defined by [WIOA Partner Shared Customers](#).
20. **Specialized Service Centers:** A specialized service center of a core partner is defined as a local service center providing specialized services to shared customers such as assistive technology, benefits counseling, and vocational counseling.
21. **Training Services:** Services to adults and dislocated workers as described in WIOA Section 134(c)(3). Per WIOA 134(c)(3)(D) these may include occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, programs that combine workplace training with related instructions, which may include cooperative education programs, private-sector training programs, skill upgrading and retraining, apprenticeships, entrepreneurial training, transitional jobs, job-readiness training, adult education and literacy activities in combination with a training program, or customized training.
22. **WIOA:** The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) Act amends the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to strengthen the United States workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training, and education programs in the United States, and to promote individual and national economic growth, and for other purposes.
23. **WIOA Local Plan:** Per WIOA Section 108, the local plan is a comprehensive 4-year plan developed by each LWDB, in partnership with the chief elected official and submitted to the Governor. The plan shall support the strategy described in the State plan. At the end of the first 2-year period of the 4-year local plan, each local board shall review the local plan, and the local board, in partnership with the chief elected official, shall prepare and submit modifications to the local plan to reflect changes in labor market and economic conditions or in other factors affecting the implementation of the local plan. Plans identify the respective local area’s current and projected workforce investment needs, the career center delivery system, performance standards, and strategies to address the workforce investment needs in consideration of performance standards per WIOA Section 116.
24. **WIOA State Plan:** The term “State Plan”, used without further description, means a unified State plan

under Section 102 or a combined State plan under Section 103.



DEPARTMENT OF CAREER SERVICES

Find a MassHire Career Center Near You

Visit a MassHire Career Center for:

- Job search assistance;
- Career planning information;
- Workshops on job search techniques including interviewing, networking, and resume writing;
- Data on the current statewide and local job market; and
- Resources to help you find the right training opportunities;
- Tools to help you conduct an effective job search.

Greater Boston

MassHire Boston Career Center

1010 Harrison Avenue
Boston, MA 02119
(617) 541-1400, TTY#: (617) 442-3610

MassHire Downtown Boston Career Center

75 Federal Street, 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02110
(617) 399-3100, 800-436-WORK (9675)

MassHire Metro North Career Centers

186 Alewife Brook Parkway, Suite 310
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 661-7867, (888) 454-9675
TTY#: (800) 439-2370

(affiliated limited services)*

4 Gerrish Avenue
Chelsea, MA 02150
(617) 884-4333

100 TradeCenter
Suite G-100
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 932-5500, (888) 273-WORK

MassHire Framingham Career Center

1671 Worcester Road
Framingham, MA 01701
(508) 861-7993

MassHire Norwood Career Center

32 Day Street
Norwood, MA 02062
(781) 269-5494

Northeastern Massachusetts

MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Centers

Haverhill Opportunity Works
(HOW Building)
671 Kenosia Street,
Haverhill, MA 01830
(978) 241-4730

255 Essex Street
Lawrence, MA 01840
(978) 722-7000

MassHire Lowell Career Center

107 Merrimack Street
Lowell, MA 01852
(978) 458-2503, TTY#: (978) 805-4915

MassHire North Shore Career Centers

70 Washington Street
Salern, Massachusetts 01970
(978) 825-7200

(affiliated limited services)*

5 Pleasant Street
Gloucester, MA 01930
(978) 283-4772

(affiliated limited services)*

North Shore Community College
300 Broad Street, LE-102
Lynn, MA 01901
(781) 691-7450

MassHire North Shore Youth Career Center**

117 Franklin Street
Lynn, MA 01902
(781) 691-7430

Southeastern Massachusetts

MassHire Attleboro Career Center

95 Pine Street
Attleboro, MA 02703
(508) 222-1950

MassHire Cape & Islands Career Center

372 North Street
Hyannis, MA 02601
(508) 771-JOBS (5627),
TTY#: (508) 862-6102

MassHire Greater Brockton Career Center

34 School Street,
Brockton, MA 02301
(508) 513-3400

MassHire Greater Brockton YouthWorks**

34 School Street, lower level
Brockton, MA 02301
(508) 584-9800

MassHire Fall River Career Center

446 North Main Street
Fall River, MA 02720
(508) 730-5000

MassHire Youth Connections**

139 South Main Street
Fall River, MA 02720
(508) 675-9245

MassHire Greater New Bedford Career Center

618 Acushnet Avenue
New Bedford, MA 02740
(508) 990-4000

MassHire Taunton Career Center

72 School Street
Taunton, MA 02780
(508) 977-1400

MassHire South Shore Career Centers

36 Cordage Park Circle, Suite 214B
Plymouth, MA 02360
(617) 376-5170

1515 Hancock Street
Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 745-4000

Central Massachusetts

MassHire North Central Career Center

100 Erdman Way
Leominster, MA 01453
(978) 534-1481, TTY#: (978) 534-1657

MassHire Southbridge Career Center

5 Optical Drive, Suite 200
Southbridge, MA 01550
(508) 765-6430, TTY#: (508) 765-6437

MassHire Worcester Career Center

340 Main Street, Suite 400
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 799-1600

Western Massachusetts

MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Centers

One Arch Place
Greenfield, MA 01301
(413) 774-4361, TTY#: 413-772-2174

(Affiliated limited services)*

20 West Street
Northampton, MA 01060
(413) 774-4361

MassHire Holyoke Career Center

850 High Street
Holyoke, MA 01040
(413) 532-4900, TTY#: (413) 535-3098

MassHire Berkshire Career Center

160 North Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 499-2220, TTY#: (413) 499-7306

MassHire Springfield Career Center

95 Liberty Street, Third Floor
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 858-2800, TTY#: (413) 858-2800

For more information about MassHire Career Centers, visit www.mass.gov/careercenters

* Affiliated limited services – Contact the career center for hours of operation and services available.

** Youth-specific Career Center.

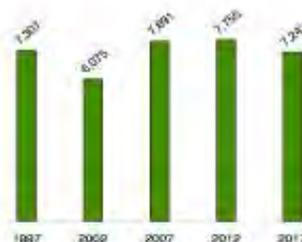


Massachusetts

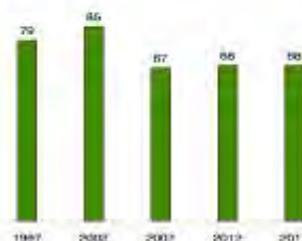
Total and Per Farm Overview, 2017 and change since 2012

	2017	% change since 2012
Number of farms	7,241	-7
Land in farms (acres)	491,653	-8
Average size of farm (acres)	68	+1
Total (\$)		
Market value of products sold	475,184,000	-3
Government payments	4,004,000	-51
Farm-related income	70,388,000	-10
Total farm production expenses	492,665,000	-9
Net cash farm income	58,911,000	+44
Per farm average (\$)		
Market value of products sold	65,624	+3
Government payments (average per farm receiving)	7,583	-27
Farm-related income	28,009	-3
Total farm production expenses	68,038	-2
Net cash farm income	7,859	+54

Number of Farms, 1997-2017



Average Farm Size, 1997-2017 (acres)



Farms by Value of Sales

Value of Sales	Number	Percent of Total *
Less than \$2,500	3,258	45
\$2,500 to \$4,999	752	10
\$5,000 to \$9,999	767	11
\$10,000 to \$24,999	774	11
\$25,000 to \$49,999	526	7
\$50,000 to \$99,999	405	6
\$100,000 or more	759	10

Farms by Size

Size	Number	Percent of Total *
1 to 9 acres	2,373	33
10 to 49 acres	2,535	35
50 to 179 acres	1,669	23
180 to 499 acres	548	8
500 to 999 acres	92	1
1,000 + acres	24	(2)



United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus

2017 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE State Profile

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold

	Sales (\$1,000)	Rank in U.S. ^a	State Producing item
Total	475,184	47	50
Crops	363,524	42	50
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas	5,388	47	50
Tobacco	5,733	9	18
Cotton and cottonseed	-	-	17
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes	102,061	25	50
Fruits, tree nuts, berries	88,433	16	50
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, sod	139,740	26	50
Cultivated Christmas trees, short rotation woody crops	3,536	15	50
Other crops and hay	18,633	44	50
Livestock, poultry, and products	111,661	47	50
Poultry and eggs	12,194	42	50
Cattle and calves	11,147	45	50
Milk from cows	45,336	39	50
Hogs and pigs	2,098	40	50
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, milk	2,305	41	50
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, donkeys	3,430	43	50
Aquaculture	29,402	16	50
Other animals and animal products	5,749	37	50

(Z) Percent of U.S. agriculture sales

Share of Sales by Type (%)

Crops	77
Livestock, poultry, and products	23

Land in Farms by Use (acres)

Cropland	171,496
Pastureland	46,341
Woodland	194,189
Other	79,627

Top Counties: Land in Farms (acres)

Worcester	95,308
Franklin	86,247
Plymouth	60,036
Berkshire	58,647
Hampshire	50,644

Total Producers ^a	12,778
Sex	
Male	7,206
Female	5,572
Age	
<35	1,082
35 - 64	7,381
65 and older	4,315
Race	
American Indian/Alaska Native	29
Asian	95
Black or African American	166
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	6
White	12,402
More than one race	80
Other characteristics	
Hispanic, Latino, Spanish origin	207
With military service	1,102
New and beginning farmers	3,538

Percent of farms that:

Have internet access	84
Farm organically	3
Sell directly to consumers	25
Hire farm labor	33
Are family farms	95

Top Crops in Acres ^d

Forage (hay/haylage), all	79,004
Vegetables harvested, all	19,014
Land in berries	14,994
Corn for silage or green chop	13,689
Cranberries	13,555

Livestock Inventory (Dec 31, 2017)

Broilers and other meat-type chickens	17,663
Cattle and calves	36,574
Goats	7,632
Hogs and pigs	(D)
Horses and ponies	14,584
Layers	155,008
Pullets	10,139
Sheep and lambs	13,310
Turkeys	21,227

See 2017 Census of Agriculture, U.S. Summary and State Data, for complete footnotes, explanations, definitions, commodity descriptions, and methodology.

^a May not add to 100% due to rounding. ^b Among states whose rank can be displayed. ^c Data collected for a maximum of four producers per farm.

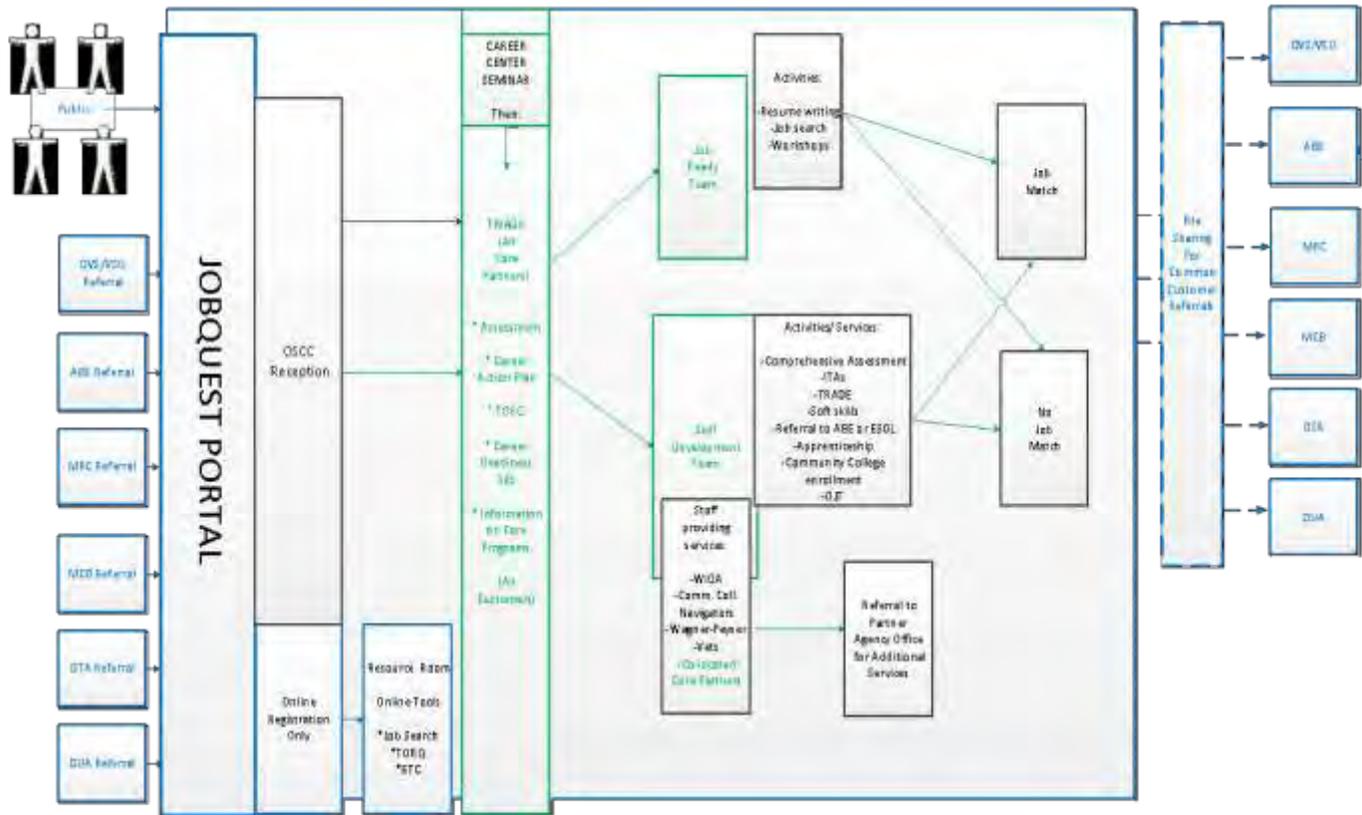
^d Crop commodity names may be shortened; see full names at www.nass.usda.gov/go/cropnames.pdf. * Position below the line does not indicate rank.

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations. (NA) Not available. (Z) Less than half of the unit shown. (-) Represents zero.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

ATTACHMENT L: Integrated, technology-based job seeker flow chart at for Career Centers (with Core Program partners)

New statewide customer flow to manage individuals from various referral sources who are triaged based on new, intensive skill assessment tools to Job Ready and Skill Building Teams within the Career Center.



Legend:
 Anything blue = New IT Interface
 Anything green = New Staffing / Customer Flow Re design
 Anything black = Exists Today

Note on Reporting: Any reporting/matching which utilizes confidential UI data will be masked and reported through DUA to the extent allowed under Massachusetts law

ATTACHMENT M: SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

[FORTHCOMING]

ATTACHMENT N: DEPARTMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

[FORTHCOMING]