



**MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Local 4 Year Plan**

Phase 2: July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021

(a) Strategic Planning elements, including:

1. A regional (local) analysis of: (i) Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and (ii) Employment needs of businesses in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations. (iii) As appropriate, your local area may use an existing analysis, which is a timely current description of the regional economy, to meet the requirements of paragraphs (a)(1)(i) and (ii) of this section;

The analysis below is an overview of the regional analysis for the Greater Lowell, but the Northeast Labor Market Blueprint identifies priority and critical industries with the Northeast region including the Merrimack Valley and North Shore workforce regions. The regional blueprint is available at:

<https://masshiregreaterlowell.com/wp-content/uploads/Northeast-Regional-Blueprint.pdf>

The employment needs of the businesses in the Greater Lowell workforce area range from the challenge of the low unemployment rate resulting in all industries competing for labor and the challenge of finding qualified labor to fill open positions. Manufacturing faces a high demand for replacement workers due to the high level of retirements because of the age of the workforce. In addition, we see that the IT stretches across all industries and employers will be looking for workers to have access to education and training across all skill levels. Access to reliable transportation remains a critical need both on the employer and employee side of the scale.

Greater Lowell's industry and occupational mix are explored in the table below. Employment is concentrated within five industries; Health Care and Social Assistance; Professional, Scientific & Technical, Manufacturing, Educational Services and Retail Trade.

Within the Greater Lowell workforce area Healthcare and Social Assistance is the largest and fast-growing with over 20,000 jobs in projected by 2024. Manufacturing is next with just over 17, 000 jobs followed by Professional, Scientific and Technical Services and Educational Services at 11, 000. Retail services and Accommodation and Food Services continue to see growth approximately 10,000 jobs respectively. While retail and accommodation/food services continue to have an impact in the area Construction has been identified as an industry critical to the area's economic success and will support initiatives that focus on the industry.

The chart below indicates longer-term projections over a 10-year period for the Greater Lowell region:

Long Term Industry Projections for Greater Lowell: 2014 - 2024					
NAICS Code	Title	Employment 2014	Employment 2024	Change Level	Change Percent
620000	Health Care and Social Assistance	18,013	20,118	2,105	11.70%
310000	Manufacturing	17,402	17,414	12	0.10%
540000	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	9,974	11,233	1,259	12.60%
610000	Educational Services	10,662	11,193	531	5.00%
440000	Retail Trade	10,038	10,401	363	3.60%
720000	Accommodation and Food Services	9,393	9,811	418	4.50%
230000	Construction	6,863	7,215	352	5.10%
560000	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediat	6,026	6,348	322	5.30%
420000	Wholesale Trade	4,745	4,828	83	1.70%
480000	Transportation and Warehousing	4,500	4,577	77	1.70%
810000	Other Services (except Government)	3,899	3,950	51	1.30%
510000	Information	3,787	3,755	-32	-0.80%
520000	Finance and Insurance	2,315	2,337	22	1.00%
550000	Management of Companies and Enterprises	2,172	2,261	89	4.10%
710000	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,573	1,655	82	5.20%
530000	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	844	888	44	5.20%
451000	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores	263	265	2	0.80%
220000	Utilities	214	225	11	5.10%
Total All Industries		124,063	130,049	5,986	4.80%
Source: Mass.gov/Imi - Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development					
Industry/Occupation matrix are obtained by applying occupational staffing patterns from the OES to produce base year occupational employment estimates. In turn, expected staffing pattern changes are applied to the base year pattern. The modified staffing patterns are then applied to obtain projected industry/occupational employment levels.					

Advanced Manufacturing

The MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board (MHGLWB) is one of the partners of the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC). NAMC is a collaboration among of industry, academia, and workforce development that was created to define and implement the Commonwealth's advanced manufacturing strategy within the Northeast region of Massachusetts, covering the four workforce development regions of Metro North, North Shore, Greater Lowell, and Merrimack Valley. This four-region partnership consists of community colleges, vocational technical schools, workforce development boards, and one-stop career centers. Key areas of focus include: developing the pipeline for job openings; developing training and aligning education/training curricula with employer needs; and promoting manufacturing as a career option.

The advanced manufacturing sector presents numerous career pathway opportunities for the region's residents to enter a growing sector. According to the "2016 Massachusetts Workforce and Labor Area Review" report, manufacturing, at 14.3%, holds the second largest share of jobs in the region behind healthcare and social assistance. Greater Lowell has one of the larger shares of manufacturing jobs in the Commonwealth, only Merrimack Valley and North Shore WDAs had a greater share.

Manufacturing can be characterized by two primary sub sectors of Navigational, Measuring, Electromedical, and Control Instruments Manufacturing with 5,054 jobs and Semiconductor and Other Electronic Component Manufacturing with 2,236 jobs.¹

The growing number of anticipated retirees in the manufacturing workforce presents a current and future workforce need to address.

The chart below is a list of common advanced manufacturing positions and related occupational information.

SOC Code	Occupation Title	# Employees in Greater Lowell	Median Salary in Greater Lowell	Typical Education Level
51-2092	Team Assemblers	910	\$32,467	High school diploma or equivalent
51-2022	Electrical and Electronic Equipment Assemblers	750	\$35,977	High school diploma or equivalent
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	580	\$65,482	High school diploma or equivalent
51-9061	Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers	560	\$43,126	High school diploma or equivalent
51-4041	Machinists	460	\$50,997	High school diploma or equivalent
51-9198	Helpers--Production Workers	300	\$28,525	No formal educational credential
17-3023	Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technicians	460	\$60,059	Associate's degree
17-3026	Industrial Engineering Technicians	350	\$51,319	Associate's degree
17-3012	Electrical and Electronics Drafters	190	\$52,856	Associate's degree
17-3013	Mechanical Drafters	120	\$65,079	Associate's degree
17-3027	Mechanical Engineering Technicians	110	\$57,913	Associate's degree
17-2141	Mechanical Engineers	870	\$97,425	Bachelor's Degree

Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development – Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2016.

¹ Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development – Economic Research Office. "Massachusetts 2016 Workforce and Labor Area Review", https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/10/04/MA2016_Workforce_and_Labor_Area_Review_0.pdf

Healthcare and Social Assistance

The healthcare and social assistance sector accounts for the largest share of jobs in the region at 16%. The industry is expected to experience substantial short and long term growth, outpacing the predictable regional growth rates across all industries. Between 2016-2018, the industry is expected to grow by 5.7%, an increase of 1,112 jobs. Similarly, between 2014-2024, the industry is expected to grow by 11.7% resulting in an additional 2,105 jobs.²

The chart below is a list of widespread health and social assistance occupations and accompanying salary and education levels typical for the positions.

Registered nurses are facing the highest level of employee shortages with nearly 800 openings.

SOC Code	Occupation Title	# Employees in Greater Lowell	Median Salary in Greater Lowell	Typical Education Level
29-1141	Registered Nurses	2,450	\$76,430	Bachelor's degree
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	1,920	\$28,671	Postsecondary non-degree award
31-1011	Home Health Aides	1,470	\$26,934	No formal educational credential
29-2061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	920	\$53,954	Postsecondary non-degree award
31-9092	Medical Assistants	420	\$36,341	Postsecondary non-degree award
21-1093	Social and Human Service Assistants	400	\$29,412	High school diploma or equivalent
29-2052	Pharmacy Technicians	330	\$30,628	High school diploma or equivalent
29-2021	Dental Hygienists	270	\$87,081	Associate's degree
31-9091	Dental Assistants	270	\$39,250	Postsecondary non-degree award
29-1123	Physical Therapists	240	\$84,353	Doctoral or professional degree
21-1014	Mental Health Counselors	210	\$52,780	Master's degree
29-2011	Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists	***	\$70,585	Bachelor's degree
29-2031	Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	***	\$94,147	Associate's degree
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists	***	\$57,716	Associate's degree
21-1021	Child, Family, and School Social Workers	***	\$49,396	Bachelor's degree

² Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development <https://www.mass.gov/find-employment-information-by-industry>

31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	***	\$52,277	Associate's degree
31-2022	Physical Therapist Aides	***	\$33,894	High school diploma or equivalent

Education

In addition to higher education institutions, the region also has three vocational technical high schools – Greater Lowell, Shawsheen Valley, and Nashoba Valley Technical High Schools. The chart below demonstrates the expected long-term demand within the early childhood and elementary and secondary systems.

SOC Code	Title	Employment 2014	Employment 2024	Change Percent	Typical education needed for entry	2016 Average Annual OES Wage
119032	Education Administrators, Elementary and Secondary School	258	269	4.3%	Master's degree	\$104,108
119033	Education Administrators, Postsecondary	319	341	6.9%	Master's degree	***
252011	Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	665	721	8.4%	Associate's degree	\$36,456
252021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	1,044	1,085	3.9%	Bachelor's degree	\$78,024
252022	Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	658	684	4.0%	Bachelor's degree	\$75,849
252031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	831	865	4.1%	Bachelor's degree	\$73,415
253021	Self-Enrichment Education Teachers	389	442	13.6%	High school diploma or equivalent	\$40,703
253098	Substitute Teachers	766	804	5.0%	No formal educational credential	\$29,968
259041	Teacher Assistants	1,418	1,501	5.9%	Some college, no degree	\$28,070

Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development – Long Term Occupational Projections – Greater Lowell WDA

Professional, Technical, and Scientific

Computer Systems Design and Related Services and Scientific Research and Development Services are the two primary subsectors under Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. A second tier is comprised of a) Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services and b) Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services.

The chart below illustrates occupations in information technology that are expected to experience long term growth.

SOC Code	Title	Employment 2014	Employment 2024	Change Level	Change Percent	Typical education needed for entry	2016 Average Annual OES Wage
130210	Computer and Info Systems Managers	613	699	86	14.1%	Bachelor's degree	\$154,190
172061	Computer Hardware Engineers	376	432	56	14.9%	Bachelor's degree	\$139,535
172071	Electrical Engineers	613	644	31	5.1%	Bachelor's degree	\$109,859
172081	Environmental Engineers	154	181	27	17.5%	Bachelor's degree	\$97,175
172112	Industrial Engineers	495	542	47	9.5%	Bachelor's degree	\$99,180
172141	Mechanical Engineers	602	644	42	7.0%	Bachelor's degree	\$100,166
151151	Computer User Support Specialists	741	835	94	12.7%	Some college, no degree	\$58,367
151133	Software Developers, Systems Software	1,372	1,570	198	14.4%	Bachelor's degree	\$122,051
151132	Software Developers, Applications	999	1,102	103	10.3%	Bachelor's degree	\$144,245
151121	Computer Systems Analysts	707	861	154	21.8%	Bachelor's degree	\$96,399

Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development – STEM Occupations in Greater Lowell WDA

Construction

According to the short-term industry projections, 2016-2018, the construction industry is expected to experience the second highest rate of growth at 9.3%. Professional, Technical, and Scientific is anticipated to have the highest growth at 14.3%.

According to the Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance (DCAMM), between 2016 and 2019, there is \$416,644,000 in active and planned University of Massachusetts Building Authority, City of Lowell, and DCAMM projects scheduled in Greater Lowell.

With this large number of public construction projects and ongoing private sector construction taking place throughout the region, the construction industry remains a critical component of the Greater Lowell workforce system.

SOC Code	Occupation Title	# Employees in Greater Lowell	Median Salary	Typical Level of Education
47-2111	Electricians	1,420	\$58,644	High school diploma or equivalent
47-2061	Construction Laborers	990	\$47,676	No formal educational credential
47-2031	Carpenters	630	\$56,512	High school diploma or equivalent
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	630	\$55,874	High school diploma or equivalent

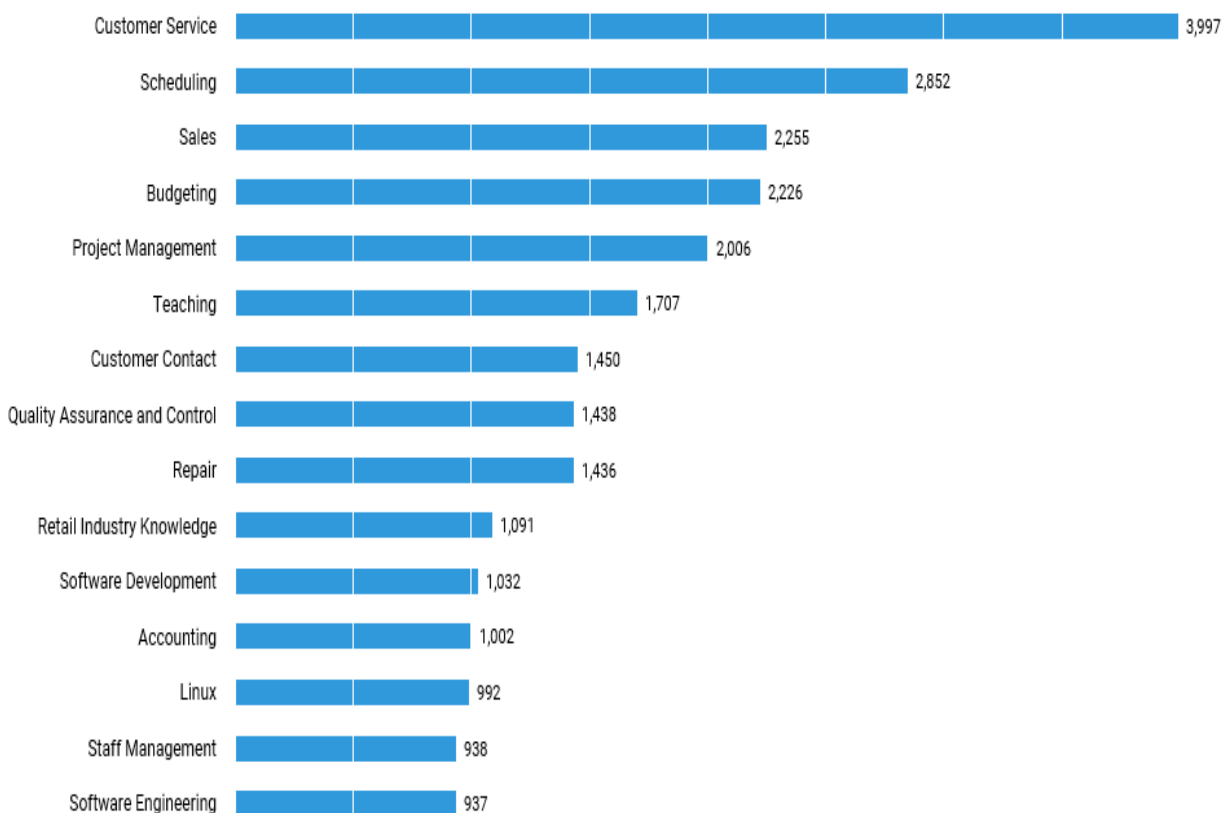
47-2211	Sheet Metal Workers	400	\$37,608	High school diploma or equivalent
47-2073	Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators	360	\$62,926	High school diploma or equivalent
47-2141	Painters, Construction and Maintenance	120	\$45,815	No formal educational credential
53-7021	Crane and Tower Operators	***	\$96,786	High school diploma or equivalent
53-7051	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	210	\$36,131	No formal educational credential
11-9021	Construction Managers	200	\$95,765	Bachelor's degree

Source: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development – Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2016.

*** Data not available

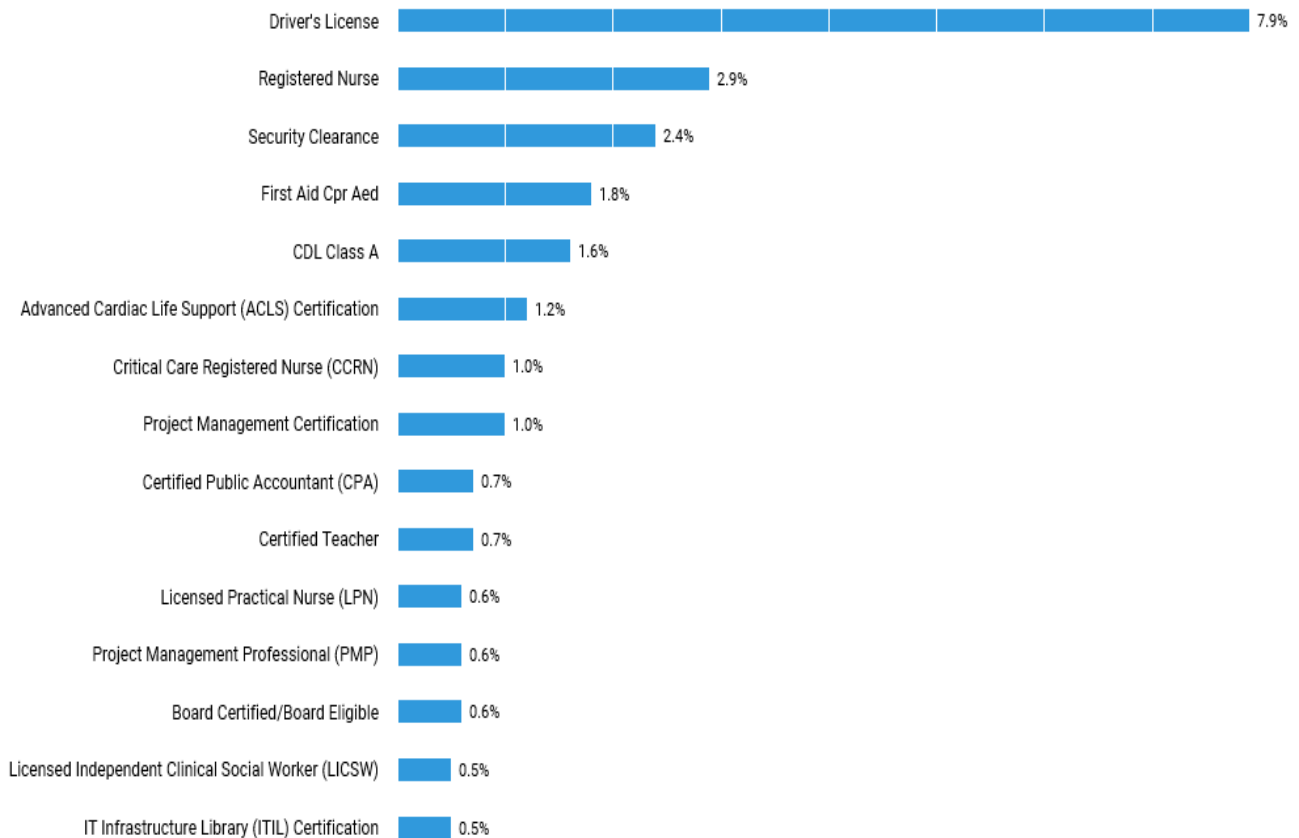
2. Describe the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the businesses in your region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

15 Most Requested Skills³



³ Burning Glass Technologies, Labor Insight/Jobs Region Scan, Greater Lowell WDA, Past 12 Months, Nov 2017- Nov 2018

15 Most Requested Certifications⁴



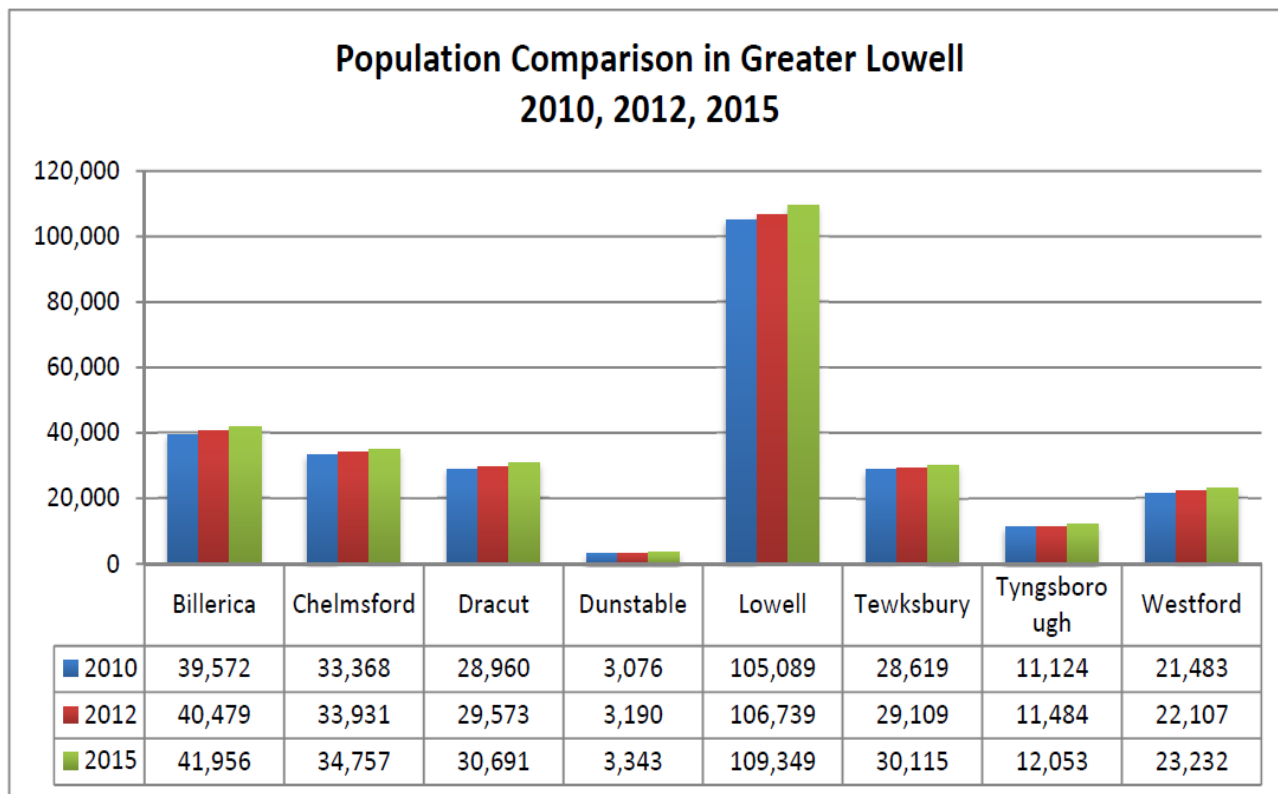
After an examination of the employment needs and the occupations of in demand industries in the Greater Lowell area the Board has identified Advanced Manufacturing, Professional, Technical, Healthcare, Education and Construction as the focus for strategic planning. A review of the positions in the area indicate a varying degree of educational and skill needs. Education and Professional Technical occupations rank mainly in the BA +. Healthcare has a broader range of skill and educational levels depending on the occupation, for example Physical Therapists, Registered Nurses and Mental Health Counselors fall firmly in the BA + category while Nursing Assistants, Pharmacy Techs and Dental Hygienists have varying levels from Post-Secondary non-degree, Associates or High School Diploma. A scan of occupations in Advanced Manufacturing and Construction indicate that educational needs of the workforce are in the Sub BA category.

3. Please provide an analysis of your regional workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment¹.

⁴ Burning Glass Technologies, Labor Insight/Jobs Region Scan, Greater Lowell WDA, Past 12 Months, Nov 2017- Nov 2018

In 2017 one of our community partners, Community Teamwork Inc., embarked on a Community Needs Assessment.⁵ They created a report and the MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board utilized that report as part of the demographic review of the region. We have included several tables below to illustrate a snapshot of our region.

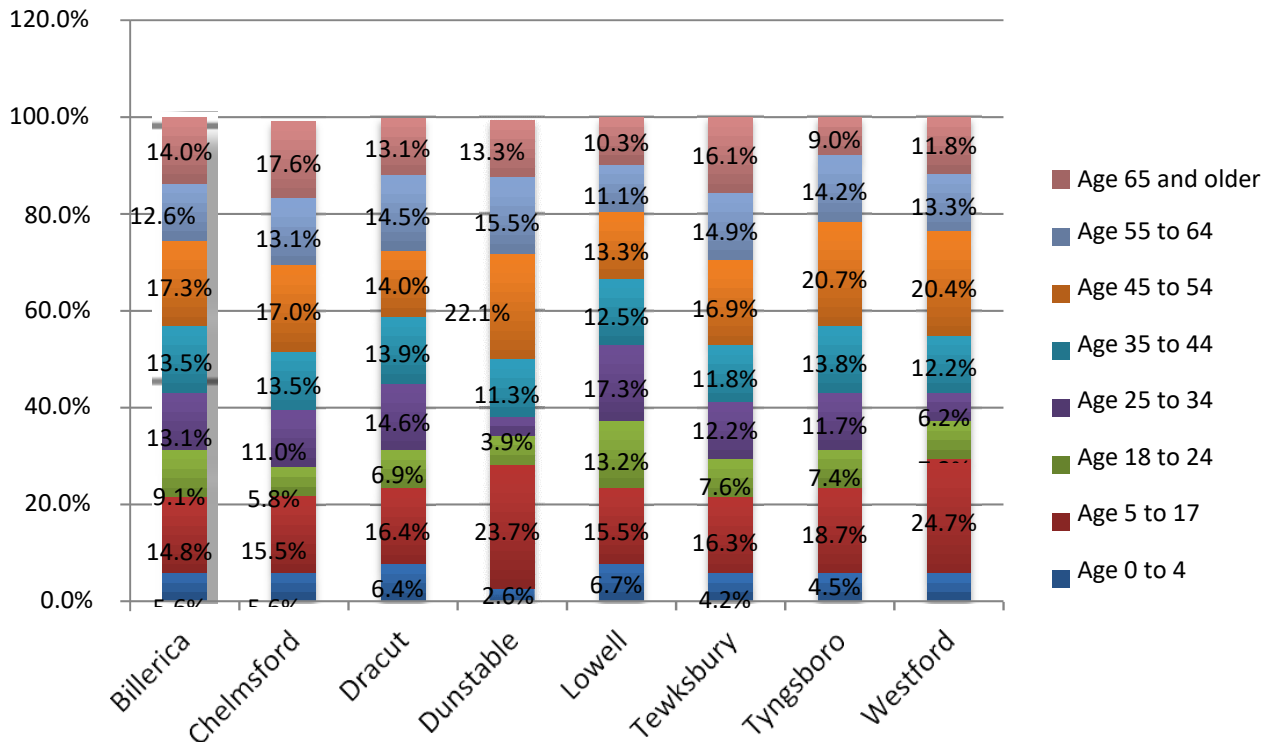
Population Trends by Community



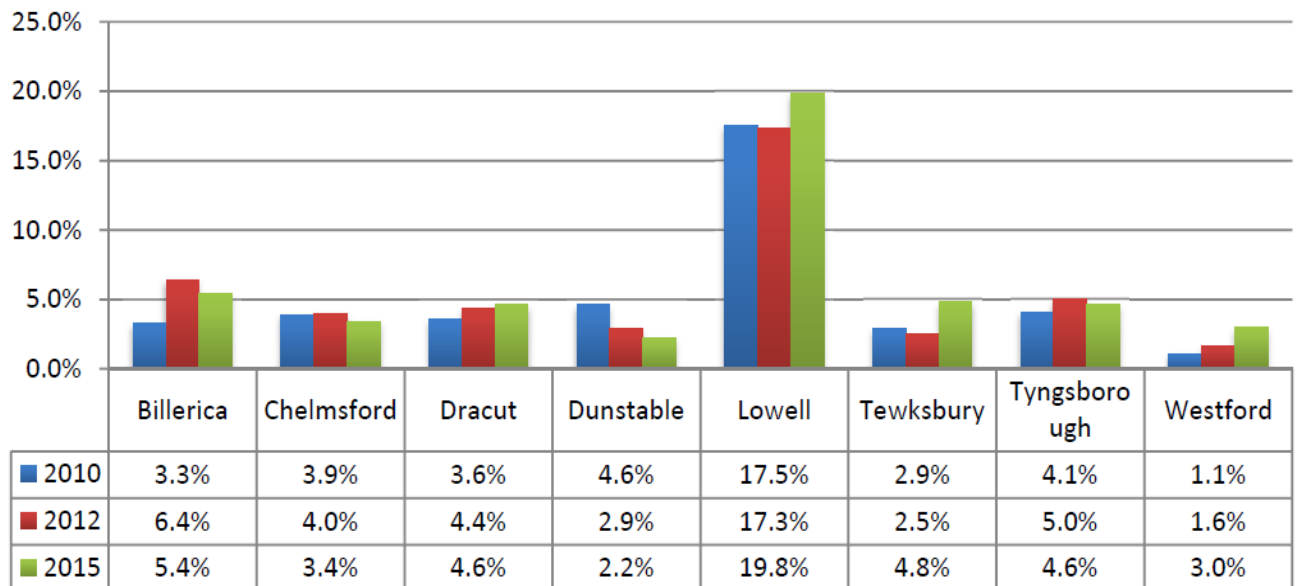
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2011-2015

⁵ Community Teamwork's "2017 Community Needs Assessment". <http://www.commteam.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017-Community-Needs-Assessment.pdf>

Percent of Population by Age in Greater Lowell

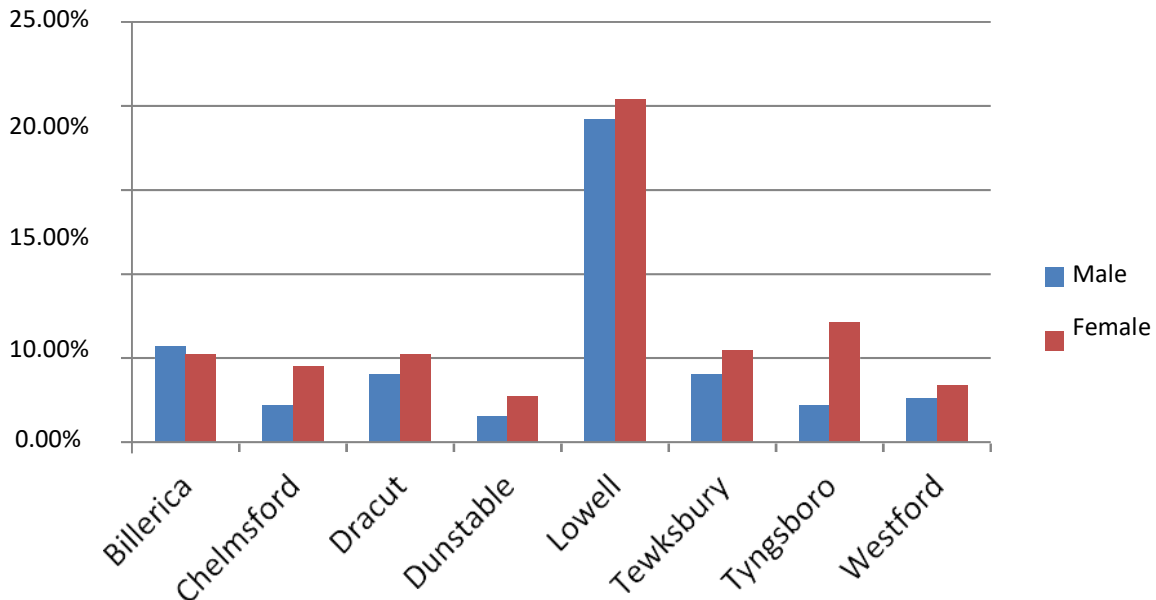


Poverty Rate Comparisons in Greater Lowell 2010, 2012, 2015



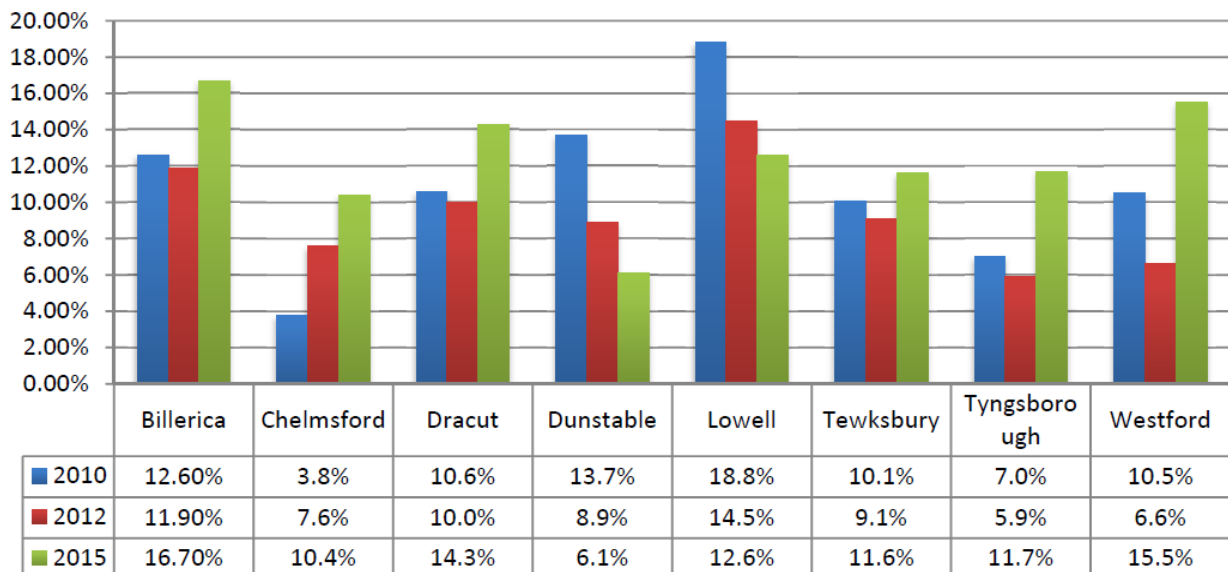
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2011-2015

Greater Lowell - Poverty by Gender

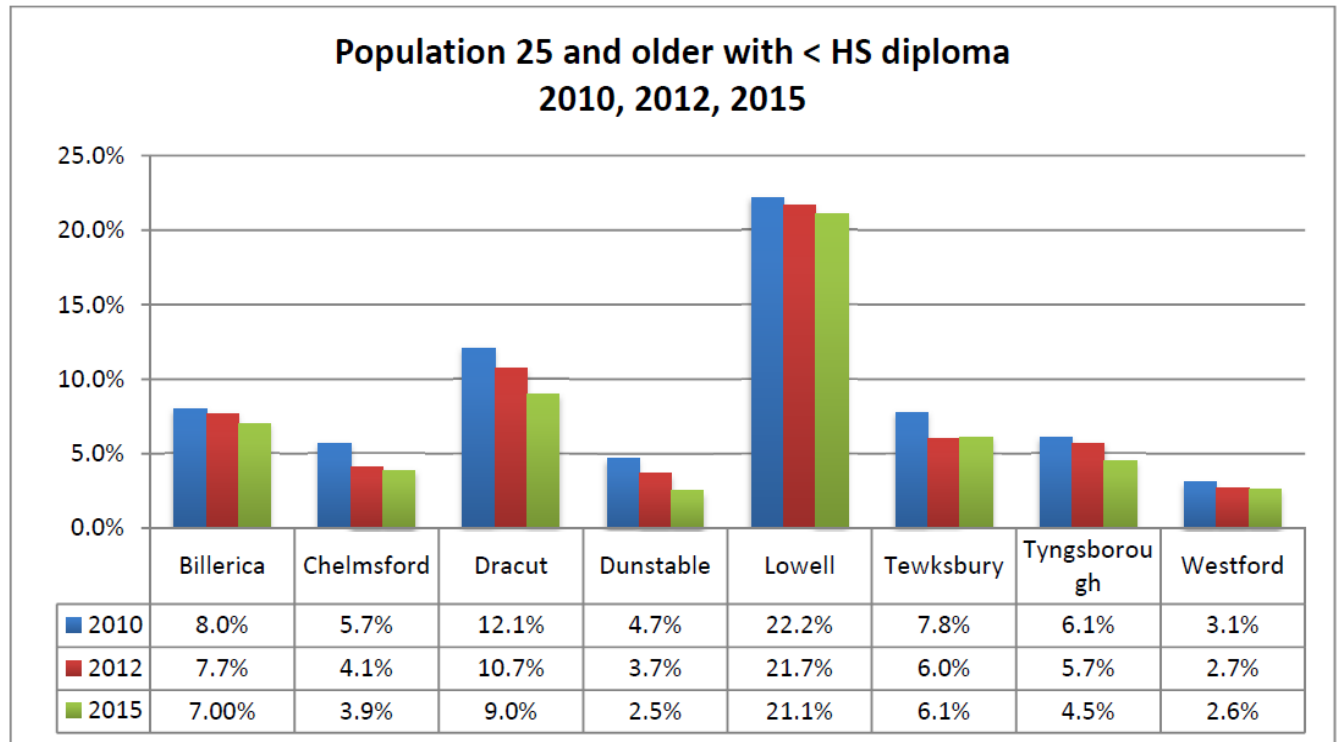


Education Levels by Community and Age

Population 18-24 with < HS diploma 2010, 2012, 2015



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2011-2015



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates 2011-2015

Labor Force and Unemployment Data⁶

Month/Year	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Local Area Rate	Massachusetts Rate
November 2018	161,780	157,643	4,137	2.6	2.6
October 2018	162,231	157,549	4,682	2.9	2.9
September 2018	161,839	156,734	5,105	3.2	3.2
August 2018	164,173	158,272	5,901	3.6	3.5
July 2018	165,469	158,821	6,648	4	3.9
June 2018	163,424	157,114	6,310	3.9	3.9
May 2018	160,708	155,327	5,381	3.3	3.3
April 2018	159,692	154,491	5,201	3.3	3.3
March 2018	158,548	152,594	5,954	3.8	3.8
February 2018	157,420	151,240	6,180	3.9	4
January 2018	156,037	149,986	6,051	3.9	4
December 2017	154,404	149,616	4,788	3.1	3.1
November 2017	154,673	149,986	4,687	3	3

One-Stop Career Center Customer Snapshot: FY'16 – FY'18

The three charts below provide an overview of the age, education level, and number of people with disabilities that utilized the region's One-Stop Career Center during FY'16 – FY'18.

Age

		# of Customers	% of Total
Age	55 to 64	3,895	25.0%
	22 to 35	3,728	24.0%
	46 to 54	3,477	22.4%
	36 to 45	2,944	18.9%
	65+	1,084	7.0%
	19 to 21	313	2.0%
	00 to 18	115	0.7%
	Unknown	1	0.0%
Total		15,557	100.0%

People with Disabilities

		# of Customers	% of Total
People with Disabilities	No	13,811	88.8%
	Yes	866	5.6%
		553	3.6%
	Unknown	327	2.1%
Total		15,557	100.0%

Education Level

		# of Customers	% of Total
Education	HS/GED	4,063	26.1%
	BA	3,779	24.3%
	Some Coll/Voc	2,837	18.2%
	Adv Deg	2,119	13.6%
	AA	1,354	8.7%
	Less Than HS	1,106	7.1%
	Unknown	299	1.9%
Total		15,557	100.0%

(4) Please provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the local area. This analysis must:

a) include strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities

The strengths of the workforce development activities in Greater Lowell include:

- Supportive services referrals with WIOA core partners
- Strong partnerships with social service entities, local service providers and non-profit organizations in the Greater Lowell region
- One common data system (the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES)) -- coordinate, schedule, monitor and report on virtually all service activities
- Strong Veterans Services – Veterans receive priority of services at the OSCC. The Veteran Service representative has 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. All staff been trained in serving veterans and the Veteran Services representative receives all new job postings for 24 hours before the general public. In addition, the Veteran Services representative consistently places highest in the State for highest average wage.
- 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
 - Burning Glass: 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
 - Career Ready 101: as part of the CRI previously noted, this program offers an integrated approach to exploring careers and associated skill requirements, builds life-literacy through lessons about financial awareness, job searching, and more
- Systemic alignment with workforce development, education and training partners to serve “shared customers”, particularly with serving those with barriers to employment (low-skilled, limited English proficient, etc.); OSCC/Partners have a shared online referral portal. Opportunity for integrated education and training models for partner customers (e.g. ABE students)
- Career Center access during evening hours enables customers who cannot visit the career center during traditional business hours to utilize the services offered. In addition, use of technology such as webinars and some offsite services increases access.

The weaknesses and gaps of the workforce development system in Greater Lowell include:

- Lack of subsidized training vouchers for customers compared to need;
- Need for additional offsite/community-based services;
- Need for increased employer engagement;
- Expand Youthworks and Summer Youthworks programs beyond Lowell into the region's other communities; and
- Transportation issues continue to pose a challenge to companies. Workers are unable to utilize public transportation to get to their jobs due to scheduling conflicts and inadequate service.

b) Address the capacity to provide the workforce development activities around:

i. education and skill needs of the workforce;

ii. individuals with barriers to employment;

iii. employment needs of businesses.

The MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce board and MassHire Lowell Career Center (MHLCC) operate under a demand driven model when developing and implementing workforce development activities in the region. Through coordination with industry, occupational skills training providers, community partners, Middlesex Community College, and various community partners, the region develops and implements various sector-based initiatives based off demand. Our strong partnerships enable the board to pursue funding to provide additional services to individuals with barrier(s) to employment, including but not limited to: recipients of public assistance, individuals with a disability, older workers, re-entry populations, individuals with limited English proficiency, and individuals who are basic skills deficient.

The board is a member of the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC). NAMC is a collaboration among industry, academia, and government that was created in 2012 to define and implement the Commonwealth's advanced manufacturing strategy within the Northeast region of Massachusetts and includes four workforce region's boards, career centers, community colleges, and vocational technical high schools.

(5) Please describe your Board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in § 677.155(a)(1).

See B. #17 (page 34) for local performance accountability measures.

The MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board has an approved Strategic Plan covering January 1, 2018 – June 30, 2018. The plan has the following vision, mission, and strategic priorities to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. NOTE – the strategic plan was developed under former Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board (GLWDB) name.

Mission

The mission of the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board (GLWDB) is to provide high quality, innovative and collaborative workforce development programs. The GLWDB promotes a skilled and educated workforce that will meet the needs of employers in the region. The GLWDB supports economic development, business competitiveness and job creation in Greater Lowell.

Vision

The Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board (GLWDB) will be the leader in workforce development policies and programming for the Greater Lowell Area, ensuring that job seekers have access to and are prepared for quality employment opportunities. The GLWDB will work with stakeholders, businesses and partners to identify the challenges and seek solutions to address the skills gaps in our region and contribute to the economic growth of our communities.

Strategic Priorities

1. Align workforce and business demands to promote and expand career pathways, skills development, and stackable credentials to address the skill gap and hiring needs of the identified priority industries and occupations

Activities:

- Fully integrate and utilize the demand driven philosophy and tools to engage businesses
- Strong partnerships with businesses and coordination with training partners to ensure services are in line with demands
- Assist employers in identifying and hiring skilled workers and accessing relevant resources including education and training for their current workforce
- Promote, expand or develop industry/occupation career pathways to fill identified skills gaps
- Understand the workforce needs of industry and companies and respond quickly to their needs for talent
- Emphasize training that leads to an industry recognized credential
- Strengthen career pathways, work-based learning, apprenticeship programs, and sector strategies

2. Effectively serve all job seekers, in particular those with barriers to employment, by improving the education and employability skills of youth and adults leading to competitive wage employment

Activities:

- Utilize partners to continue to expand access through improved accommodations for people with disabilities
- Develop education and training opportunities in priority industries for eligible participants with employment barriers
- Reestablish a Youth Council to assist in the development of key policy and decision making to help youth achieve successful transitions to further education and employment.

- Monitor local demographics and make recommendations for trainings/curriculum based on needs of local job seekers
- In collaboration with the Career Center of Lowell:
 - Educate and encourage job seekers to focus on gaining in-demand skills
 - Educate local vendors to provide training and opportunities for job seekers that focus on in-demand skills required by the region's businesses and credentials

3. Be viewed as the leading advocate, convener, and resource for workforce development activities in the Greater Lowell region

Activities:

- Gather, analyze and disseminate labor market data to a variety of audiences including industry, community partners, institutions of higher education, and high schools
- Expand career awareness activities with a focus on STEM
- Provide accurate and timely information on current and future employer hiring and training needs

4. Create and leverage partnerships to raise and develop additional funding and resources

Activities:

- Leverage and foster partnerships with the following:
 - One-Stop Career Center
 - Employers
 - Higher Education Institutions – MCC and UMass Lowell
 - Vocational Technical Schools – Nashoba Valley Technical High School, Greater Lowell Technical High School, and Shawsheen Valley Technical High School
 - Community Based Organizations
 - Elementary and Secondary Education Schools
 - Labor Unions
- Develop a strategic plan with a focus on securing funding through, but not limited to, the following sources: corporate and private foundations, other state and federal funding outside of core funding
- Work with community partners to capture additional resources to support providing services to fill the skills gap within our priority industries
- Work with our regional partners to ensure our strategic priorities are aligned with regional planning to maximize resources

5. Continue to maintain strong board and career center operations including a system that values all partners, supports collaboration, communication, and visibility

Activities:

- Ensure WDB staff and board members have relevant and professional networks in priority industries and with political leadership in the region

- Ensure core programs are aligned with WIOA and state priority areas
- Build and leverage State House, legislative, and municipal relationships
- Engage board members to strengthen the visibility, opportunities, and visibility of the GLWDB
- Strengthen marketing and relationship with local media outlets
- Maintain strong career center performance through oversight of the one-stop career center

(6) Taking into account analyses described in 1 through 4 above, what is your regions strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs and required partners to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in paragraph (a)(5) of this section.

The Greater Lowell Workforce Board acts as the convener of the WIOA Partner MOU which defines the roles and responsibilities of all required partners in the region including the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, and Youth Program (Title I), as part of DCS/EOLWD; the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (Title II), as part of ACLS/DESE/EOE; Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Title III), as part of DCS/EOLWD; the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, as part of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), EOHHS; Federal-State Unemployment Compensation Program as part of DUA/EOLWD; Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program, as part of DCS/EOLWD; Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program, as part of DCS/EOLWD; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF), as part of DTA/EOHHS, Employment & Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), as part of DTA/EOHHS, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP).

The partners listed above met on a regular basis to develop the MOU including defining shared customers, defining customer flow (job seekers and business), and developing procedures to track activities, outcomes, and referrals. The board continues to meet on quarterly basis to review an update practices and procedures.

See attached Greater Lowell Partner MOU.

(1) Identify the following elements of the workforce development system in your local area:

(i) Programs that are included in your local workforce system (programs listed alphabetically)

- Amp It Up! – MassDevelopment program
- Competitive Integrated. Employment Services (CIES) – DTA program
- Co-located Partner Services – Mass Rehab, Department of Transitional Assistance, Adult Education, and Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Connecting Activities – DESE funded school-to-career program
- Disability Employment Initiative (DEI)
- National Dislocated Worker Grants
- Rapid Response Services
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RSEA)
- Registered Apprenticeships
- State One-Stop Funded Labor Exchange
- Ticket to Work

- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Unemployment Insurance Services (UI lab)
- Veteran's Services
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I --- Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth
- Wagner Peyser Labor Exchange
- YouthWorks – Year-Round and Summer – Commonwealth Corporation funded

(ii) How your Board will support the strategy identified in the State Plan and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment;

The MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board convened a consortium of workforce development partners to facilitate greater service alignment, integration and efficiency across the local system. To establish an overarching universal framework for how partners greater Lowell's local system will work together to deliver workforce development programs, the partners developed a Partner MOU that includes an online referral portal to be utilized by all partners, co-location and cross-training of staff. Partners include, but are not limited to, the MassHire Lowell Career Center, DCS, DTA, DUA, Massachusetts Vocational Rehab, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, Abisi Adult Basic Education and Operation ABLE. The MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board also partners with Middlesex Community College, the regions high schools and technical schools and various community-based organizations.

(2) Please describe how your Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:

- (i) Expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;***
- (ii) Facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and***
- (iii) Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable);***

With guidance and oversight from the MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board, the Board and the MassHire Lowell Career Center will work closely with core partners coordinate and expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly for individuals who have barriers to employment. The Board and Career Center will build on successful cohort trainings in in-demand occupations, delivered in partnership with our community colleges and technical schools, to introduce career pathways models, improve access to activities leading to industry-recognized postsecondary credentials, and develop co-enrollment protocols. The partners will work with the Board to increase integration of services, particularly services that introduce appropriate accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

WIOA acknowledged that one of the primary constraints to expanding services in local systems has been the siloed way in which partner organizations have traditionally operated. To address this issue the Partner MOU laid out a plan for continuous communication and cross training of staff. The Board set a

schedule of quarterly meetings of the partners as well as a newly created Partner Business Service Team.

(3) Please describe the strategies and services that will be used in your local area:

(i) To facilitate engagement of businesses in workforce development programs, including small businesses and businesses in in-demand industry sectors and occupations;

The current MHGLWB Strategic Plan, effective January 1, 2018 – June 30, 2021 identifies five priority industries in the region – healthcare, professional and technical services (IT), advanced manufacturing, education, and construction. The MHGLWB will embark on developing career pathways in the priority industries. The career pathways will include information on salary ranges, typical education level needed, and number of individuals employed in the region for specific occupations. The pathways will be available on the MHGLWB's website and be distributed to the OSCC, local high schools, Middlesex Community College, and community-based organizations.

The MHGLWB participated in the development of the Northeast Regional Labor Market Blueprint with workforce development, economic development, and education stakeholders in the Greater Lowell, Merrimack Valley, and North Shore workforce regions. The regional blueprint identifies three priority industries across the Northeast region: healthcare, professional and technical services (IT), and advanced manufacturing. The industries selected were driven by current and future pipeline development needs determined by employer focus groups, surveys, and labor market information. Over the next four years, the GLWBD will be addressing the skills gap by working on the foundational and industry specific goals and strategies in the Northeast Labor Market Blueprint.

The MHGLWB is integral member of the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC). NAMC was established to promote sustained collaboration between industry, academia, and workforce development to support the manufacturing industry in northeast Massachusetts. It is led by a business leadership team which informs the consortium about the current and future business needs of the manufacturing community. NAMC is consistently adapting its training modules to reflect the skills demanded in industry.

The MHGLWB promotes both the on-the-job training and apprenticeship work-based models. The region promotes and markets the apprenticeship model through the Massachusetts Apprenticeship Initiative. Within the region's WIOA Youth Providers, the MHGLWB heavily stresses the importance of integrating career pathways in both in-school and out-of-school programming. The MHGLWB mandates all providers provide career pathways programming including job shadowing, mentoring, and internships.

The Board is utilizing the quarterly Partner meetings and engaging the newly formed Partner Business Service team to seek input and identify entry points for customers.

Overall, sixteen of the eighteen (89%) private sector board members are actively engaged with the MassHire Lowell Career Center. MHGLWB private sector members utilize the OSCC for the following services: specialized recruitment events, posting job orders, attending off-site job fairs, hosting summer youth interns, applicant pre-screenings, and obtaining assistance for Workforce Training Fund grants. In addition, board members assist in conducting financial literacy workshops on-site at the OSCC. Board

members are also active in providing services to in-school and out-of-school youth. They provide company tours, job shadow opportunities, and participate in career awareness panels.

When attending community and business events, the MHGLWB staff and members promote the wide variety of resources available at the OSCC. For example, the OSCC services are promoted at events held by: Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce, Middlesex 3 Coalition, Westford Business Association, City of Lowell, Coalition for a Better Acre, various Rotary Clubs, and other community events.

In conjunction with the OSCC, the MHGLWB educates employers on the various federal and state programs available. The goal is to make local employers more aware of and utilize relevant resources and incentives available in the Commonwealth.

Regarding outreach to small businesses, the career center and board work closely with the Merrimack Valley Small Business Center. In addition, the Massachusetts District Office of the U.S Small Business Administration (SBA) holds a “Starting and Growing Your Business: The SBA Advantage” workshop at the career center. The workshop provides information on the various SBA programs and services available for start-up and existing businesses.

The following programs are actively promoted: Workforce Training Fund, Workforce Competitive Trust Fund, WorkShare, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, on-the-job training, apprenticeships. The MHGLWB also provides technical assistance to companies pursuing the resources.

See Attached Career Center Business Flow Chart

(ii) To serve agricultural businesses and how you intend to improve those services;

Agriculture is not a critical or priority industry in the region but collaborates with agricultural businesses if the need arises.

(iii) To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in your area;

Under the oversight of the board, the MassHire Lowell Career Center pre-screen applicants for the occupation or industry sector with which they are being connected. The Workforce Performance and Opportunities committee will review program infrastructure to monitor implementation of measures to address service delivery gaps.

Establish parameters and a mechanism to measure success and return on investment for employers. Provide customer support after candidates are hired or placed in work and learn opportunities. Identify additional employee retention and resources that the workforce system can offer as cost savings benefit for business.

(iv) To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development

The Board will the lead following activities to coordinate workforce development with economic development:

- Develop and implement processes that clearly connect the local workforce system's activities to both existing and new local and regional economic drivers.
- Work with the region's economic development departments and agencies to maintain a current inventory of existing and new economic development initiatives and real estate development projects.
- Review inventory on a quarterly basis to identify workforce development implications and opportunities.
- Identify hiring trends, skill gaps and employment opportunities in the industry sectors targeted in the regions strategic plan.
- Identify skills trends attached to each target industry and work with partners to identify the needs and expectations of the forecasted in-demand occupations and assisting in the creation of associated career pathways

(v) To strengthen linkages between the Career Center delivery system and unemployment insurance programs;

a. What methods are used by the Board to identify and recruit business intermediaries

b. Specifically, what procedures are in place to offer Career Center Business Services and Mass BizWorks programs to local businesses

The Career Center's Business Service Team assists companies of all sizes to meet their staffing needs. The Business Service Representative (BSR) will meet with the local business customer to introduce themselves and explain their role and how the Career Center may be able to provide value added support to the business. The BSR is knowledgeable of the business services that are provided through the CCL and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (i.e., Mass BizWorks, Rapid Response, Work Share, Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Workforce Training Fund, On-the-Job Training).

The BSR will request a tour of the company or hiring department to obtain cultural perspective and discuss priority of business staffing needs. BSR will obtain specific hiring information such as:

- # of job openings
- priority of hires
- job descriptions
- hours needed; FTE or PTE
- utilization of staffing agencies
- time frame expected
- follow up time frame

The BSR will develop recruitment strategies to source qualified job seekers for the job openings. Veteran Representative at the Career Center will receive all job opening(s) for 24 hours (priority of service for Veterans) before made available to the public. Emails are sent to all Career Advisors on a daily and/or weekly basis with the listing of job openings.

The BSR will vet all potential candidates for job openings. Potential candidates can be identified from Mass JobQuest, DocStar, Crystal Reports etc. (Resumes of customers are scanned into DocStar) After locating and entering all pertinent job seeker and job/business related data into MOSES, next step is to reach out and meet with the job seeker, conduct a job skills assessment, match job seeker's job skills

and work experience with business customer's job specifications. A soft skills assessment is part of the initial assessment. When a potential job seeker is deemed qualified for job referral, BSR instructs potential job seeker to visit company website and fill out on-line job application. BSR communicates with business customer and confirms that potential candidate has completed on-line job application and has been referred to be considered for further employment assessment by the company representative.

If a company decides to interview the job seeker, the BSR will follow up with the job seeker and obtain feedback from the business after the scheduled interview

If a job seeker is hired, the BSR will be asked to follow up with the business contact and obtain new hire data, e.g, job title, compensation, location and start date.

(vi) That may include the implementation of initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional businesses. These initiatives must support the strategy described in paragraph (b)(3) of this section;

The board will lead and implement the following activities:

- Fully integrate and utilize the demand driven philosophy and tools to engage businesses
- Assist employers in identifying and hiring skilled workers and accessing relevant resources including education and training for their current workforce
- Promote, expand or develop industry/occupation career pathways to fill identified skills gaps
- Understand the workforce needs of industry and companies and respond quickly to their needs for talent
- Emphasize training that leads to an industry recognized credential
- Strengthen career pathways, work-based learning, apprenticeship programs, and sector strategies
- Core Partners will actively participate in a business services team

(4) Please provide an examination of how your Board will:

- ***Coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local area***
- ***Promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services;***

The MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board embarked on the regional planning process with two other workforce boards in the Northeast. The partners developed a regional blueprint to help align the goals of local agencies that fall under the States newly formed Workforce Skills Cabinet; economic development, workforce development and education.

The planning group engaged businesses in the region through a series of focus groups that gathered information relative to private sector workforce issues. While a business from different industries were engaged the planning committee focused on Manufacturing, Education, Professional, Scientific and Technical as well as Healthcare. In total 31 companies were engaged directly as part of the process and

an additional 500 companies were engaged through surveys. Many of the businesses also served as representatives on the planning team.

By participating in the regional planning process to develop a regional labor market blueprint as well as regular local economic development municipal meetings the MHGLWB will be a working partner in assuring the readiness of a skilled workforce.

To promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services, the local system will work to strengthen connections with area business incubators such as the UMass Lowell Innovation Hub and the Greater Lowell's Office of Small Business Assistance, to assess and support the workforce needs of start-up and small businesses and provide ongoing assistance as companies grow and expand.

(5) Please describe the Career Center system in your area, including:

(i) How your Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local businesses, workers and job seekers;

The Board hosts quarterly information sessions for all current and potential vendors. The vendors are given the criteria for course approval and the process for securing a contract with the Career Center/City of Lowell. After the information session each vendor is scheduled for a one-on-one meeting with the MHGLWB and the Career Center. Those meetings are to review labor market trends compliance and performance measurements, i.e. credentials completed and placement rates.

The Board runs lists weekly of training vendors looking to have their course offerings approved. Approval is based on the State criteria. It is critical that the vendor is offering a nationally recognized credential and those credentials will lead to employment in in-demand industries and occupations. The Board reviews if the course will result in a credential, license or certification upon completion, if the vendor has an up to date schedule, up to date contact information and if the quote/price given to the job seeker matches that in the data in MOSES. Labor market is utilized for all vendors and course approvals to reflect business needs.

(ii) How your Board will facilitate access to services provided through the Career Center system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means;

The MHGLWB is fully committed to providing services to the job seekers and businesses in each of the eight communities in the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Area. The MHGLWB drives the OSCC to provide services outside of the brick and mortar OSCC located in downtown Lowell. The OSCC has developed a programmatic strategy to get out in the community and meet job seekers throughout the region. As a result, the OSCC provides services and orientations at the following locations throughout the region that serve diverse audiences including the WIOA targeted populations: Lowell Adult Education, DTA, MRC, Pollard Memorial Library, Westford Library, Chelmsford Library, Lowell Career Academy, Greater Lowell Technical High School, Family Resource Center, Coalition for a Better Acre's Community Dinners, and Community Teamwork.

The OSCC utilizes webinars to provide greater access. The webinars are done at least weekly. These are about a half hour long presentation on topics that cannot be addressed in our in-person workshops.

Facilitators can go in detail on a specific topic that does not get enough time in the in-person workshop. These webinars are open to the public and participants can register via our website. They receive a confirmation e-mail with the link to the webinar.

(iii) How entities within the Career Center system, including Career Center operators and partners, will comply with WIOA sec. 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities;

The career center is ADA compliant. Several years ago, the center had a full time Navigator position that worked on procuring the appropriate equipment for our disabled customers. The region had a Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) III grant and are currently receive a DEI VII grant. From the DEI III funding, the center hired a full time Disability Resource Coordinator who successfully updated the center's equipment and procured electronic handicap door openers at all the entrances and bathroom doors.

The career center became an Employment Network which enables them to take Ticket to Work tickets from customers receiving Social Security Disability Benefits. The success and revenue from the Ticket to Work program enabled the center to fund the Disability Resource Coordinator position after DEI III ended. She provides services on site and a few times a month goes to the local Mass Rehab Commission office to meet with clients there. The DEI VII staff work with the disabled students at the Greater Lowell Vocational Technical School on work readiness.

(iv) The roles and resource contributions of your partners – how are these relationships sustained and kept productive;

The following WIOA core partners are represented in and signed the Local Umbrella MOU: Department of Unemployment Insurance, Department of Transitional Assistance, Mass Commission for the Blind, Mass Rehab Commission, Abisi Adult Basic Education, Operation ABLE/Senior Community Service Employment Program and the MassHire Lowell Career Center.

The MHGLWB worked over several months with our partners to develop an MOU that identified our shared customers and developed methods and processes to support youth, job seekers, and businesses. We identified our priority populations and a referral system to be utilized by the partners and developed flow charts for services. A revised MOU was submitted in June 2018.

To best determine shared cost contributions, every six months the MOU partners, will review and evaluate shared costs activities. The group will develop an appropriate funding structure, either real dollar or in-kind, to adequately meet the needs of the shared customer and ensure efficient use of partner resources. All partners agree to jointly support and maintain an effective local integrated service delivery system.

The MHGLWB in agreement with the OSCC Required Partners agree to jointly review the WIOA mandated performance metrics for the workforce areas or metrics as negotiated as part of any shared and infrastructure contract costs between the MHGLWB and the mandated One-Stop Career Center

partners.

The required partners agree to consistently monitor and evaluate the referral process and customer service process to job seekers and businesses. The partners are committed to working with employers to address their current and future needs. Each partner has identified a staff contact to serve as part of the region's "business service team" to address employer needs and provide labor market analysis.

An executed agreement for resource sharing has been created with DTA. Each partner is co-located at the Lowell Career Center except Mass Commission for the Blind, which does not have staff capacity to co-locate at the career center. In addition, the OSCC provide services and career center orientations at DTA, Lowell Adult Education, and MRC.

A web-based portal system was developed by the OSCC to track referrals to all the partners and vice versa. The portal is effective in tracking referrals amongst the partners. The referral portal was noted as a best practice by the Department of Career Services. The co-location of the partners at the OSCC and cross-training of staff has been effective in providing more efficient services to job seekers.

To address the business customer flow, the regional Business Service Team is working together to coordinate efforts providing demand driven services to local employers including job fairs, access to labor market information, customized recruitments, and assistance filling job openings. To ensure quality service delivery for all shared customers, the MHGLWB is committed to convening quarterly meetings to review and share information amongst the partners.

(6) Please provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in your local area.

The MHLCC provides services to customers that qualify for Dislocated Worker or Adult services. As customers come to the MHLCC for the Career Center Seminar they can request to come back and meet with a Career Advisor. If they are enrolled in RESEA they must come back for a triage/RESEA review. At this meeting the Career Advisor will determine if the customer wants/needs intensive services. They customer will be scheduled to come back for a longer appointment and to bring the required eligibility paperwork. Once enrolled the Career Advisor will work with the customer on a career plan and determine if training is an option for the customer. If training is an option, assessments will be conducted. TABE tests will be done if the customers do not have a bachelor's degree. Other assessments include Prove It, TORQ, or MassCIS. All customer case files are discussed in a weekly Case Management meeting with staff and management and BSRs in attendance. The group will decide if training is the right direction to go in. Once the type of training is chosen customers must research different programs and bring back their decision of where they would like to go to training. Once in training the Career Advisor will check in at least monthly to provide additional support. When training is completed the Career Advisor will make recommendations for the customers' resume, recommend workshops and work with the BSRs for job placement. Once placed in employment, Career advisors follow up monthly for 12 months unless the follow up is declined by the customer.

(7) Describe how your Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the

local area with statewide rapid response activities.

Rapid Response activities include sending reports of recent and upcoming layoffs in our area. RR team will send the WARN report for any upcoming lay off. RR will go on site at the company and deliver their array of services. At this point the CC staff are available to assist if needed. If necessary, the CC management and Board will work the RR staff to determine if an NDWG may be necessary due to the large number of dislocated workers and available existing funding. If needed the CC management may request a RR Set Aside grant to cover expenses during the NDWG application process. CC staff participate in RR regional meetings.

(8) Please provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in your area including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which must include an identification of successful models of such activities.

a. Please also provide a description of youth workforce investment activity coordination with the Department of Transitional Assistance, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

The MHGLWB is actively engaged in the development of youth service programming for our region. Every two years the board designs and issues an RFP for in-school and out-of-school WIOA youth program providers. A subcommittee of board members, which includes core partner members, participates as reviewers of the proposals. In addition, the Board oversees the Connecting Activities, school to-career program administered by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The MHGLWB coordinates with the Career Center in the administration of Year-Round Youthworks and the summer Youthworks programming. WIOA Youth programming, both in- school youth and out-of-school youth programming, provided by the Board is geared towards youth who are low income, have barriers to employment, and are disconnected from education and training.

The Board has made a conscious effort to place youth in STEM related, paid internships. In May 2018, the GLWDB will be hosted a STEM Roundtable to encourage STEM employers to hire local high school youth.

In February 2018, the Board reconvened the Greater Lowell Youth Council. The Youth Council is comprised of over 30 individuals representing business, high schools, and youth serving community-based organizations from across the region. The Youth Council will identify youth related challenges within the region and formulate goals and strategies to address the issues.

The Board has a dedicated Youth Services Program Manager that provides the oversight and monitoring of the youth service providers as the Board administers the WIOA Youth Frameworks funding. The Youth Services Program Manager ensures the funded in-school and out-of-school youth providers are meeting performance measures, enrollment goals, and provides technical assistance as needed.

The Board also convenes quarterly WIOA Youth Provider Vendor Meetings to provide updates and technical assistance to funded programs. One way, the MHGLWB works in partnership with all youth service providers, stakeholders, and the OSCC is through the Greater Lowell Youth Council. The Youth Council is an avenue to share resources including job postings, upcoming youth conferences, trainings,

and opportunities for in-school and out-of-school.

Several MHGLWB private sector board members are active in the region's youth initiatives including hiring summer youth, conducting job shadows, company tours, and financial literacy workshops. In addition, several financial institutions participate in a summer bank fair to introduce young people about the benefits of having a savings account.

In addition, the core partners discuss youth customer flow at the quarterly MOU partner meetings. The Youth Program Manager does onsite compliance checks of the providers not less than once a year with a dedicated monitoring tool. The providers are also required to submit monthly performance reports to the Manager.

In addition, the region holds quarterly WIOA Youth Vendor meetings to provide updates, technical assistance, and an opportunity for vendors to share best practices.

(9) Please explain how your Local Board will coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

A representative from the Greater Lowell Technical High School sits on the Greater Lowell Workforce Board and participates on the Board's Youth Council along with representatives from Lowell High School. Middlesex Community College and the University of Massachusetts Lowell are represented on the Board and actively participate on multiple committees. The high level of involvement from both the high schools, community college and the University assist the Board immeasurably in effectively coordinating education and workforce development activities with relevant secondary and post-secondary activities in the greater Lowell region.

In the Northeast region, the regional planning process has created an environment for systemic alignment of economic development, workforce development and education. Through this process a blueprint was developed that identified shared strategies among the partners. The partners made commitment to continuous communication through regular meetings and the establishment of various task forces focused on our priority industries. The partners will participate in a shared measurement system to ensure progress is being made towards our shared vision. In addition, the economic development, workforce development and education partners have agreed to create an inventory of resources for employers and job seekers, compare inventory needs of priority and critical industries and review the inventory to identify areas of duplication, gaps or needs for adjustments to better meet needs. Creating consortiums with clear career pathways such as NAMC, in the priority industry of Advanced Manufacturing, in our priority industries of Healthcare, Professional, Scientific and Technical, Education and Construction will be critical in providing services in our area.

(10) How will your Board coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area? Please also describe how other programs and services in your local area are leveraged to compliant workforce investment activities.

The Board is a member of the Middlesex 3 Coalition. One of the organization's top priorities is to support initiatives to improve transportation access for job seekers, those facing barriers, in our region. The Board also partners with community-based organizations such as Community Teamwork, Coalition for a Better Acre and Working Cities Lowell, to support initiatives in housing, financial literacy, increased access to day care in the Greater Lowell region. The board participates in a pilot program with DTA to address the cliff effect many of the job seekers with barriers face.

(11) What plans, assurances, and strategies do you have in place for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services and other services provided through the Career Center delivery system?

The MassHire Lowell Career Center has been integrated with State Wagner Peyser Staff for several years now. All state staff are versed in servicing Dislocated Workers, Low Income Adults, and Trade customers. All city staff are trained to perform RESEA reviews.

A variety of partner services are accessible to customers either: (a) on-site full-time where space permits, (b) on-site part-time through scheduling of shared workspaces, or (c) by information provision and referral. On-site are the following: DTA's full engagement worker, Job Corp, Operation ABLE's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Bene Plan (Social Security Benefit Q & A), Lowell Adult Education, Mass Rehabilitation Commission, Unemployment Insurance, and Rapid Response. Mass Commission for the Blind has offered to train staff in their services, however, they do not have enough staff to co-locate here but agreed that if we had a customer in need of services, we would coordinate that with them.

Staff go out to the following for services and for orientations: Lowell Adult Education, DTA, Mass Rehab. Commission, Pollard Memorial Library, Westford Library, Chelmsford Library, Lowell Career Academy, Greater Lowell Technical High School, Family Resource Center, Coalition for the Better Acre's Community Dinners and Community Teamwork.

(12) How will career and training services, required under WIOA, be provided to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs) through the Career Center(s)?

The Board has adopted the State policies regarding migrant seasonal workers. Although there is not a strong demand, workforce development services are available to both employers and workers involved in the agricultural sector.

(13) How will the Board coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA title II? This description must include how the Board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under title II consistent with WIOA secs.

107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec. 232:

Each eligible provider desiring a grant or contract from an eligible agency shall submit an application to the eligible agency containing such information and assurances as the eligible agency may require, including a description of –

i. of how funds awarded under this title will be spent consistent with the requirements of this

title;

ii. any cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities;

iii. how the eligible provider will provide services in alignment with the local plan under section 108, including how such provider will promote concurrent enrollment in programs and activities under title I, as appropriate;

iv. how the eligible provider will meet the State adjusted levels of performance described in section 116(b)(3), including how such provider will collect data to report on such performance indicators;

v. how the eligible provider will fulfill Career Center partner responsibilities as described in section 121(b)(1)(A), as appropriate;

vi. how the eligible provider will provide services in a manner that meets the needs of eligible individuals; and

vii. information that addresses the considerations described under section 231(e), as applicable.

MHGLWB staff worked with the state funded education program in the following areas:

- Review of adult education proposal(s) for funding for consistency with i-vii above.
- Participation in program quality reviews/monitoring and selected site visits
- Development of effective employer partnerships to place adult education graduate.
- Provide training and information for adult education staff on current trends in the labor market
- Support and guidance to adult education programs related to the development of viable career pathways
- Support and guidance to adult education programs in serving shared customers
- Support and guidance to the adult education staff located at the MassHire Lowell Career Center

(14) Provide copies of executed cooperative agreements, MOUs, ISAs, or other agreements between required partners which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in your local Career Center delivery system. This includes cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA sec. 107(d)(11)) between the Board or other local entities described in WIOA sec. 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated State agency or designated State unit administering programs carried out under title I of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (other than sec. 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741) and subject to sec. 121(f)) in accordance with sec. 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with businesses, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.

Please see the attached WIOA Partner MOU for the Greater Lowell Region.

Describe how the Local Board/Career Center intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partnerships with local service providers (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements). (Note:

There is a statewide collaborative agreement in place between DCS and the New England Farm Workers' Council (NEFWC), the WIOA Sec. 167 Grantee. A copy of the agreement will be included as part of the consolidated State Plan).

The Board and the Career Center meet regularly with the WIOA mandated partners to review the Partner MOU, the online referral portal, cross training activities and co-location resources. The GLWB will continue to partner with community-based organizations such as the Coalition for a Better Acre, Working Cities Lowell and Community Teamwork to support the workforce development and support service activities of these organizations. The GLWB will continue to develop formal relationships with partners such as the Middlesex Sheriff's Office, Lowell Community Health Center, Lowell House and UTEC through grant partnership opportunities, providing services onsite at these locations and supporting the workforce development and support service activities.

In addition to the WIOA core partners, the GLWB is actively involved in the development and implementation of the 'Northeast Labor Market Blueprint' with the Merrimack Valley and North Shore workforce regions.

(15) Please provide the name and contact information of your Fiscal Agent.

The MassHire Lowell Career Center/City of Lowell is the Fiscal Agent:

Michael Durkin
Assistant Director
978.805.4808
Michael.Durkin@masshirelowellcc.com

(16) Please detail the competitive process that will be used to award the sub grants and contracts for WIOA title I activities.

As a department of the City of Lowell, the MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board follows the procurement guidelines of the City of Lowell in accordance with Chapter MGL 30B: Uniform Procurement Act.

In accordance with WIOA regulations, the Board procures WIOA youth providers every two years and the One-Stop Career Center Operator(s) every four years. Both will be selected via a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. All proposals are evaluated and scored independently by a sub-committee of board members. A final recommendation is voted up by the full board.

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) follow a state-driven process and are an exception to the RFP process. The region follows Policy 100 DCS 14.100 "Massachusetts Eligible Training Provider List (MA ETPL) Initial and Subsequent Eligibility Process" located on MassWorkforce.org
<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-training-policy-issuances>

(17) Please provide the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official consistent with WIOA sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of your local area

and to be used by the Local Board for measuring the performance of your local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA title I subtitle B, and the Career Center system.

The following was submitted to the MassHire DCS for the WIOA Performance Measures:

Performance Measure	FY'19 Proposed Local Goal	FY'20 Proposed Local Goal
WIOA ADULT MEASURES		
Employment Q2	86.0%	86.5%
Employment Q4	78.0%	78.0%
Median Earnings Q2	\$5,200	\$5,300
Credential Rate	71.0%	72.0%
WIOA DISLOCATED WORKER MEASURES		
Employment Q2	86.0%	86.0%
Employment Q4	85.0%	85.0%
Median Earnings Q2	\$7,700	\$7,800
Credential Rate	60.0%	62.0%
WIOA YOUTH MEASURES		
Employment/Education Q2	80.5%	81.0%
Employment/Education Q4	73.0%	73.5%
Credential Rate	70.5%	70.5%

In addition, the MassHire Lowell Career Center has the following performance measures for FY'19.

Job Seekers Services	FY'19 Goal
Total Job Seekers Served	6,300
a. Total Job Seekers Unemployed	5,800
b. Persons with Disabilities	400
c. UI Claimants Served	4,750
d. Veterans Served	325
Employer Services	FY'19 Goal
Total Employers Served	490
a. New to Career Center	320
b. Repeat	170
2. Employers Receiving Job Seeker Referrals	185
3. Employers Hiring from Referrals	87

The MHGLWB's 'Workforce Performance & Opportunities Committee' meets bi-monthly to review and discuss career center performance. The committee is consistently reviewing job-seeker and employer data to drive the performance of the region.

(18) What are the actions and activities that support the local boards continued status as a high-performance workforce board?

In 2009, the MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board was awarded the distinction of a "high performing workforce board" by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. The Board received this designation by meeting numerous standards of quality and effectiveness including board member engagement in driving region's activities.

- a). What trainings are applicable to Board members?***
- b). How do business Board members contribute to workforce development in your region?***
- c). How does your Board support the business services in the career centers? d). To what extent does inter-/intra-Board collaboration result in positive outcomes for job-seekers and businesses?***

New MHGLWB members meet one-on-one with the Executive Director and receive a formal 2-hour orientation. The orientation covers an overview of the federal and state workforce development system, the board's committees, one-stop career center, and current grants/activities. In addition, the Executive Director holds "refresher orientations" once a year for experienced board members. All Board members are required to sit on a Committee which allows them to contribute directly to the organization.

All Board members are encouraged and invited to attend local and statewide conferences including the annual Massachusetts Jobs and Workforce Summit.

Overall, sixteen of the eighteen (89%) private sector members are actively engaged with the MassHire Lowell Career Center. MHGLWB private sector members utilize the OSCC for the following services: specialized recruitment events, posting job orders, attending off-site job fairs, hosting summer youth interns, applicant pre-screenings, and obtaining assistance for Workforce Training Fund grants. In addition, board members assist in conducting financial literacy workshops on-site at the OSCC. Board members are also active in providing services to in-school and out-of-school youth. They provide company tours, job shadow opportunities, and participate in career awareness panels.

(19) How will training services outlined in WIOA sec. 134 be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter, and how your Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

Key changes in customer service mandated by WIOA have been integrated into a new customer centered service model currently being utilized at the MassHire Lowell Career Center. This model is a result of a design challenge that the Career Center, along with the MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce

Board, Core Partners and Community Partners participated in during Fiscal years 16 & 17. The intent was to improve customer flow and access to services to non-unemployment required customers. The implementation of these changes has produced a return rate of 30% after orientation by our partners non-unemployment customers. In addition, the MassHire Lowell Career Center has the highest rates of Work Program Participants (WPP), which are Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program recipients, required to perform work search as part of receiving benefits.

As part of the process a portal system was created on our website for tracking referrals to our partners and vice versa. The portal is simple to use and is an effective tool for case management, in particular if a partner referral is a no show. Prior to this system we had to rely on staff putting the referral in the MOSES system. This allows us to cross check with MOSES to ensure referrals are being tracked and we are counting them as shared customers.

Customer Service Flow

Customers can access the services of the MassHire Lowell Career Center by becoming a member of the Career Center and attending a Career Center Seminar (CCS). After a customer attends the CCS the customer is either triaged via the RESEA program, which is a component of accessing Unemployment benefits, or the customer can request an appointment with a Career Advisor/Employment Counselor. The Career Advisor utilizes the *What Do I Need* form to answer two broad questions:

1. Can this customer benefit from services and/or resources the Career Center has to offer?
2. Can this customer benefit from the services and/or resources of partners, in addition to, or instead of those available through the Career Center?

Based on the outcome of the *What Do I Need* assessment, the Career Advisor and customer work together to develop an action plan, which could be self-directed utilizing the Career Center resources or at home or more intensive services. Partner referrals are also made, as appropriate

If it is determined that customers can benefit from more staff-intensive services, the Career Advisor discusses WIOA eligibility criteria and identifies the documentation the customer will need to produce to demonstrate eligibility. The customer may also be eligible for another grant funded program as well. Customers may also be directed to staff for job coaching and that workshops are appropriate for their job search plan. If the customer is enrolled in WIOA programming they will be followed up for 12 months.

If the customer is referred to a partner agency for services co-case management between the Career Center and the Partner occurs. Once the customer is ready for employment, they are referred to the Career Center for job placement services. The Career Center will continue to work with that customer until job placement occurs.

The process is highlighted in the attached customer flow chart.

(20) Please describe the local area strategy and service plans for utilization of the following work-based training models:

a. On-the-Job Training, including use of the Commonwealth's waiver to provide up to 90% employee wage reimbursement to businesses with fewer than 50 employees

MHGLWB has an executed Master Agreement with the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board for the statewide Workforce Training Fund Program – WTFP OJT. The Board’s Workforce Performance and Opportunities Committee is in the process of developing a policy to include 90% employee wage reimbursement waiver for businesses with fewer than 50 employees.

b. Apprenticeship

Through the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium, the MHGLWB is conducting advanced manufacturing apprenticeships throughout the region. Moving forward, NAMC aims to expand the manufacturing apprenticeships statewide. In addition, the Board stays up-to-date on statewide apprenticeship developments in the Northeast region’s other two priority industries – IT/Tech and Healthcare.

c. Incumbent Worker Training

Through the NAMC partnership, the Board supports customized incumbent worker training in the manufacturing sector. In addition, the Board actively promotes the Workforce Training Fund to eligible employees across the region. In the last 18 months, 7 employers have received \$674,345 in funding to train 408 incumbent workers.

d. Work Experiences (paid or unpaid)

The Board provides work experience through youth programming. All the region’s WIOA youth funded programs (in-school and out-of-school) are required to provide paid or unpaid work experience to enrolled youth. In addition, the region runs both summer and year-round YouthWorks programs.

e. Transitional jobs (§ 680.190 – one that provides a time-limited work experience, that is wage-paid and subsidized, and is in the public, private, or non-profit sectors for those individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have inconsistent work history, as determined by the Local Board.

The Board currently does not prioritize transitional jobs.

f. Online remediation tools (such as WorkKeys Curriculum) for OJT/apprenticeship screening in support of cultivating and demonstrating workplace competencies.

Career Advisors/Employment Counselors have access to WorkKeys curriculum and IBM’s Prove It to assess customers. WorkKeys allows Career Advisors to assess a customer literacy level in reading in math and track progression. Prove It will give the Career Advisors/Employment Counselors to test customers in specific areas in over 1,200 skills.

i. Does the local area utilize the National Career Readiness Curriculum (NCRC) to measure job-seekers work ethic and discipline, basic skills abilities, and job-ready qualifications

The Career Center offers job seekers and businesses the opportunity to earn a National Career Ready Certificate. The Board has made it priority to make the credential to our WIOA partners and local

businesses.

(21) Please describe the process used by your Board, consistent with WIOA sec. 108(d), to provide up to a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of your local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations.

a). make available copies of a proposed local plan to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media; b). allow members of the public to submit comments, not later than the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date on which the proposed local plan is made available; c). include with the local plan submitted to the Governor any such comments that represent disagreement with the plan.

A draft of the MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce local plan will be posted to the workforce website for a 30-day public review period. Board members representing stakeholders from the business community, labor organization, and other community groups will be asked to share the local plan draft within their respective networks.

A point person on staff will be identified to compile public comments. When the 30-day period closes, the Executive Committee will convene to review comments and advise on whether and how input should be integrated into the final draft of the local plan that will be forwarded for submission to the state.

(22) Describe how your Career Centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by system partners.

The Career Center management team uses numerous reports each week or month to track customer progression. These reports – which are distributed to individual case managers -- allow oversight of a case managers' activities and status of a customer. These reports include weekly case manager overviews, monthly follow-ups, caseload for Case Advisors, and entered employment.

Requests to meet with a Career Advisor or an Employment Counselor are now submitted from our website to managers. A manager will then assess the customer and assign them to a Career Advisor/Employment Counselor. Once assigned, the manager sends the requests to an administrative assistant who schedules the appointment and notifies the customer through e-mail. This process eliminates excessive paper, reduces wait time, and allows the manager to view the volume of requests.

WIOA Partner Portal. WIOA partners can now refer their customers to Career Center services through the Career Center's website. A partner portal has been developed to allow partner agencies to send direct referrals for their customers. Once the referral is received, a manager directs the referral to appropriate staff. This referral system allows case managers at partner agencies to quickly refer their customers and upload résumés. The Career Center can also use the same system to refer customers to partner services. By using this system, the number of referrals can be easily tracked or followed up when necessary.

Career Advisors/Employment Counselors have access to WorkKeys curriculum and IBM's Prove It to assess customers. WorkKeys allows Career Advisors to assess a customer literacy level in reading in math and track progression. Prove It will give the Career Advisors/Employment Counselors to test customers in specific areas in over 1,200 skills.

Webinars: Our Webinars done at least weekly. These are about a half hour long presentation on topics that cannot be addressed in our in-person workshops. Facilitators can go in detail on a specific topic that does not get enough time in the in-person workshop. These webinars are open to the public and participants can register via our website. They receive a confirmation e-mail with the link to the webinar.

(23) What is the direction given by the Governor and your local Board to the career center operator to ensure priority for adult career and training services will be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and § 680.600 –

***POS for Veterans: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/priority-of-service-for-veterans>
State Plan: <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/02/09/ma-wioa-state-plan-final-4-7-16.pdf>***

Please describe the local board's policy and process related to Priority of Service for adult career and training services for recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient (100 DCS 08-116).

The MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board has adopted the State's policy as referenced in the State Plan for priority of service. The Workforce Performance and Opportunities committee regularly reviews the policy and activities to ensure delivery of service is consistent with the State's mandates and enable the OSCC to remain efficient and meeting performance measurements.

(24) Please describe the local policy and process that ensures priority for adult career and training services is given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), § 680.600 and 100 DCS 18.101.1 in the absence of a priority of services policy.

- ***Veterans and eligible spouses***
- ***Recipients of public assistance***
- ***Other low-income individuals***
- ***Individuals who are basic skills deficient***

As stated in the previous response, the Board follows state guidance related to Priority of Service for adult career and training services. MHGLB has opted not to give priority to other individuals outside of the groups given priority under WIOA.

C. Local plan must include any additional information required by the Governor.

Not applicable at the time of the 30-day posting.

D. Local Plan must identify the portions that the Governor has designated as appropriate for common response in the regional plan where there is a shared responsibility, as permitted by § 679.540(b):

The Governor, through the Workforce Skills Cabinet, has emphasized the importance of regional planning and implementation. The plan has incorporated several items from the Northeast Regional Blueprint in the Greater Lowell plan.

E. Comments submitted during the public comment period that represent disagreement with the plan are required to be included the local plan.

There were no public comments submitted during the 30-day public comment period.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. WIOA Local Four-Year Plan Signatories
- B. Northeast Labor Market Blueprint
- C. Local Strategic Plan: January 1, 2018 – June 30, 2020
- D. WIOA Partner MOU --- Original and Refreshed
- E. Career Center/Workforce Board Charter
- F. Career Center - Business Services Flowchart
- G. Career Center – Customer Flow Chart