

**WIOA Local Four-Year Plan Signatories**

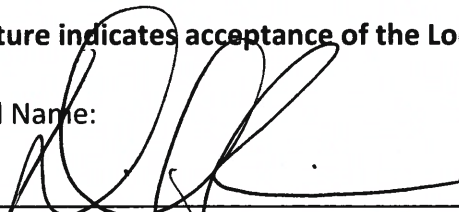
**Fiscal Years 2018 - 2021**

**MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board**  
Name of MassHire Workforce Board

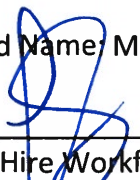
This Local Four-Year Plan shall be fully executed as of the date of signature below, and effective through June 30, 2021. The Plan may be amended or modified if agreed to by all parties.

**Signature indicates acceptance of the Local Four-Year Plan.**

Typed Name:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Elected Official, Mayor of Lawrence 2/1/19  
Date

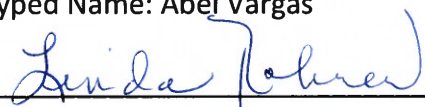
Typed Name: Mayor Dan Rivera

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MassHire Workforce Board Chair (or Designee) 2/1/19  
Date

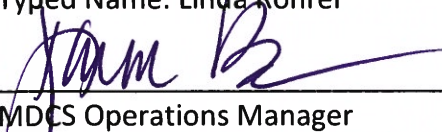
Typed Name: Juan Yepez

  
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MassHire Workforce Board Director / Title I Fiscal Agent 2/1/19  
Date

Typed Name: Abel Vargas

  
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MassHire Career Center Director 2/1/2019  
Date

Typed Name: Linda Rohrer

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MDCS Operations Manager 2/1/19  
Date

Typed Name: Dawn Beati



**MERRIMACK VALLEY  
WORKFORCE BOARD**

**MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board  
4 Year WIOA Local Plan  
2018 - 2021**

**January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

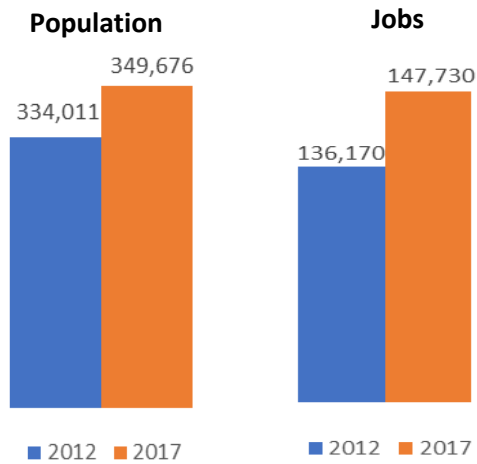
Please use this document as a template, providing a comprehensive response to each of the questions listed. If information is contained in an attachment, please label and reference it clearly.

**(a) Strategic Planning elements, including:**

- 1) A regional (local) analysis of:
  - a) Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
  - b) Employment needs of businesses in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
  - c) 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 Northeast Labor Market Blueprint “Regional Context” from which we draw much of the local region’s strategic priorities. The content below highlights more local dynamics and data points. For more information on our Regional Blueprint please visit: <https://masshiremvwb.org/wp-content/uploads/Blueprintsigned3-30-18FINAL.pdf>

**Economic Conditions<sup>1 2</sup>**



**Merrimack Valley Median Household Income<sup>3</sup>**

**\$73,900**

**Median HH Income of The Regions 5 Largest Communities<sup>4</sup>**

City/Town	2012	2017	% Change
Lawrence	\$31,931	\$39,627	24%
Haverhill	\$60,271	\$65,926	9%
Methuen	\$65,855	\$73,492	12%
Andover	\$118,324	\$143,292	21%
North Andover	\$97,044	\$105,661	9%

The region has seen an increase in population of 4.7% from 2012 to 2017. This increase is slightly higher than the state average of 3.5% over the same period. Continued population is expected through the 2020 census with estimates coming in at ~362,000.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau, 5 Year Population Estimates 2013-2017, American Factfinder, <https://factfinder.census.gov/>  
<sup>2</sup> EOLWD, Employment and Wages Survey (ES-202), Annual 2012, Annual 2017, <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/labor-market-information>  
<sup>3</sup> Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, 2018-2023 Merrimack Valley Comprehensive Economic Development  
<sup>4</sup>Strategy, June 21, 2018, <https://mvpc.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-2018-2023-MV-CEDS-SEPT-2018-mod.pdf>

There has also been an increase in total number of jobs as noted above. Total jobs have increased by 8.5%, slightly higher than population growth. That jobs growth rate is slightly lower than that state which had 9.2% more jobs. Also reflecting a healthier job market are the increase in Median Household Incomes. As noted in the above chart, the top 5 communities in population saw an increase in wages between 2012 and 2017. Lawrence, the community with the lowest wages, saw the sharpest climbs in wages. Reasons for the rise can be attributed to a tight labor market and the increase of the state’s minimum wage.

**In Demand Industries (Top 15)<sup>4</sup>**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>(-/+ ) Jobs</b>	<b>% Change</b>
Health Care and Social Assistance	22,360	29,034	6,674	29.8%
Manufacturing	24,893	24,389	-504	-2.0%
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	18,702	20,491	1,789	9.6%
Educational Services	11,890	14,004	2,114	17.8%
Accommodation and Food Services	10,029	11,194	1,165	11.6%
Professional and Technical Services	8,837	9,025	188	2.1%
Administrative and Waste Services	8,910	7,846	-1,064	-11.9%
Construction	5,303	7,471	2,168	40.9%
Public Administration	5,653	5,797	144	2.5%
Other Services, Except Public Administration	5,870	4,658	-1,212	-20.6%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	3,656	3,886	230	6.3%
Finance and Insurance	3,622	3,716	94	2.6%
Information	2,646	2,249	-397	-15.0%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2,271	2,101	-170	-7.5%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,296	1,613	317	24.5%

The region saw the greatest increase in jobs come from Health Care and Social Services, Construction, and Education Services. Per the Northeast Regional Blueprint<sup>5</sup>, the highlighted industries have been identified as priorities.

<sup>4</sup> EOLWD, Employment and Wages Survey (ES-202), Annual 2012, Annual 2017, <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/labor-market-information>

<sup>5</sup> Northeast Labor Market Blueprint 2018, Priority Occupations, <https://masshiremvwb.org/wp-content/uploads/Blueprintsigned3-30-18FINAL.pdf>

**In Demand Occupations (Top 16)<sup>6</sup>**

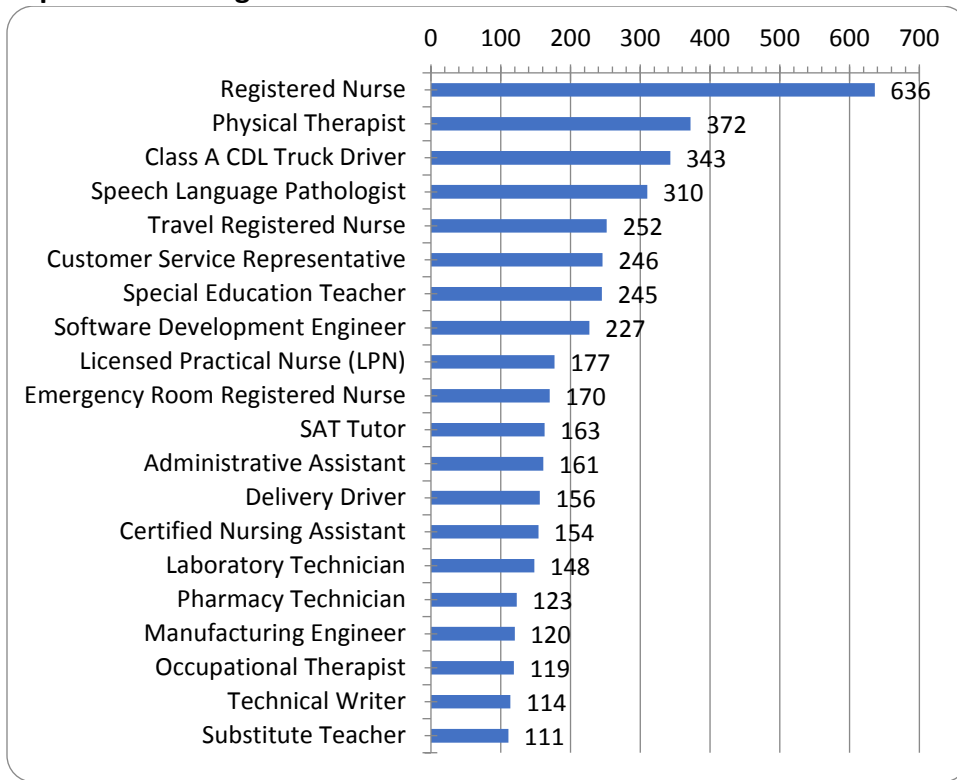
<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2017 Jobs</b>
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	37,760
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	21,670
Production Occupations	20,360
Management Occupations	20,160
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	19,800
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	19,090
Sales and Related Occupations	17,640
Personal Care and Service Occupations	14,500
Healthcare Support Occupations	12,420
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	11,150
Personal Care Aides	9,390
Construction and Extraction Occupations	8,950
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	8,930
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	7,430
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	6,590
Registered Nurses	6,240

The chart above highlights the occupations with the most employees in the region. The highlighted occupations are ones that have been prioritized in the Northeast Region’s Local Market Blueprint.<sup>7</sup> The chart below tells a similar story of active job postings reflecting occupation with the highest demand in real time.

<sup>6</sup> EOLWD, Occupational Employment and Wages Survey (ES-202), Annual 2017, <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/labor-market-information>

<sup>7</sup> Northeast Labor Market Blueprint 2018, Priority Occupations, <https://masshiremvwb.org/wp-content/uploads/Blueprintsigned3-30-18FINAL.pdf>

### Top 20 Job Postings<sup>8</sup>



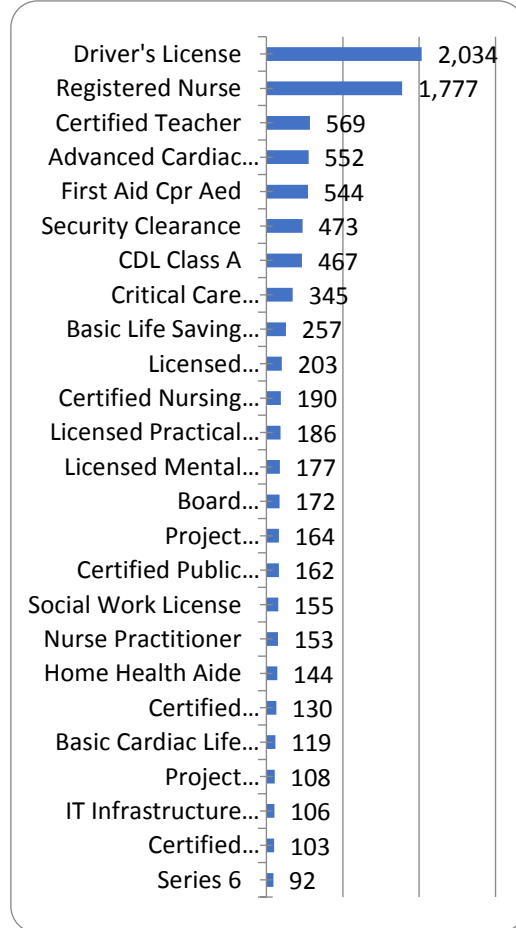
<sup>8</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, Labor Insight, Jobs Scan, Lower Merrimack Valley WDA, Oct. 1, 2017- Oct 31, 2018, <https://laborinsight.buring-glass.com>

(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.

**Most Requested Skills<sup>9</sup>**



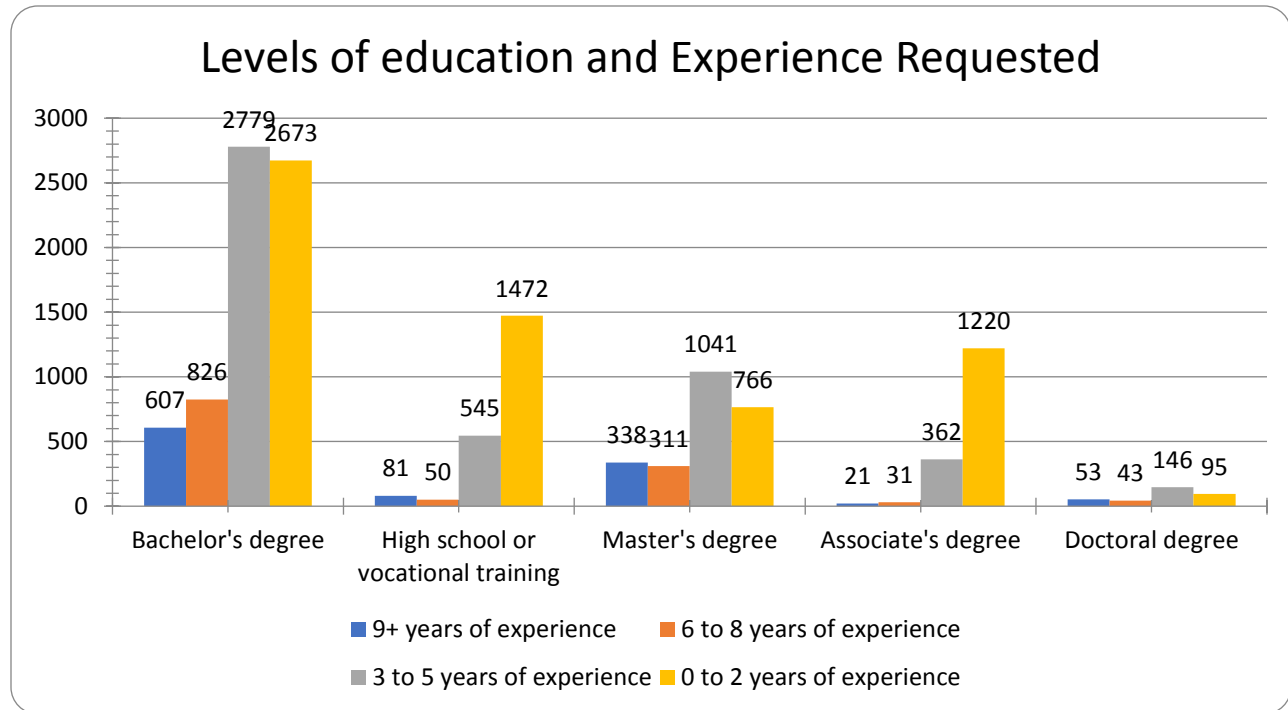
**Most Requested Certification<sup>10</sup>**



<sup>9</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, Labor Insight, Jobs Scan, Lower Merrimack Valley WDA, Oct. 1, 2017- Oct 31, 2018, <https://laborinsight.buring-glass.com>

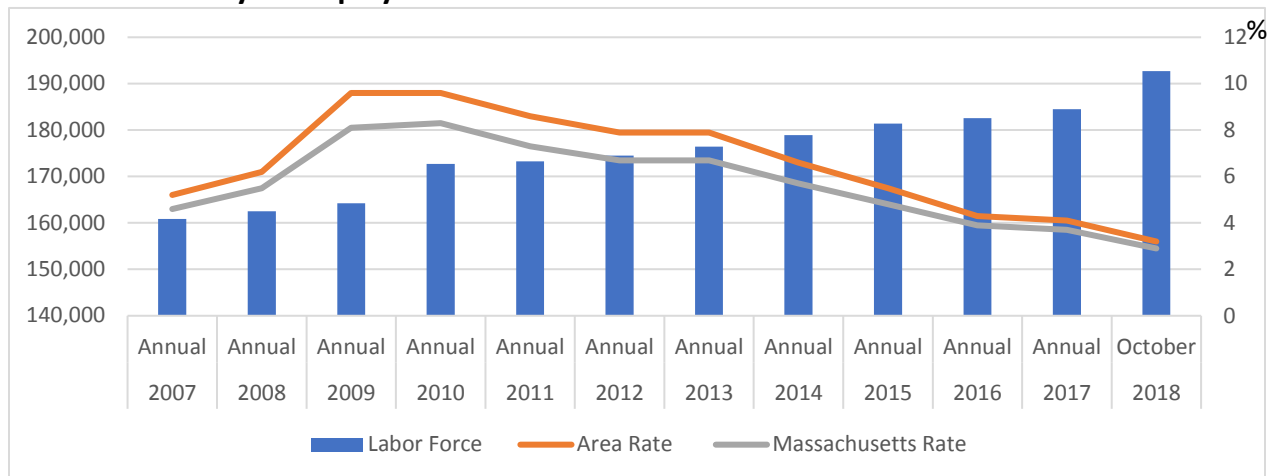
<sup>10</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, Labor Insight, Jobs Scan, Lower Merrimack Valley WDA, Oct. 1, 2017- Oct 31, 2018, <https://laborinsight.buring-glass.com>

### Education and Experience Required by Employers<sup>11</sup>



(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 employment<sup>1</sup>.

### Merrimack Valley Unemployment and Workforce<sup>12</sup>



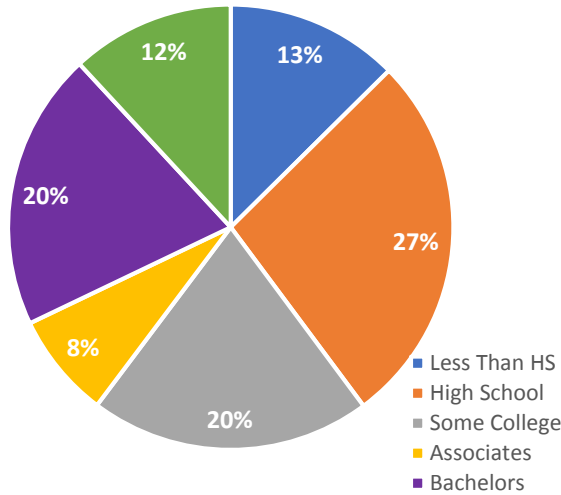
<sup>11</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, Labor Insight, Jobs Scan, Lower Merrimack Valley WDA, Oct. 1, 2017- Oct 31, 2018, <https://laborinsight.buring-glass.com>

<sup>12</sup> EOLWD, Employment and Wages Survey (ES-202), Annual 2007 – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2018 <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/labor-market-information>



The Merrimack Valley’s work force has increased steadily since 2007. Since 2007 the increase totals 31,842 or 20%. A similar story can be told about the unemployment number with the regions rate mirroring the state. The current unemployment rate is 3.2%

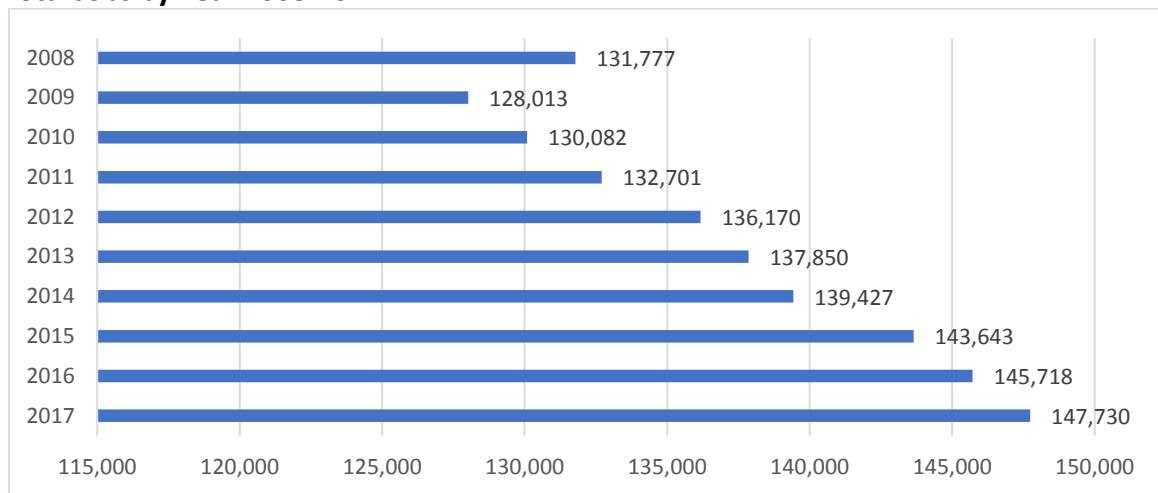
**Educational Attainment<sup>13</sup>**



Level of Education	Population
Less Than HS	34,855
High School	75,465
Some College	56,596
Associates	21,173
Bachelors	55,978
Graduate	32,940

In the Merrimack Valley, 87% of the population has a high school degree or above compared to 90.3% in the state.

**Total Jobs by Year 2008-2017<sup>14</sup>**

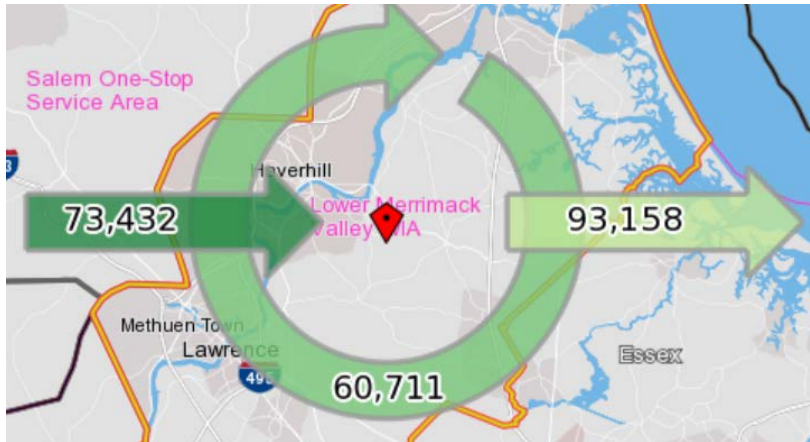


There has been a steady increase of jobs since 2008. In total, there have been nearly 15,000 jobs created, or 12%.

<sup>13</sup> US Census Bureau, 5 Year Educational Attainment Estimates 2013-2017, American Factfinder, <https://factfinder.census.gov/>

<sup>14</sup> EOLWD, Employment and Wages Survey (ES-202), Annual 2007 – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2018 <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/labor-market-information>

### Employee Inflows and Outflows For Jobs In Merrimack Valley<sup>15</sup>

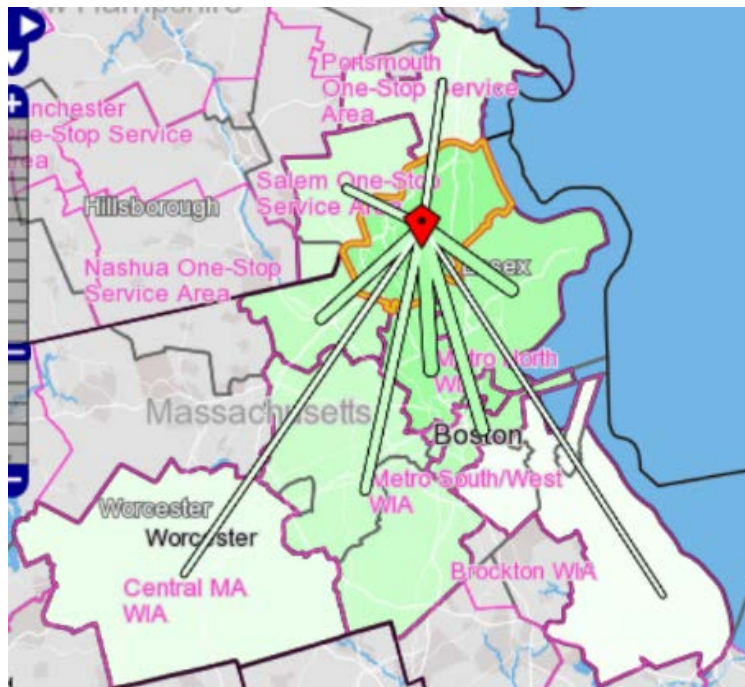


The graphic above highlights the inflows and outflows into and out of the region:

- 73,432 employees come into the region for work
- 60,711 live and work in the city
- 93,158 work outside of the region

On the other end, we find that employees are willing to go long distances for work. See the graphic below:

### Locations Where Merrimack Valley Residents Work in 2015<sup>16</sup>



<sup>15</sup> US Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Inflow/Outflow Analysis, 2015, <https://lehd.ces.census.gov/>

<sup>16</sup> US Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Inflow/Outflow Analysis, 2015, <https://lehd.ces.census.gov/>

**Job Counts by Places Where Merrimack Valley Residents Work<sup>17</sup>**

Region	Count	Share
All Workforce Investment Areas (WIA)	153,869	100%
Lower Merrimack Valley WIA	60,711	40%
Metro North WIA	20,197	13%
North Shore WIA	15,241	10%
Boston WIA	12,351	8%
Greater Lowell WIA	10,822	7%
Metro South/West WIA	10,213	7%
Salem One-Stop Service Area (NH)	4,819	3%
Portsmouth One-Stop Service Area (NH)	3,313	2%
Central MA WIA	2,430	2%
South Shore WIA	1,917	1%
All Other Locations	11,855	8%

The charts above show that 60% of the Merrimack Valley workforce goes outside of the region for work. On the other end 55% of the total jobs in the region are filled by residents from other regions/states.

*(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*
- 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 Merrimack Valley sees itself as crucial to meeting the workforce needs of the region. The region has taken several steps and layers of interventions to support members of the 15 communities. Among them are:

- Forming part of the Northeast Regions effort to develop the Northeast Regional Blueprint. This effort is in partnership with Greater Lowell Workforce Board as well Northshore Workforce Board.
- Leverage the Northeast Advance Manufacturing Consortium to develop apprenticeship and manufacturing related training.
- Develop industry clusters for our Business Service Representatives to focus on. Those areas include Manufacturing, Trades, Health Care, and Professional Services.
- Coordination of Employer Facing organizations to better align outreach efforts.
- Recognizing that there is a larger Spanish speaking population, efforts have begun to study best practices around bilingual manufacturing floors. The premise being that if language is a

<sup>17</sup> US Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Inflow/Outflow Analysis, 2015, <https://lehd.ces.census.gov/>

barrier for employment, and businesses need the help, are there steps employers can take to leverage the Spanish speaking workforce without disrupting operations.

- Our One Stop Operator, Norther Essex Community College, has introduced a process to gain credentials using foreign degrees. This helps immigrant utilize their years of post-secondary education here in the United. States.
- Continue to support occupational training programs in priority industries

Despite the many efforts, there are still lingering and difficult problems that must be solved. An aging population in manufacturing and other fields has put a strain on recruitment efforts for many of our employers. That same aging is causing population increased demands in our health care system that we are not able to keep up with.

*(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). The primary indicators of performance include:*

- a) The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;*
- b) The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;*
- c) Median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;*
- d) The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training) who attained a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program*

The vision of the MVWB is to create the framework for which Employers and residents in the region have a foundation from which they have the opportunity to achieve sustained economic growth and prosperity.

Through consensus-building and coordination, the region looks to create a leadership framework for the collective actions of workforce providers. The board will serve as the repository of valid objective, factual, information on workforce issues in the Merrimack Valley. The board will demonstrate the integrity to serve as an impartial convener, broker, and manager of relationships.

To achieve this, the MVWB looks to utilize “business intelligence” to develop data driven strategies based on analysis of Labor Market Information to guide decision making. The Board looks to convene, broker and leverage partnerships with key stakeholders, e.g., WIOA Core Partners, career and technical education, community colleges and other higher education entities, organized labor, and others.

*(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 Merrimack valley Workforce Board convenes the WIOA Partners MOU participant regularly. The group is tasked with identifying opportunities for collaboration to included how to best service shared customers, ensuring a seamless transition of our customers when referring, and developing a system to track performance. Additional specifics on how the partners will collaborate are in the MOU document. The member organizations include:

Lawrence Adult Learning Center  
Northern Essex Community College  
Methuen Adult Learning Center  
Haverhill Community Action Inc.  
Notre Dame Education Center – Lawrence  
International Institute of Greater Lawrence  
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission  
Massachusetts Commission of the Blind  
Department of Unemployment Assistance  
Department of Transitional Assistance  
Senior Community Service Employment Program  
Greater Lawrence Community Action Council

In addition to the partners noted above, the region has strong working relationships with area high schools, Northern Essex Community College, and several nonprofits, primarily in Lawrence, that deliver workforce development programs and often require MVWB support.

***(b) Under WIOA, the plan must include a description of the following requirements (WIOA secs. 108(b)(2)–(21)):***

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

*(i.) Programs that are included in your local workforce system (please list programs)*

The MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center and / or the MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board operate or host the following programs within our local workforce system:

Wagner-Peyser Act Program (as amended by Title III)  
WIOA Title I Adult Program  
WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program  
WIOA Title I Youth Program  
Veterans Programs  
TRADE Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Workers Programs whose activities are authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974  
BizWorks / Rapid Response

Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) Walk-in Services  
National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) programs  
Competitive Integrated Employment Services (DTA's CIES Program initiative)

BIZWORKS

Adult Education Programs (Title II)

- Lawrence Adult Learning Center
- Community Action Inc.
- Methuen Adult Learning Center
- Notre Dame Education Center – Lawrence
- International Institute of Greater Lawrence
- Northern Essex Community College / CAEPP

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MCB), Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), EOHHS

Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), EOHHS

Senior Community Service Employment Program, Operation ABLE

Greater Lawrence Community Action Council

School to Career Connecting Activities (MA DESE)

YouthWorks Summer subsidized employment/training (Commonwealth Corporation)

YouthWorks Year-Round Planning grant (Commonwealth Corporation)

Amp it Up! (MassDevelopment)

Bridging the Opportunity Gap Program (BOG), Department of Youth Services, EOHHS

Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC) funded advanced manufacturing occupational skills trainings and apprenticeships (Various funders)

Advanced Manufacturing Training for PreSchool Parents Program (AMPP) (Learn to Earn funding – Commonwealth Corporation)

Reintegration Through Construction Pathways Construction (RECP) Laborer program for returning citizens (WCTF funded – Commonwealth Corporation)

Reintegration Through Construction Pathways Construction (RECP) Laborer program for returning citizens (Reentry Demonstration Project funded -Commonwealth Corp.)

Employment Advancement Reentry NOW! (EARN) program for court involved Youth (U.S. Department of Labor funded)

Reentry Opportunities Program for adults (subcontract through Volunteers of America for a U.S. DOL funded program)

Environmental Technical Training Program for heavy equipment operators / truck drivers (U. S. Environmental Protection Agency)

Regional Labor Market Blueprint implementation plan funding (MA Department of Career Services)

*i. 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 MVWB supports and works with the Northern Essex Community College (NECC) operated MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center which carries out WIOA Title I and Title III core programs. MassHire MVCC is staffed by both NECC and MA Department of Career Services staff. An

annual umbrella contract governs our relationship, and the MassHire MVWB provides oversight and monitoring of all key performance indicators established in the work statements of each program operated by MassHire MVCC.

Collaboration with OSCC Partners, many whom carry out WIOA Title II and Title IV core programs, was outlined in the WIOA Partners MOU ensures service alignment. The key areas of focus are highlighted in the following 9 Assurances found in the MOU:

1. Conducting an ongoing assessment of this MOU to incorporate necessary modifications in order to achieve continuous improvements to Merrimack Valley's one-stop delivery system.
2. Participating in the operation of the one-stop delivery system consistent with the terms of this MOU, the requirements of WIOA, and the requirements of Federal laws authorizing WIOA programs and activities.
3. Updating and further detailing the definition of Partner "shared" customers to create an ever clearer understanding of how multiple providers, services and resources should best support youth, job seekers, and businesses.
4. Refining One-Stop Career Center customer flow and service practices across partner agencies, ensuring continuously improved access and service availability to "shared" customers.
5. Utilizing robust technology tools to scale-up practices and provide more significant supports for individuals with barriers to employment, including basic skills assessment, remediation, and career development, while also recognizing that whatever tools are used must productively connect with statewide data gathering systems and that those statewide stove-pipe systems may limit how robust scale-ups will be. Attempts may be made to jointly purchase or develop regional IT products or processes that will help partners share information or communicate.
6. Tracking and evaluating the outcome of services offered to individuals with barriers to employment, especially shared customers.
7. Using some funds or resources available for programs and activities to maintain the one-stop delivery system, including the infrastructure and shared costs of our two One-Stop Career Centers, by methods mutually agreed upon by State Secretariats, the MassHire MVWB, the Merrimack Valley Chief Elected Official, and the Merrimack Valley OSCC Partners. When no consensus on methods is reached, the Governor, after consultation with the Chief Elected Official, the MassHire MVWB and Massachusetts' State Workforce Development Board shall determine the portion of funds to be provided (WIOA sec. 121(a) (h) (1) (C)).
8. Provide representation on the MassHire MVWB as requested by the MVWIA CEO and/or, participate in MassHire MVWB ad hoc activities/events or standing committees.
9. The MOU will be reviewed periodically, and if changes occur, renewed, not less than once every 3-years to ensure appropriate service delivery and funding. The MOU will be updated to reflect changes to the One-Stop Partner infrastructure cost contributions. Funding of infrastructure costs for the Merrimack Valley One-Stop Career Centers and other Centers throughout the State are being

developed at the State level. It also recognizes that increased outcomes most often correlate to increased funding.

Further, the MassHire MVWB works in close collaboration with the programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 to ensure service alignment. These include Greater Lawrence Technical School (GLTS) (located in Andover) and the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School (Whittier Tech) (located in Haverhill). The GLTS has recently been approved for the Eligible Training Providing List so its adult education offerings are available for WIOA Individual Training Account (ITA) training funds. Whittier Tech is also applying for ETPL approval. NAMC sponsored advanced manufacturing trainings are offered at both schools. Many of the MassHire MVWB non-formula funded group training programs have contracted with GLTS to provide occupational skills training. These include both the LTE AMPP program for pre-school parents and the RECP program for returning citizens. We are exploring offering a landscaping / hardscaping occupational skills training for EARN program court involved youth to be supported with YouthWorks Summer funding.

MassHire MVWB staff serve on the Program Advisory Committee for Haverhill High School's Chapter Career Technical Education programs in Information Support Services & Networking and in the Programming & Web Development. Our Connecting Activities program provide internship supports to both programs, as well as to Methuen High School's Chapter 74 program in Biotechnology and in Programming & Web Development.

*(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;*

The MassHire MVWB works with the career center and WIOA partners to expand access to employment, training, education and support services through a four-pronged strategy:

1. Offering excellent customer centered career services each day that are universally accessible to all workers, including eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Continuous improvement is built into service delivery, so innovation based on customer needs can be integrated into updated service flow and design.
2. Co-location of WIOA Partners at MassHire MVCC to ensure coordination of referrals and services to best serve shared (and potentially shared) customers.
3. Promoting continuous business engagement and opportunities for collaboration across the business cycle as priorities for achieving workforce system success. (Demand 2.0)
4. On-going development and implementation of special programs – based either on sector partnerships to address workforce needs of specific industries, or on service needs of at-risk populations, or both, – to complement and expand workforce system service offerings in the region.

*(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);*



Facilitating the development of career pathways is an on-going endeavor that's central to the Board's goal of contributing to local prosperity through providing opportunities for worker advancement. This is done primarily in collaboration with the MassHire MVCC, with input from other entities carrying out core programs, educational institutions, and local workforce focused organizations.

We develop career pathways with partners by mapping out training and education entry points, credentials/degrees to be gained, and how these connect to entry or higher-level jobs in priority industries. These inform the occupational skills training and educational programs available to WIOA customers through ITAs. All ITA approved offerings must lead to industry recognized, preferably stackable, credentials. Our non-formula funded group training programs expand access to credentials and building awareness of career opportunities.

Specific instances of this work include collaboration between NAMC, GLTS and NECC to explore articulation agreements to provide college credit NAMC courses. Working with Lawrence Public Schools, the Lawrence Partnership and healthcare employers, we established a healthcare pathway program for LHS grads to train for CNA or Medical Assisting credentials, be hired by partner employers, and then be eligible for workplace scholarships for education to advance on the healthcare career ladder.

Ensuring co-enrollment of customers whenever possible and appropriate between different core programs is also a priority of the Board. Co-location of WIOA core partners at the MassHire MVCC facilitates this process, and career center staff has received training in partner programs, and visa versa, to better determine which customers are a fit for co-enrollment. We are also in the process of streamlining eligibility and enrollment between WIOA and non-formula funded programs so customers can access all services for which they qualify, and which would be beneficial. The WIOA partners will meet regularly in 2019 and beyond to further advance co-enrollment and ensuring access to career pathways.

*(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 region is working to develop a more robust network of employer facing organizations that would better position the region to effectively communicate with employers. Employers have expressed concerns with numerous agencies/nonprofits reaching out with no clearer sense of how one organization interacts with the other. The region continues to lean on the Northeast Advance Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC) for direct employer engagement. NAMC has shown an incredible ability to connect employers to the work force system's resources, particularly with apprenticeship. Like NAMC, the Business Service Unit is crucial component of our business engagement capacity serving, in most cases, as the main point of contact and driver for new engaged businesses.

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

The Merrimack Valley has limited to no interaction with agricultural businesses.

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

The Merrimack Valley OSCC has restructured the way it engages employers. The Career Center now organizes its efforts around industry sectors. They include Health Care, Trades, Manufacturing, and Professional Services. This strategy allows our business service representatives to better understand the industry specific needs of the regions employers. There is also an understanding that business needs do not always begin or end with Workforce solutions. To better support business, there is a constant effort to develop and nurture relationships with our agency partners.

*(iv.) To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development;*

The MassHire MVWB works closely with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC). The Executive Director of MVPC is a member of the MassHire MVWB and serves as the Chair of the Nominating Committee. Further, the newly appointed Executive Director of the MassHire MVWB was previously the Economic Develop Director of the City of Lawrence. Mr. Vargas played a key role in the development of MVPC's 2018-2023 Merrimack Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy completed in June of 2018. The new MassHire MVWB Director sees many opportunities to further engage economic development professionals in the region such as being better in tune with development activity that may suggest job creation.

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

Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) staff are located at the MassHire MVCC in Lawrence. Unemployment Insurance recipients often visit the career center to receive assistance from DUA staff in filing claims or resolving problems. Since DUA is situated within the career center customers are able to take advantage of MassHire MVCC services on the spot. This close proximity creates a seamless transition from receiving assistance from DUA staff to career center services.

The DUA is also one of our WIOA Partners and so participates in regular meetings and considering solutions to how to better serve our shared customers.

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

Select business intermediaries, in the form of reputable staffing agencies, are considered employer partners in the Merrimack Valley workforce system. They are identified and recruited in two ways. First, through the Business Service Unit at the career center. Business Service Representatives engage with staffing agencies to understand their labor needs and how they coincide with the employment needs of job seeker customers. Staffing agencies are included in hiring events and their vacancies are included in job listings. Second, business intermediaries are sometimes partners in our grant funded job training programs. In both cases, the employment opportunities offered by

staffing agencies fulfills the needs of some job seekers – especially those who lack transportation so are served well by an agency located close-by, or for those who need work experience to be competitive for direct hire. As a rule, both the Board and the Career Center refer job seekers to direct hire employment with priority industry employers, rather than through a business intermediary, whenever practicable.

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

The BizWorks programming is a key component of the MassHire MVWB employer engagement efforts. On a semi regular basis, the region hosts BizWorks workshops for employers allowing them direct access to partner agencies. The services, and the packaging of the services, is seen as a true asset of quality employer engagement.

- (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 Merrimack Valley workforce system has many strategies and services in place to implement the initiatives listed in the question above. All are included as part of the career center Business Services package when meeting with employers. Specific initiatives either in planning or underway include:

- Incumbent worker training: BSRs and the MassHire Workforce Board regularly explore with employers how to collaborate to provide subsidized pre-employment training for workers to qualify for entry level jobs, and then have employers contribute to strengthening their workforce and promoting individuals by investing in incumbent worker training. This has been done successfully in the youth healthcare program described in section 2. Iii, and also in our EPA funded trainings where employers maintain worker qualifications by supporting short term incumbent worker training.
- On-The-Job training: MassHire MVCC has just hired a BSR with significant experience in OJTs. With this new expertise on board, the career center looks to ramp up OJT placements over the 3-year plan period. Current OJT type employment is confined to apprenticeships.
- Customized Training Programs: MassHire MVWB currently operates three customized training programs for returning citizens or court involved youth, and two additional customized programs – one for pre-school parents and another for unemployed adults.
- Industry / Sector strategies: Our most successful sector strategy is NAMC, which addresses employer labor market demand in advanced manufacturing. We also plan to develop a healthcare sector strategy in collaboration with the state’s initiative, and also re exploring consolidating our construction related programs into a trades sector strategy initiative.
- Career Pathways: Strategies discussed in section b) 2. (iii.)
- Utilization of effective business intermediaries: This was discussed in section b) 2. (v.) a.

*(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*

As earlier noted, economic development activity in many cases is a leading indicator for workforce development needs. Having representatives with their ears to the ground will allow the workforce system to respond earlier to employer needs. The Northeast Region, through the development of the Regional Blueprint, has prioritized the participation of economic development professionals in all planning efforts. More specially we plan to:

1. Regularly engage economic development partners at both the municipal and regional level. This includes attendance at regional economic development planning meetings.
  2. Develop familiarity with municipal master plans and/or economic development priorities.
  3. Request and/or seek out permitting activity from local Planning and Zoning Board of Appeals Boards that may indicate development activity.
  4. Continue to leverage local chambers and board members as a means to connect to other employers.
- *Promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services;*

In response to the Merrimack Valley Columbia Gas explosions, the MVWB has been asked to provide support services to the businesses in the affected area. More specifically, the MVWB along with MVCC will deliver:

1. A job fair, or series of job fairs, designed to provide qualified workers to businesses who lost their workforce during a period of closure and now need new workers in order to continue and grow their businesses
2. Training for business owners and/or current workforce on a topic or topics to be determined during the assessment phase (possibilities include ESOL, Operating a Small Business, Finances for Small Business Owners; could be a Workforce Training Fund grant with additional funding needed for employer wage match)
3. Training and job placement services for workers who have lost their jobs due to slowed business or closure of their employer who was affected by the gas explosions and fires.

Participating in this effort will bring added relevance to workforce system in the region while delivering much needed support to business during a difficult time. Further, we hope this effort serves as a model for support in other communities in our region.

The programming will be funded entirely by Columbia Gas through their \$10,000,000 contribution to support affected businesses in Andover, Lawrence, and North Andover.

*(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;*

To understand employer labor market needs, the MassHire MVWB supported a 2016 Lawrence Partnership employer survey which provided valuable input, and we also rely on data gathered by our own interactions with employers, or by our sector based NAMC or MassHire MVCC BSR Unit staff. As part of the planning process of designing new group trainings for in-demand occupations, we form an employer advisory group to counsel us on soft and hard skills and credentials needed to prepare job seekers for these jobs. We then work with local or regional education providers to ensure training availability – and if it doesn't exist, we've invited trainers to our region, have assisted local trainers to offer a new course or include transportation support services for trainees to travel to the training site. Further, we counsel trainers on how to qualify for the Eligible Training Provider List and get courses approved for Section 30 and in our region – so WIOA training funds can be used through ITAs for these new trainers and courses.

The MVWB continues to identify training providers that deliver the services that most reflect the needs of employers. For the training providers we do have, we plan to continue to assess their performance based on placement rates, average wages, and overall compliance with our ITA policy.

*(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 Merrimack Valley Workforce Development Area is comprised of towns, cities, and suburbs, with no truly remote areas. Nonetheless, we are facilitating access to MassHire MVCC services through the use of technology and plan to continue expanding this ability over the next three years. Currently information on services and useful links are available for remote access via the MassHire MVCC website. This includes webpages on youth, job seeker and business services, and the workshops, job fair, and recruitment calendars. Links are available to job search tools such as Snag, Disabilityjobs, JobQuest, and the Hot Jobs List, career exploration sites such as MassCIS and ONET Online, and other resources such as MassRides, Benefits.gov and CareerOneStop.

Once a jobseeker becomes a career center member remote access is available to Career Ready 101 to improve job readiness skills, as well as other self-paced online learning platforms such as Rosetta Stone and Microsoft Office trainings.

Discussions are centered on making the membership application accessible online prior to visiting the career center to speed the application process, as well as making workshop registration available online. At the center, plans are underway to triage customers more rapidly through use of tablets in the membership area, and use of flat screens to advertise services and events.

*(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 MassHire MVWB is active in the disability service community, both among required WIOA partners and other service providers in our region. The MassHire MVCC management understands ADA regulations and is in compliance with all access and programmatic requirements. The center possesses appropriate assistive technology and regularly conducts staff training.

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

The roles and responsibilities of all WIOA career center partners are listed in the MOU which was completed in early 2018 and will be updated each year. Resource contributions of each partner is decided at the state level and allocations are added to the integrated budget when disbursed to the local level. Relationships are sustained and kept productive through regularly scheduled high level partner meetings, and through meetings with individual partners to review issues related to shared space, customers and services.

Many of the partners are on-site in the Lawrence career center, including: WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth; Job Corps; Wagner Peyser; VR (MRC); AEFLA represented by the Lawrence Adult Learning Center; SCSEP; Trade; JVSG; UI; and TANF. Partners on-site in at the Haverhill career center include: WP; VR (MRC); AEFLA represented by CAI; and JVSG. Partners not on-site at either location: YouthBuild; Native American; VR (MCB); Perkins; CSBG; and HUD. Volunteers of American will soon have staff onsite to assist shared customers who are participants in their Department of Labor funded program for reentering adults. Partners currently on-site have space that meets their needs and published schedules that facilitate referral.

*(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 MassHire MVCC is a comprehensive one stop career center with offices in downtown Lawrence and on the Northern Essex Community College campus in Haverhill. Both offer a full range of WIOA adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities as described in the table below and illustrated in the Customer Flow Diagram in Attachment 1.

<b>ADULT &amp; DISLOCATED WORKER JOB SEEKER ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>BASIC CAREER SERVICES</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL CAREER SERVICES</b>	<b>TRAINING</b>
<i>WIOA basic career services are self-service and/or informational.</i>	<i>WIOA individualized services assist through the exploration of careers, trainings, and employment opportunities.</i>	<i>Trainings are funded by WIOA and other sources; trainees must meet specific eligibility criteria to participate.</i>
Outreach, intake and orientation to the information, services, program tools and resources available in the local workforce system.	Comprehensive & specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs.	Occupational skills training through WIOA funded Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

Initial assessment of skill level(s), aptitudes, abilities & support services needs.	Development of an Individual Employment Plan (also known as a Career Action Plan) to ID employment goals and services to achieve goals.	On-The-Job Training
In and out of area job search assistance (including information on in-demand industry sectors & non-traditional employment.	Information on eligible training providers and referral to training.	Registered apprenticeship work & learning opportunities
Information on labor market demand, vacancies, and job skills needed to apply	Individual counselling & career planning	Industry sector partnership trainings, such as through NAMC.
Eligibility determination for Adult, DW & Youth programs	Case management for individuals seeking training, and for individuals during job search, referral and placement.	Incumbent worker training
Referrals to & coordination of activities with other programs, esp. WIOA partners, and services, esp. support services.	Workforce preparation workshops, on job seeking and job readiness topics such as punctuality, communications, resume writing, interviewing skills, financial literacy, professional conduct, etc.	Grant funded group occupational skills plus soft skills training opportunities for in demand occupations
Performance of local area on accountability measures	Work experience, transitional jobs, registered apprenticeships, & internships	Referrals to adult education & literacy activities in combination with training services (all provided by AEFLA providers)
Information in Spanish – the 2 <sup>nd</sup> most common language in the region.	Post-employment follow-up services and support, including additional counselling, contact with employer, peer support, info. on additional education.	
Information & assistance on UI claims.		
Assistance in establishing eligibility for financial aid for non-WIOA programs.		

An assessment was done on career center operations, which includes a review of Adult and Dislocated Worker Job Seeker Services, in late FY18 through the Career Center Certification process. The Review Team Report gave the center an above average score of 68 out of a possible 100 points, and commended the new operator for the innovations they initiated in year 1 of their 4-year charter.

The MassHire MVCC has integrated operations over the last year, and has re-organized staff into Industry Sector Teams (IST). This result has been continuous improvement of service delivery and performance numbers are reaching annual goals.

Customer surveys are also completed by customers to assess satisfaction with services. Business customers complete them after job fairs and other events. Job seeker customers complete surveys after career center seminars and all workshops. Survey results are reviewed by managers and BSRs (for business customers) and presenters and counselors (for job seekers). Survey results inform changes to improve service delivery. Survey results so far have shown good customer satisfaction with new service delivery models; feedback is reviewed systematically by management to influence service delivery in an effort to continually improve responsiveness and customer satisfaction.

<b>EMPLOYER SERVICES</b>		
Provide and follow established protocol with businesses, responding to all requests in a timely manner	Provide information and services related to Unemployment Insurance taxes and claims	Assist with disability and communication accommodations, including job coaches
Conduct outreach regarding Local workforce system's services and products	Conduct on-site Rapid Response activities regarding closures and downsizings	Develop On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts, incumbent worker contracts, or pay-for-performance contract strategies
Provide access to labor market information	Provide customized recruitment and job applicant screening, assessment and referral services	Provide employer and industry cluster-driven Occupational Skills Training through Individual Training Accounts with eligible training providers
Assist with the interpretation of labor market information		Develop customized training opportunities to meet specific employer and/or industry cluster needs
Use of one-stop center facilities for recruiting and interviewing job applicants	Consult on job description development and industry trends	Coordinate with employers to develop and implement layoff aversion
Post job vacancies in the state labor exchange system and take and fill job orders	Provide information disability awareness issues	Provide incumbent worker upgrade training through various modalities
Provide information regarding workforce development initiatives and programs	Provide information regarding assistive technology and communication accommodations	Develop, convene, or implement industry or sector partnerships

Employer Services are an integral part of a demand driven system workforce development system. Therefore, these are included as a core component of the MassHire MVCC service delivery system. The MassHire MVCC Business Services Unit offers Employer Services to all employers in the 15 cities and towns of the Merrimack Valley Workforce Development Area. This is done through Industry Sector Teams divided into Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Professional, Technical and Scientific, and Construction and Other. Services provided are listed in the table below.



*(7) Describe how your Board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.*

The MassHire MVWB is in frequent contact with the statewide rapid response staff located in our career center – especially Norca Disla-Shannon and Ken Messina. We receive and monitor the monthly Rapid Response WARN and Rapid Response Employer / Employee Trends Reports.

As Rapid Response reacts to local businesses in transition, including major layoffs and plant closings, we and our career center are ready to assist with pre-layoff and post layoff services and provide any needed additional aid to affected companies and workers. If TRADE certified, the career center stands ready to deliver counselling and assist customers in fulfilling eligibility and selecting training. If appropriate, the MassHire MVWB applies for a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) to develop a plan to address the dislocation event. Currently the Board is the recipient of the Polartec NDWG and sub-recipient of the Disaster Hurricane Response NDWG.

*(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.*

The MassHire MVWB ensures a robust set of workforce investment activities available to youth aged 16-24 in the Lower Merrimack Valley. We understand the critical importance of guiding in-school and out-of-school youth in exploring career pathways and connecting them with educational opportunities to ensure future prosperity for individuals and the region.

As a foundation, the Basic and Individual Career Services described in section 6 above are all available to area youth who are determined eligible for WIOA services. The 14 WIOA Youth Elements are additionally available to youth through MassHire MVCC offerings and /or provided by outside vendors. Wagner Peyser Labor Exchange services are also youth accessible. When youth enter the career center, they progress along the customer flow diagram shown in Attachment 1, with the caveat that placement in post-secondary education is an acceptable outcome in addition to job placement. At least 75% of our annual WIOA Youth funds are expended on Out-Of-School Youth; 20% are utilized for Work Experience. Occupational skills training is available for WIOA ITAs. We've developed a strategy to offer training and work experience through the following programs:

- Youth ITAs with work experience
- Signal Success career / work readiness workshop series coupled with subsidized work
- SkillsBuild Pre-Apprenticeship program (training & work experience)

The MassHire MVWB operates two programs that target court involved youth.

- The Employment Advancement Reentry NOW! (EARN) program will provide at least 95 court involved 18-24-year-old Lawrence residents with wrap around services and occupational skills training to achieve employment or enrollment in higher education. In early FY19 we became the recipient of the US Department of Labor Reentry Project(RP) grant that will support EARN implementation. We are contracted with Lawrence Family Development, Inc.

through their SISU Center, as well as our career center and NAMC, to collaboratively reach EARN goals. Trainings will be supported with funds leveraged from our WIOA, NAMC, and YouthWorks Year-Round grants.

- The Bridging the Opportunities Gap (BOG) program which improves the life chances of Department of Youth Services court involved youth through education, work experience and ongoing support that encourages pro-social behavior and personal advancement. Participants gain job readiness skills, an increased awareness of post-secondary options and the knowledge of careers available to them, as well as the opportunity to identify their areas of personal interest. Youth are also able to take advantage of job shadow, short-term internships and subsidized employment. This is an open enrollment opportunity and only individuals referred by DYS are eligible.

*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.*

All three agencies are WIOA Partners in the MassHire MVWB partner MOU and make referrals to our youth programs. All MassHire MVWB / MVCC youth programs are open and assessible to ALL youth regardless of disability.

*(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.*

In providing workforce investment activities for In-School-Youth, the MassHire MVWB acts as a team with our local high schools and post-secondary education programs to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication. We implement two wide-reaching programs for In-School-Youth each year. They are:

- Connecting Activities - which links schools to careers in area priority industries. It is operated in collaboration with 8 local high schools, including Lawrence High School, Lawrence Learning Center, Methuen HS, Haverhill HS, Newburyport HS, Amesbury HS and Whittier Regional Technical School and Greater Lawrence Technical School. Our school year 2018-2019 goal is to place 510 students in jobs / internships, provide pre-placement job readiness workshops to all 510 students, ensure 180 are STEM placements, and also offer Career Development Activities such as Company Tours, Job Shadow Days and employer panels. Our new 3-year CA Plan calls for increasing STEM placements by 20 each year, increasing parent outreach, and working in closer collaboration with the MassHire MVCC BSU and with Chapter 74 schools and programs.
- YouthWorks Summer – subsidized employment for in school and out of school income eligible youth between the ages of 14 and 21 who live in Lawrence, Haverhill or Methuen. During summer 2018 224 youth participated in YouthWorks. They gained employability skills, exposure to career pathways and the opportunity to identify their areas of interest through a series of workshops. Then all participated in a subsidized work experience with a local non-profit, public or private sector employer, where feedback on performance was gained through the Work

Based Learning Plan. We expect to operate YouthWorks Summer during the next 2 summers during the time period covering this 4-year local annual plan. This program enhances school year internships and job shadow days held by schools and / or our Connecting Activities program.

The MassHire MVWB has also operated the Amp it Up! MassDevelopment funded program to increase awareness of advanced manufacturing careers in our region. We have been especially successful at motivating interest through company tours and short-term teacher externships.

*(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 coordinates WIOA Title I workforce development activities with transportation and other support services in the Lower Merrimack Valley through the guidelines delineated in our Supportive Services and our Needs Based Payments Policies.

Supportive Services are provided with the understanding that customers will not become dependent upon such services, but rather self-sufficient and able to make their own arrangements by the time they complete participation in program(s) accessed through the MassHire MVCC. Such services are provided only to customers who are without the means to pay for such services themselves or through other resources. Therefore, we partner with local WIOA Partners and nonprofit agencies to refer customers for assistance prior to being considered for WIOA Support Services.

A transportation stipend is available to eligible enrolled WIOA Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth (which would nearly always be Out-of-School Youth) who travel in their own vehicles during WIOA training, job search or during the first weeks of a new job if required to obtain or retain employment. The stipend varies according to distance traveled and customers must maintain 80% attendance in training, and document travel. Support service funds also may be used, under specific circumstances, to support driver's education, testing and license fees, vehicle insurance, and repairs. Monthly bus passes are available to customers who don't own a vehicle. To complement our resources, we partner with the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority to connect customers to reduced fare and Special Needs public transportation. Northern Essex Community College offers free bus service from its Lawrence to its Haverhill campus, which is useful since the MassHire MVCC Haverhill office is adjacent to the college. Finally, WIOA customers who are co-enrolled in grant funded training programs may be eligible for transportation support, via local private sector van transport, to make training accessible.

Additional appropriate support services are provisioned to coordinate with WIOA Title I workforce investment activities. This included support for medical services, HiSET costs, uniforms & tools, child care, other testing and certification fees. WIOA customers must follow the Support Services Policy guidelines and prescribed process to receive support service benefits.

*(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?*

In the Lower Merrimack Valley Northern Essex Community College operates the One Stop Career Center, using MassHire MVCC and MassHire Department of Career Services staff. Together they form an integrated structure in providing both Wagner-Peyser services and WIOA Title I services. This integrated structure allows maximum coordination, an avoidance of duplication of services, and well managed service delivery. All services are delivered in compliance with federal, state and local regulations. The MassHire MVWB monitors the career center, and both meet on a regular basis to review system operation and areas for improvement.

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

The MassHire MVCC rarely serves MSFWs, however, staff are trained and prepared to do so as required under WIOA. Spanish and English signage is available in the MassHire MVCC, and persons who identify themselves as a MSFW are provided with information and services regarding their specific needs. Under universal access, all persons receive access to the same services, resources, referrals and services, as do MSFWs. The Career Center Seminar reviews the definition and services available to MSFWs - this provides an orientation for MSFWs to understand what's available. Employment Counselors and all members of the Industry Sector Team address the specific needs of the individual MSFW.

*(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 –*

- a) of how funds awarded under this title will be spent consistent with the requirements of this title;*
- b) any cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities;*
- c) 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;*
- d) 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;*
- e) how the eligible provider will fulfill Career Center partner responsibilities as described in section 121(b)(1)(A), as appropriate;*

- f) *how the eligible provider will provide services in a manner that meets the needs of eligible individuals; and*
- g) *information that addresses the considerations described under section 231(e), as applicable.*

There are a wide variety of strategies used by the MassHire MVWB to coordinate WIOA Title I activities with WIOA Title II adult education and literacy activities. Strategies are implemented by both the board and MassHire MVCC and include:

- Participation on MA DESE Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) FY2019-FY2022 Multi-Year Open and Competitive Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for Adult Education and readiness to participate in upcoming RFP reviews as called on.
  - Participation in program quality reviews / monitoring and selected site visits.
  - Development of effective employer partnerships to place adult education graduates.
  - Support and guidance to local adult education programs related to developing career pathways for Lower Merrimack Valley adult learners.
  - Co-locating adult education staff at the career center to assess customers for adult education services, and referral to adult education providers.
  - Coordinating with adult education providers on service provision to shared customers.
  - Partnering with adult education providers and other community organizations to support non WIOA funded occupational skills training for adult learners.
  - Participation in networks of adult education service providers in Lawrence and Methuen to ensure collaboration.
  - Providing representation of the workforce system at adult education sponsored community events.
- (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.*

*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).*

Please find in Attachment 2 the executed Memorandum of Understanding between required WIOA partners which defines how all local service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in our Career Center delivery system, including efforts to enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities.

The MassHire MVWB intends to build upon our already existing collaboration with partners through maintaining the biannual meeting schedule, and ad hoc or quarterly meeting schedule as described in Section III.B. Partner Meeting Schedule of the MOU. The Assurances found in Section IV. of the MOU also describe how relationships will be maintained and joint service delivery will be continuously improved.

Closer partnerships have been established with the adjacent workforce boards – the MassHire North Shore WB and the MassHire Greater Lowell WB. Linkage has been strengthened through the Regional Labor Market Blueprint development process, where together we also formed much stronger ties with economic development agencies, private sector employers, and institutions of higher education and vocational schools. Shared goals for the 2018-2022 are listed below:

<b>Northeast Regional Labor Market Blueprint</b>		
<b>By 2018, we will...</b>	<b>By 2020, we will...</b>	<b>By 2022, we will...</b>
Increase understanding of the region’s economic development, workforce development, and education services resources through completion of first annual resource inventory focused on education and training opportunities for our priority industries. This will also include a review of existing ESOL programs, particularly those that	Additional awareness of the Northeast Regional Planning Team’s efforts by increasing the distribution list, use of social media, by 50%.  Advise the State in establishing and providing data for a dashboard. Identify key data points and sources and establish regular data reporting times from all partners.	Positive movement in the total job numbers for priority industries.  Increase number of completions in priority occupations by 1% or 100 completions per year.

<p>are focused on our urban areas to ascertain where additional resources should be focused.</p>	<p>Increase number of completions in priority occupations by 1% or 100 completions per year.</p>	
<p>Increase participation in the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Coalition (NAMC) cross-region sector initiative by 100 students and 10 industry participants.</p>	<p>Establish a second industry sector initiative from among the priority industries and targeted training to serve the industry sector</p>	

Robust partnerships exist between the MassHireMVWB, MassHire MVCC and local non-profit service providers, training vendors and educational institutions to carry out grant funded occupational skills trainings. These are governed by MOU’s or are contract based. Participants are frequently co-enrolled in WIOA or receive Wagner Peyser services in addition to grant funded workforce development services. Programs are industry sector specific or targeted on specific special populations. The collaborations formed are subsequently built upon, and serve as the basis to expand the workforce system’s impact. Examples include partnerships formed for the EPA funded Environmental Technical Training Program, WCTF FY’16 funded Skills Training for Transportation and Equipment Operators, WCTF FY’17 funded Reintegration through Construction Pathways, Learn to Earn funded Advanced Manufacturing for Pre-School Parents, DOL funded Reentry Opportunities for Youth, FY ’19 Re-entry Workforce Development Demonstration Program funded RECP Program, and all NAMC funded advanced manufacturing trainings. On-going partnerships are also hallmarks of our youth programs, including Bridging the Opportunity Gap, Connecting Activities, and YouthWorks Summer / YW Year-Round.

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

The MassHire MVWB has been designated by the City of Lawrence to be the Fiscal Agent. Executive Director Abel Vargas is the contact person; his email is 978-682-7099 ext. 7058, and his email address is [avargas@masshiremvwb.org](mailto:avargas@masshiremvwb.org).

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

The competitive process that is and will be used by MassHire MVWB to award sub grants and contracts for WIOA title I activities follows the guidelines set forth in MA Issuance 100 DCS 01.102 as well as our local Procurement Policy updated 11.7.16. Our Board has a single contract for its regional WIOA Title I activities with Northern Essex Community College which was selected through a competitive process to operate MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center. This process must take place at least once every 4 years and be done in accordance with WIOA, and state laws and policies governing One-Stop Operator procurement. A review committee comprised of Board members and local WIOA partners reviews proposals and makes recommendations for selection.

Subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities are

(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 in the local area.

The following local levels of performance were submitted to the MDCS as the MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board proposed levels of performance:

Performance Measure	FY2019 Proposed Local Goal	FY2020 Proposed Local Goal
<b>WIOA ADULT MEASURES</b>		
Employment Q2	86.0%	86.5%
Employment Q4	78.0%	78.0%
Median Earnings Q2	\$5,200	\$5,300
Credential Rate	<b>68.0%</b>	<b>70.0%</b>
<b>WIOA DISLOCATED WORKER MEASURES</b>		
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%
<b>WIOA YOUTH MEASURES</b>		
Employment/Education Q2	80.5%	81.0%
Employment/Education Q4	73.0%	73.5%
Median Earnings Q2		
Credential Rate	70.5%	70.5%

The MassHire MVWB has the following performance goals for our career center:

PROGRAM ACTIVITY	ANNUAL PLAN
<b>Job Seeker Services</b>	
1. Total Job Seekers Served	9,000
a. Job Seekers Unemployed	8,200
b. Persons with Disabilities	380
c. UI Claimants Served	6,000
d. Veterans Served	360



2. Total Entered Employments	2,000
<b>Employer Services</b>	
1.Total Employers Served	1,700
a. New to Career Center	750
b. Repeat	950
2. Employers Receiving Job Seeker Referrals	250
3. Employers Hiring from Referrals	75
4. Employers Receiving Enhanced Services	
<b>WIOA Adults</b>	
1. Total Participants	76
a. Carry-in Participants	22
b. New Participants	54
2. Total Participants in Training (single count)	64
a. Carry-in Participants	22
b. New Participants	42
3. Program Exiters	41
a. Enter Employment	30
i. Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$14.50
b. Negative Exits	11
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	
1. Total Participants	168
a. Carry-in Participants	123
b. New Participants	45
2. Total Participants in Training (single count)	138
a. Carry-in Participants	105
b. New Participants	33
3. Program Exiters	116
a. Enter Employment	81
i. Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$21.00
b. Negative Exits	35
<b>Youth</b>	
1. Total Participants	45
a. Carry-in Participants	14
b. New Participants	31
2. Total Participants in Training (single count)	45
a. Individual Training Account (ITA)	20
b. Work Experience	26
3. Program Exiters	23
a. Enter Employment	13

b. Average Hourly Wage at Placement	
c. Entered Post-Secondary/Advanced Trng (double count possible)	3
d. Negative Exits	7

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

a) *What trainings are applicable to Board members?*

All members that join the board are provided with a full orientation on matters relating to the board. They include a review of all funding sources, including WIOA and the corresponding activity. Members are informed of their role on how they can positively affect the boards mission and vision. The Executive Director will also plan regular reminders to the entire board.

b) *How do business Board members contribute to workforce development in your region?*

Board members are expected to be active participants in the collective effort to carry out the mission and vision of the board. More specifically members:

- o Actively participate in meetings
- o Serve on committee's when called upon
- o Assist in connecting MVWB staff with industry colleagues
- o Develop knowledge on workforce system programs and how it applies to them and others in their industry
- o Champion the boards programs and initiatives
- o Help the boards role as a convener

c) *How does your Board support the business services in the career centers?*

Many of the board members have been customers of the career center at one point while serving as a board member giving them good perspective of how the system works. The board also regularly interacts with career center staff at our quarterly board meetings. A new initiative that we plan to roll out is asking board members to facilitate workshops for the Career Centers Business Service Unit. This will allow staff to better understand business needs.

d) *To what extent does inter-/intra-Board collaboration result in positive outcomes for job-seekers and businesses?*

All of the noted activities support the broader workforce system in the Merrimack Valley. These activities help the system deliver the best possible service to both customers and businesses.

(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.*

Training services as outlined in WIOA section 134 are offered in the Lower Merrimack Valley workforce investment area through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Our MassHire MVCC provides the career services to Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth customers that determine eligibility for WIOA training. WIOA training is offered exclusively through ITAs, not through contracts for training services, with the exception of a portion of Youth funding utilized for Work Experience (also disbursed on an individual basis). The career center follows the MassHire MVWB ITA Policy and Procedures to administer ITA trainings. Training providers must be on the MA Eligible Training Provider List and courses must be approved by the MVWB to be available to customers in our region.

Informed customer choice is ensured in the selection of training programs because of the procedures outlined in our ITA Policy. Customers must be interviewed, evaluated or assessed, and then receive career planning services so they have the breadth of knowledge necessary to select trainings linked to employment opportunities in our area or further if they are willing to commute or relocate. In addition, we have customers visit training providers to select which is most appropriate for them. MassHire MVWB also continues to expand training offerings to give customers more choices. The Greater Lawrence Technical School has recently had new courses approved for ITAs, and Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School is in the process of doing so.

*(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*

On-the-Job training is one of the services offered to employers by the Business Services Unit of the MassHire MVCC. Standard Operating Procedures outline the strategy and service plan for utilizing OJT in our region, with the local MassHire MVWB OJT Policy, and MDCS Issuance 100 DCS 07.101.1 serving as primary reference for implementation. A Business Service Representative has recently been hired by the career center with extensive experience in OJT, so we anticipate expanding our use of OJTs with area businesses in the near future.

MassHire DCS issuance DCS 13.110 provides guidance for OJT in Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs and issuance 100 DCS 07.100.1 provides the same for OJT through the Workforce Training Fund Program. We have an executed master agreement with the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board to serve as partners on the statewide Workforce Training Fund – On-the-Job Training program.

*b) Apprenticeship*

The MassHireMVWB is working in collaboration with the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC) on apprenticeships in our region; the focus is on advanced manufacturing

apprenticeships. We anticipate building on this success to develop apprenticeships in other industry sectors.

NAMC is spearheading the Massachusetts Apprentice Initiative for the manufacturing sector both in our region and all across the Commonwealth. Under this program NAMC help manufacturing companies throughout the state develop Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Programs. RAs are intended to develop a new generation of skilled manufacturing employees within a cross section of job categories that are common across a number of advanced manufacturers in the region. The program targets full time employees (either incumbent or specifically hired for the RA) and requires a combination of on-the-job training delivered during work hours, and outside Related Technical Instruction (RTI). Successful completion of a RA program results in a certification that is recognized throughout the state and country. We can help develop RAs that are unique to each company's needs.

One of our most innovative approaches is to encourage and train Workforce Boards to become Apprenticeship Sponsors. This transfers much of the administrative burden from the companies to the Workforce Board. Beyond this, each Workforce Board and Career Center in the NAMC region contributes to the project through outreach to companies and potential employees, monitoring of each RA's progress, and development of appropriate RTI programs at regional educational partners.

#### *c) Incumbent Worker Training*

Customized Incumbent worker training is available in our region through Workforce Training Fund Program grants to employers. Our NAMC partnership has also yield trainings for incumbent workers in the advanced manufacturing sector. We also have reviewed WIOA regulations as regards incumbent worker training and are aware that we can use up to 20% of our adult and dislocated worker allocations to provide for the cost of providing such training. This is a strategy which we have not yet deployed in our WIOA Annual Plan but will consider in the next planning cycle.

#### *d) Work Experiences (paid or unpaid)*

Work experience is available in our region through our youth programs. The MassHire MVWB WIOA Youth strategy features work experience, since it's mandated that 20% of our local area WIOA Youth funds are utilized on this work-based training model. Therefore, we offer the following options in our WIOA Youth program that is operated by the career center, and which focuses on Out-of-School Youth:

1. Individual Training Account occupational skills training combined with subsidized work experience
2. Participation in pre-apprenticeship work experience
3. Job readiness / job seeking skills workshops coupled with subsidized work

Further, our Connecting Activities program provides internships and co-op experiences at a variety of area high school and vocational technical schools; Youth Works Summer is also well known as a valuable work experience opportunity that is available each year. The MassHire MVWB is also just initiating a DOL funded reentry program for court involved youth that includes a subsidized work experience component.

- 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. These jobs are designed to enable an individual to establish a work history, demonstrate work success in an employee-employer relationship, and develop the skills that lead to unsubsidized employment).*

Transitional jobs are not currently included in the MassHire MVWB strategy and service plan for utilization of work-based training models.

- f) *Online remediation tools (such as WorkKeys Curriculum) for OJT/apprenticeship screening in support of cultivating and demonstrating workplace competencies.*
  - 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 MassHireMVWB uses the Career Ready 101 tool as a remediation tool to cultivate and demonstrate workplace competencies.

- (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;*

The Merrimack Valley Workforce board will make the plan available for a 21-day review for public comment between the dates of January 14, 2019 until February 03, 2019. In addition to posting the plan on the front page of our website, the plan will also be sent to email distribution lists, board members (including all committees, agency partners, and local elected and appointed officials.

- 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;*

The 4-Year Annual Plan will be posted and open for comment for a full 21 days.

- c). *include with the local plan submitted to the Governor any such comments that represent disagreement with the plan.*

Any disagreements of the draft plan will be included in the final version submitted to the Governor.

- (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.*

At the point of intake, all individuals desiring service from the career center, including WIOA partner shared customers, currently complete a membership form which is data-entered by staff into MOSES. Case management and other services are entered into MOSES by counselors and tracked through this system. WIOA partner program shared customers are identified through use of career center specific buttons (MRC, MCB, DTA, SCSEP, etc.). The career center intends to move toward use of technology that will enable individuals to enter membership information at intake through use of tablets.

- (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-wioastate-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).*

MVWB broadly applies the Policy set forth by the State for priority of service. More specifically, the region looks to prioritize veterans, low income individuals, and persons with disabilities.

- (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 (Attachment C) 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*

*The Local Board may establish a process that also gives priority to other individuals eligible to receive such services outside the groups given priority under WIOA, provided that it is consistent with the priority of service for Veterans. Please note the*

*local policy and process must be consistent with WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and § 680.600 in the absence of a priority of service policy.*

As noted, the region follows the state policy on setting priority of services for all training and career services.

**(c) Your local plan must include any additional information required by the Governor.**

No additional information has been required at this time.

**(d) Your 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 regional responsibility, as permitted by § 679.540(b):**

*The Governor may issue regional planning guidance that allows Local Boards and chief elected officials in a planning region to address any local plan requirements through the regional plan where there is a shared regional responsibility. Incorporate anything from your Regional Plan content as appropriate.*

When relevant, information referencing the Regional Blueprint is included throughout the document.

**(e) Comments submitted during the public comment period that represent disagreement with the plan are required to be included with your local plan.**

No comments submitted.