



MERRIMACK VALLEY
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

Strategic Plan 2011-2016

Revised October 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Overview	1
MVWIB 2011-2016 Strategic Plan Principles	5
Dislocated and ‘Adult’ Workers Principle 1	5
Dislocated and ‘Adult’ Workers Principle 2	10
Dislocated and ‘Adult’ Workers Principle 3	12
Dislocated and ‘Adult’ Worker Principal 4	13
Dislocated and ‘Adult’ Worker Principle 5	14
Youth Principle 1	14
Youth Principle 2	20
Youth Principle 3	21
Partner Relations Principle 1	23
Partner Relations Principle 2	24
Strategic Priority: Capacity Building	27
Strategic Priority: Addressing the Skills Gap	27
Strategic Priority: Enhancing the Youth Pipeline	28
Activities, Timeframe, Benchmarks/Indicators	28
Merrimack Valley WIB Strategic Plan Evaluation Method	37

Overview

During the past three years, the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) responded to cross-WIB region business and industry workforce needs by actively participating in the following:

- A State Energy Sector Program (SESP) with the Greater Lowell and North Shore WIBs, where the MVWIB itself job placed about thirty new clean energy workers and helped upgrade the skills of thirty incumbent workers. This activity is also part of the MVWIB High Performing WIB three workforce development focus areas.
- A Regional Innovation Grant (RIG) with the Greater Lowell and New Hampshire WIBs where the current MVWIB Deputy Director wrote the Plan and Final Report.
- The Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative (NAMC), with the Greater Lowell, Metro North and North Shore WIBs as well three Community Colleges and many Career Centers and Vocational High Schools. It is still very much a work in progress but also one of our focus areas.
- MVWIB is an active participant in the Mass Workforce Board Association which regularly addresses cross-WIB employer issues

MVWIB has also budgeted considerable Valley Works Career Center (VWCC) IT staff time to help develop new, Statewide IT systems.

Our Board Chairman, Joseph Bevilacqua, heads one of the largest and most active Chambers of Commerce in Massachusetts and it crosses several WIB regions. He and Governor Patrick are Co-Chairmen of the MA Workforce Investment Board. He, other Board members and the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board Executive Director are in constant contact with area business people and we always try to be responsive to their needs.

Mr. Bevilacqua is also chairman of the Massachusetts Economic Development Council and keeps the MVWIB and staff informed of MA economic development strategies. This document includes charts and document citations that demonstrate the MVWIB's ability to analyze data relevant to both the workforce and economic development systems.

MVWIB staff members are on the board of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) and the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council (MVEDC). We have participated in the development of the following goals for at least the last three years. Their current goals are as follows:

MVPC Economic Development Goals:

- *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
- *Business Incentives and Districts
- *Data/Technical Assistance
- *Brownfields Abatement
- *Small Business Loan Fund

MVEDC Goals:

- *I-93 Tri-Town Interstate Completion
- * Reinforcing industry clusters as economic drivers
- * Strengthening the Partners for Progress

The MVEDC is currently headed by David Tibbets, former MA Secretary of Housing and Economic Development. The MVWIB was one of the Board members who voted to select him as head of MVEDC. Since then, we have supported MVEDC organizational goals related to event and project planning via the Merrimack Valley Partners for Progress. The Partners bring together Northern Essex Community College, Middlesex Community College, area Chambers of Commerce as well as the Greater Lowell Workforce Investment Board and MVWIB to work together on more integrated and aligned services to area employers. We have provided LMI information that helped shape its employer focus and also prevented the Partners from entering into a bank worker trainee program with Goldman Sachs because we knew that area small banks thought that Goldman's reputation was tarnished by the 2008 economic meltdown.

The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) is currently headed by Dennis DiZoglio, a former mayor of the City of Methuen, which abuts Lawrence. We are a member of their leadership team and shared the LMI information which helped shape their September 2012 Clean Energy Action Plan and their 2013 MV Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The MVWIB Executive Director was one of three members on the Haverhill Garage Development Plan which reinforced MVPC's Mill Space refurbishment goals. At a March 23, 2013 quarterly board meeting, the MVWIB Executive Director suggested that MVPC board prioritize its many projects in anticipation of ongoing sequester cuts and that is a current work in progress. Deputy Director Barbara Zeimet or the Executive Director attended virtually all of MVPCs CEDS meetings and directly influenced outcomes. As a result of those efforts MVWPC and MVWIB are now working together to promote local hiring for municipal clean energy updates. A copy of the draft document is in the attachments.

The MVEDC and MVWP both have regions that include communities outside of our Workforce Investment Area (WIA). The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) serves fifteen cities and towns in the Northeast section of Massachusetts sometimes known as the Lower Merrimack Valley. Its cities and towns consist of: Andover, Amesbury, Boxford, Groveland, Georgetown, Haverhill, Lawrence, Methuen, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, North Andover, Rowley, Salisbury, and West Newbury. The region has an especially diverse population with large cultural, educational and economic differences amongst its constituent communities. Most of our WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth funds serve low income people and most of them reside in the cities of Lawrence, Haverhill and Methuen

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board charters and oversees the ValleyWorks Career Center, which has two locations, one in Lawrence and one in Haverhill. ValleyWorks staff consist of City of Lawrence Department of Training and Development employees and State employees from the Commonwealth's Department of Career Services. ValleyWorks has historically been one of the most visited centers in the State with most on-site Lawrence customers generally being low-income minorities while those visiting the Haverhill site being a mix of low-income and middle class white and minority customers. From 2011 to 2013, about 15,000 individuals per year became ValleyWorks member and about six hundred employers were annually served. The Centers regularly achieved or exceeded its planned performance levels. Apart from a basic dashboard, this package contains several examples of how MVWIB staff keep the Board informed of various situations and of how VWCC and MVWIB staff perform in dealing with them.

In addition to the oversight of the local Career Center, the MVWIB brings additional resources and oversight capacity to this region's training vendors. We have historically worked with about fifty individual vendors per year using WIA and non-WIA funds. Our non-WIA funding generally comes from CommCorp, other State and Federal departments and from the private sector. We also work

with other regions and organizations that have different sets of funding streams and vendors which we subcontract using shared funds.

The MVWIB develops joint strategies and works with vendors and public and private partners to assist the following specific types of individuals, most of whom are low-income, and area businesses and industry types, most of which have a noticeable area presence:

- limited-English speakers
- immigrants and refugees
- ethnic or racial minorities
- veterans
- the physically or mentally disabled
- adult and youth ex-offenders
- high school graduates and drop-outs
- the unemployed or underemployed
- hospitals and medical clinics
- long-term care facilities
- advanced manufacturers, many of which are defense contractors
- lead and asbestos abatement companies¹
- companies in need of specialized IT
- trucking and transportation companies
- food processing/manufacturers
- clean energy companies

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) began to develop its last Strategic Plan in September of 2008. That effort responded to the State's High Performing Workforce Investment Board (HPWIB) initiative. (In October 2010, MVWIB received HPWIB certification, in part due to the quality of its Strategic Plan.)

Every effort was made to ensure that we received information from both workforce stakeholders and entities involved in economic development. Stated perspectives reflect the priorities and needs of critical employment sectors in the region, and are aligned with local economic development efforts. They also embrace the three comprehensive workforce priorities outlined by the Governor:

- ◆ Build the capacity of the workforce system
- ◆ Address the regions skill gaps in key industries
- ◆ Enhance the youth pipeline to employment

1] Health Care, 2] Advanced Manufacturing and 3]Green/Life Sciences were chosen as this region's primary workforce development foci. Massachusetts Job Vacancy Survey indicated that the healthcare field had the most numerous and frequent vacancies. The majority of this region's manufacturing sector jobs required an Associate's Degree or higher. Green jobs were hard to track and quantify because their definitions were flexible and they may occur in any type of business or industry. Since then, we've found that clean energy and site abatement jobs are more easily defined..

At the time the plan and the HPW paperwork were started, 4.8% of Merrimack Valley WIA residents were unemployed (December 2007). At the time of initial plan development, members used the Massachusetts Job Vacancy Survey² which was based on fourth quarter of 2007 employment numbers. 7700 employers across the Commonwealth responded to the 2007 survey. It indicated that just 8% of employers thought they would be cutting jobs at their businesses while 30% expected to increase hiring and 53% expected to keep their employment levels about the same.

¹ BLS data indicates that the City of Lawrence has more abatement workers per capita than any other municipality in the United States

² Massachusetts Job Vacancy Survey, Massachusetts Office of Workforce Development, 4th Quarter 2007.

Unfortunately, that did not happen. Instead, virtually all but high-end scientific and professional services laid-off workers. At the time our strategic plan was developed, we did not know that the MVWIA would have nearly twice as much unemployment for at least the next six years. Nor did we know that our annual WIA funding would drop by over 30% in three years (counting ARRA funds the drop would be greater).

At the time, Board, employer partner, and staff discussions focused on ensuring that employers in critical Merrimack Valley employment sectors would have sufficient numbers of prepared workers to fill anticipated vacancies. We continue to consider this a key goal but we now temper it with the realization that we must help as many residents find good jobs wherever they can using a lot less workforce development money. The following indicates our region's, and most of our principle cities' above average underemployment rates in FY2013.

	MA	National	LMVWIA	Lawrence	Haverhill	Methuen
July	6.6	8.3	7.8	13.9	6.9	8.8
August	6.4	8.1	7.9	14.8	7.0	8.8
September	6.4	7.8	7.9	14.6	7.1	8.6
October	6.2	7.9	7.6	13.9	6.7	8.2
November	6.1	7.7	6.4	13.9	6.8	7.9
December	6.5	7.8	7.8	14.1	7.1	8.6
January	7.4	7.9	8.4	15.1	7.6	8.8
February	6.8	7.7	7.9	14.2	7.0	8.6
March	6.8	7.6	8.1	15.1	7.3	8.5
April	6.3	7.5	8.1	15.0	7.2	8.5
May	6.8	7.6	7.9	14.7	6.7	8.3
June	7.4	7.6	8.6	15.7	7.3	9.1

As will later be noted, the UI rate does not fully capture many area residents' difficult situation. Many more than the State average are disconnected from the labor force and they do not register in UI numbers.

MVWIB plans have been more tentative since the great recession. The economic outlook improves then falters, usually because of world events, the growing national debt, and the political arguments on how to deal with it. The most recent unemployment data as of this writing (7/2013) has Merrimack Valley WIA unemployment increasing year-on-year to 8.5%, while the Massachusetts rate also increased year- on-year to 7.2%)³.

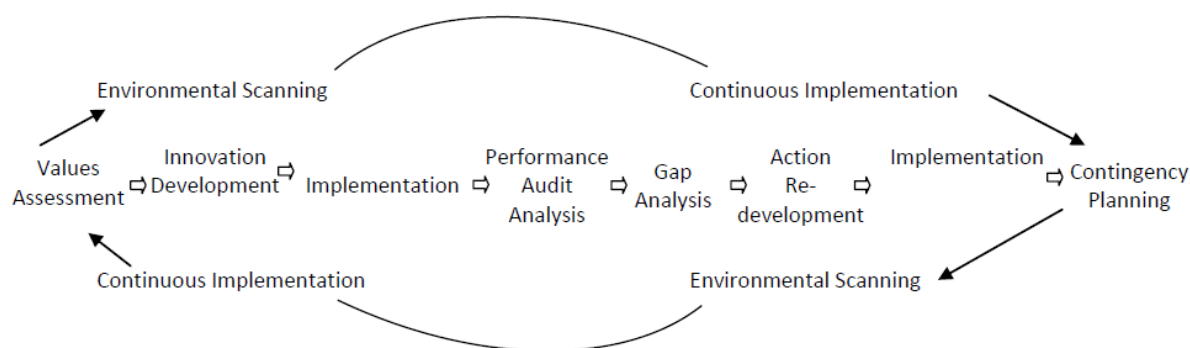
We now consider the Merrimack Valley workforce system's first priority to be ensuring that the immediate needs of unemployed individuals are met as best possible with reduced funding in an era of unclear global, national, political and regional developments. We focus much of our planning on how to deal with current and future cuts and aim to do our best to attain the performance goals annually provided to the Division of Career Services (DCS).

Due to UI On-line's belated and imperfect arrival, our short-term plan also consist of ongoing adjustments to the new realities occasioned by it. In this context we are conducting a thoughtful and thorough analysis of the regions' workforce and employment needs to ensure that diminishing dollars are most effectively spent in facilitating Merrimack Valley residents access to the best jobs they qualify for. But we also continue to strive to support businesses that are creating the products and services that meet and will meet future consumer demands. As majority board members, they were this plan's the primary shapers.

³ Massachusetts Unemployment Trends for Merrimack Valley Service Delivery Area July 2013

We use currently available media news, labor market information, workforce demographics, industry projections and input from employers in key industries to adjust our short- and long-term strategic plan as needed in a quickly changing economic and political landscape. Board, partners and staff also discuss various workforce development funding scenarios and how to react to them appropriately at various staffing and operational levels.

The below roughly illustrates how we use information.



Future workforce development funding levels, how the nation handles the growing deficit, the effective reform of K-12 and college education systems, how well the U.S. competes and leads the global economy, and the long-term impact of UI on-line are all very uncertain. To meet current national, State and regional challenges, the board has voted to create various signposts going forward. Our last strategic plan version built on past success and lessons learned through a number of key initiatives and collaborations. But the past now seems less useful for concrete future planning. To maintain the flexibility current times seem to demand, MVWIB's newly compiled and updated 2011-2016 Strategic Plan builds on past goals while offering new guiding principles to shape our reactions to changing events.

Our strategic plan is roughly organized on the basis of the Strategic Principles recently approved by MVWIB through the year 2016⁴. After elaborating on different aspects of those principals, we list goals, activities, and benchmarks designed to measure and evaluate the impact of the Strategic Plan over its remaining three years.

MVWIB 2011-2016 Strategic Plan Principles

Dislocated and 'Adult' Workers Principle 1. *Continue to focus our regional workforce development job pipeline on advanced manufacturing, entry to low and mid-level health care, green technology and other emerging industries as stated in our High Performing WIB document but do not lessen support to other areas that have job openings and good wages.*

Despite the post-2008 economic slowdown, this region's advance manufacturing companies continue to state that they need skilled machinists and entry level workers to replace aging machinists on the point of retirement and to allow younger in-house personnel to upgrade so that they can fill more senior positions. But formula WIA money has been steadily reduced over the past three years. This region cannot sustain adequate staffing with just WIA formula funds. It has qualified for various National Emergency Grants (NEGs) to provide concentrated services for dislocated workers

⁴ MVWIB October 10, 2013 Annual Meeting minutes featuring Secretary Goldstein as principle speaker

affected by large closings or downsizings in various employment sectors that may not be in advanced manufacturing or our two other stated focus areas.

Without NEG support, all of our VWCC unemployed or incumbent worker services, and all of our employer services would suffer from a cumulative WIA formula funding cut of over 30% from FY 2011 to FY 2014. We cannot concentrate on just advanced manufacturing, entry to low and mid-level health care and green technology but instead need to go to the areas where NEG grants indicate there is most need and where significant NEG financial support is provided.

It may also not be best to direct an inordinate number of unemployed and underemployed customers to those three sectors because each of them is extraordinarily dependent on Federal and State government decisions which may overturned more suddenly than is normally the case with market forces. As far as WIA ITAs go, we plan to instead treat our focus areas as we treat any other business sectors – if LMI information indicates that there are immediate or soon-to-be job offerings, we inform appropriate customers of the same and let them choose.

It is difficult to gauge future regional and Massachusetts advanced manufacturing job numbers. There is an undoubted need to replace aging machinists with younger ones and there may be tens of thousands of manufacturing job openings occurring in a few years. But Massachusetts is expensive compared to other parts of the country and the world. Although fracking may lower the cost of manufacturing in America, New York and New England have little of it. Fracking is also likely to lower worldwide energy costs to the advantage of other manufacturing centers. Robotic technology also seems to be reducing the number of employees needed to manufacture goods.

But there are few obvious MVWIA options to new manufacturing growth and MVWIB strives to be involved in efforts to sustain it. So the MVWIB is an active member of the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC) which replaced the Northeastern Massachusetts Customized Manufacturing Partnership (NMCMP). NAMC has had a rough beginning, in part because the partnership now includes another WIB along with the three that previously formed NMCMP, and also three Community Colleges and at least five vocational school - while again working with just a \$500,000 two year grant.

The following 2012-2014 Job projections were extrapolated from mass.gov and provided to the Board and staff. It indicates that MVWIA's health care employment openings are expected to grow while manufacturing stays flat.

Short Term Industry Projections for Lower Merrimack

The short term employment projections use historical and current industry employment to project how employment will change

CS	Industry Title	Employment		Change	
		2012	2014	Net	Percent
000	Total All Industries	146,792	151,099	4,307	2.9 %
000	Health Care and Social Assistance	22,153	23,058	905	4.1 %
000	Ambulatory Health Care Services	8,313	8,804	491	5.9 %
000	Hospitals	4,987	5,059	72	1.4 %
000	Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	5,316	5,467	151	2.8 %
000	Social Assistance	3,537	3,728	191	5.4 %
000	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	241	248	7	2.9 %
000	Crop Production	151	153	2	1.3 %
000	Construction	4,831	5,234	403	8.3 %
000	Construction of Buildings	725	757	32	4.4 %
000	Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	775	879	104	13.4 %
000	Specialty Trade Contractors	3,331	3,598	267	8.0 %
000	Manufacturing	25,070	24,115	-955	-3.8 %
000	Food Manufacturing	2,738	2,783	45	1.6 %
000	Paper Manufacturing	276	257	-19	-6.9 %
000	Printing and Related Support Activities	928	848	-80	-8.6 %
000	Chemical Manufacturing	1,512	1,525	13	0.9 %
000	Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	537	487	-50	-9.3 %
000	Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	139	132	-7	-5.0 %
000	Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	2,112	2,001	-111	-5.3 %
000	Machinery Manufacturing	962	933	-29	-3.0 %
000	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	5,307	5,007	-300	-5.7 %
000	Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing	1,255	1,164	-91	-7.3 %
000	Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	297	272	-25	-8.4 %
000	Miscellaneous Manufacturing	1,885	1,780	-105	-5.6 %

Health care provides our regional workforce development system its largest number of entry- and mid-level job openings. But though recent Federal changes in our health care system increases the number of people insured, it is also intended to contain costs. Area health care employers believe that we have already reached the high water mark in health care employment⁵. Even if this perception is inaccurate, it and the new health care system's current lack of clarity may lower historical health care worker hire rates from now till 2016.

Many of the health care providers we are in touch with (below is a partial chart of those in Haverhill) are hesitant to increase hiring until the impact of the new national health care reform act are better known.

Cardinal Associates of Hazelhill	Kyrille Tapscott DMD	Dentist	978-621-8427	62 Broad Street	Suite 100	Hazelhill
Central Wheelchair & Van Transportation	Yury Zoluf	Owner	978-374-3480	31 Court St.		Hazelhill
Children's Health Care Inc.	Marianne Throton NPBT	Office Manager	978-656-1122	2 Water Street, Suite 3		Hazelhill
City of Hazelhill	John J. Goff	City Manager	978-621-7666	140 Lincoln Avenue		Hazelhill
Frank Orth III Family Practice	Karen Carter	Office Manager	978-656-6755	14 North Main Street		Hazelhill
General Medical Equipment & Services, Inc.	Sharon Fowler	General Manager	978-621-2290	65 Acero Road, Suite K		Hazelhill
Lab USA, Inc.	Mohammad Afzali	President	978-656-0133	108 Elm Mainmark Street		Hazelhill
Northwest Dental Care	Bobbay Brynton	Business Admin.	978-621-7131	483 Main Street		Hazelhill
Northwest Dermatology Associates	Jeremy P. Finkle	President	978-674-0770	62 Broad Street, Suite 301		Hazelhill
Northwest Veterinary Services	Kevin D. Finkle	Assoc. Dir.	978-674-0770	62 Broad Street, Suite 301		Hazelhill
Water Street Family Dental PC	Katina Gomez	HR	978-621-1999	2 Water Street		Hazelhill
West System of Adult Hearing	Chenar	Owner	978-621-6163	62 Broad Street, Suite 200		Hazelhill
Whittier Medical Associates	Eileen Walsh	Office Manager	978-621-8102	62 Broad Street, Suite 200		Hazelhill
Wolfe Dental, M.D.	Al D.	Dr.	978-621-3510	233 North Main Street		Hazelhill
Wolfe Dental, M.D.	Tish Horigan - no longer	Director/Owner	978-621-8190	140 Lincoln Avenue		Hazelhill
Wright Rehab Hospital	Allen Sanderson	Supervisor	978-372-8000	114 Ward Hill Ext.		Hazelhill
Yung & Associates	John R. Yung	Dir. of Nursing	978-372-5697	25 Broad Street		Hazelhill
Young House Homecare, LLC	Eric Sudol	VP	978-373-1203	112 Peeman St. Ext.		Hazelhill
Zimmer Hospice	Debra Kane	Director	978-373-0413	25 Broad Street, Suite 601		Hazelhill
Zimmer Hospice	Beth Bialis	Administrator	978-373-1747	126 Monument Square		Hazelhill
Zimmer Hospice				100 Elm Street		Hazelhill
Zimmer Hospice	Christie Grandmaison	Mgr.	978-656-1060	254 Amesbury Rd.		Hazelhill
Zimmer Hospice	R. Wagner	Director	978-652-4720	90 Broad Street		Hazelhill
Zimmer Hospice/Vingate at Hazelhill	Julie Foster 6/30/12	Human Resources	978-372-7700	190 North Avenue		Hazelhill
Zimmer House Inc.	Alina Smith	Office Supervisor	978-372-1081	87 Shattuck Street		Hazelhill
Zimmer House Inc.	Jan Regional	Regional Director	978-621-1630	1 Village Way		Hazelhill
Zimmer Health Group	Richard Anthony	Accounting Mgr.	978-372-1110	35 Acero Road		Hazelhill
Zimmer House Inc.	Donna	Front desk	978-621-9000	150 North Main Street		Hazelhill
Zimmer House Inc.	Richard Anthony	Accounting Mgr.	978-372-1111	689 Main Street		Hazelhill
Zimmer House Inc.	Donna	Front desk	978-621-0707	150 North Main Street		Hazelhill

MVWIB is consequently seeking non-WIA funds in partnership with specific companies in order to bolster this area's entry-level health service related training. Hospitals and family health centers seem to have enough capacity to develop funding and undertake in-house training. They are independently approaching CommCorp for Massachusetts Health Care funding. MVWIB therefore plans to team with smaller entities that have limited grant writing and training capacity. We currently have a planning proposal in to CommCorp to help train entry-level and incumbent workers at long-term care facilities. They will usually be trained for the higher paying jobs on the list left and below. Those jobs are most often filled by low-income people whose first language is not English. They form this region's largest WIA-funding eligible group.

		# employed in US	U.S Higher Hrly Wage	Yrly Wage	U.S Lower Hrly Wage
1	Position fm US BLS 2012				
2	Personal care aides	985,230	10.01	20,830	9.57
3	Home health aides	839,930	10.49	21,830	10.01
4	Personal care and service occupations	3,810,750	11.80	24,550	10.02
5	Pharmacy aides	42,600	11.28	23,460	10.51
6	Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides	2,391,750	11.69	24,320	11.07
7	Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides	2,391,750	11.69	24,320	11.07
8	Ambulance drivers and attendants, except	18,540	11.97	24,900	11.27
9	Physical therapist aides	48,700	12.22	25,410	11.48
10	Orderlies	53,920	12.35	25,700	11.53
11	Nursing assistants	1,420,020	12.32	25,620	11.74
12	Psychiatric aides	77,880	12.83	26,680	11.82
13	Healthcare support occupations	3,915,460	13.36	27,780	12.28
14	Dietetic technicians	24,660	13.79	28,680	12.62
15	Occupational therapy aides	7,950	14.36	29,870	12.91
16	Ophthalmic laboratory technicians	29,380	14.35	29,850	13.74
17	Pharmacy technicians	353,340	14.63	30,430	14.1
18	Medical assistants	553,140	14.69	30,550	14.12
19	Phlebotomists	100,380	14.86	30,910	14.29
20	Psychiatric technicians	67,760	15.93	33,140	14.45
21	Veterinary technologists and technicians	83,350	15.13	31,470	14.56
22	Medical equipment preparers	50,230	15.51	32,260	14.82

Employment by education by on-the-job training category, 2010 and projected 2020

Employment by education by on-the-job training category, 2010 and projected 2020

Education, work experience, and on-the-job training	Employment				Change		Total job openings due to growth and replacement needs, 2010-20	
	Number		Percent distribution				Number	% Distribution
	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010-20	%		
Total, all occupations	143,068.20	163,537.00	100	100	20,468.80	14.3	54,787.40	100
Doctoral or professional degree	4,409.70	5,286.30	3.1	3.2	876.6	19.9	1,701.80	3.1
Internship/residency	1,013.90	1,250.70	0.7	0.8	236.8	23.4	471	0.9
Apprenticeship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Long-term on-the-job training	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Moderate-term on-the-job training	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short-term on-the-job training	34	37.2	0	0	3.1	9.2	9.6	0
None	3,361.80	3,998.40	2.3	2.4	636.6	18.9	1,221.20	2.2
Master's degree	1,986.00	2,417.20	1.4	1.5	431.2	21.7	903.9	1.6
Internship/residency	176	238.4	0.1	0.1	62.4	35.5	102.1	0.2

⁵ MVI B 4/26/2011 Quarterly Meeting at Holy Family Hospital

As seen above, among many other sources, the MVWIB uses Bureau of Labor Statistics to help keep track of current health care employment trends, wages, and projected educated and training needs. The chart indicates that ongoing and numerous entry-level hiring is expected.

The MVWIB allocates more WIA funding to healthcare worker training than to any other employment sector. Although we sometimes train people for mid-level health job credentials, many of those are expensive and take more than one year to complete. Current funding levels advise against them and we instead support less expensive and briefer entry-level health care training. But we are concerned that hiring rates may slow in all health sectors and consequently look for increased, health care targeted funding in close cooperation with area employers. That is what we are currently doing with long-term care facilities and what we plan to do with other entities as opportunity presents.

The following is another recent LMVWIA job projection on mass.gov. Regardless of the expected silver tsunami, manufacturing is way down on the list of expected job openings and not seen in the below copy of an Excel spreadsheet until much further down the list.

1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
2	Most job openings for Lower Merrimack Valley WIA - Long Term									
3	SOC									
4	Code	Title	2010 Employment	2020 Employment	Change Level	Change Percent	Annual Average Openings Total	Annual Average Openings Growth	Annual Average Openings Replacements	Education Level
5	291111	Registered Nurses	3,740	5,000	1,260	33.69%	194	126	68	Associate's degree
6	999021	Personal Care Aides	1,384	2,217	833	60.19%	94	83	11	Less than high school
7	311012	Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	1,540	1,994	454	29.48%	65	45	20	Postsecondary non-degree award
8	252021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	1,631	2,082	451	27.65%	81	45	36	Bachelor's degree
9	414012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	1,292	1,734	442	34.21%	74	44	30	High school diploma or equivalent
10	436013	Medical Secretaries	1,210	1,644	434	35.87%	59	43	16	High school diploma or equivalent
11	259041	Teacher Assistants	1,808	2,227	419	23.17%	83	42	41	High school diploma or equivalent
12	434051	Customer Service Representatives	1,571	1,987	416	26.46%	87	42	45	High school diploma or equivalent
13	512092	Team Assemblers	1,798	2,214	416	23.14%	78	42	36	High school diploma or equivalent
14	439061	Office Clerks, General	2,086	2,499	413	19.80%	78	41	37	High school diploma or equivalent
15	433031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	2,279	2,667	388	17.03%	64	39	25	High school diploma or equivalent
16	131161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	606	967	361	59.57%	52	36	16	Bachelor's degree
17	151132	Software Developers, Applications	1,034	1,388	354	34.24%	46	35	11	Bachelor's degree
18	353021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	2,054	2,401	347	16.89%	92	35	57	Less than high school
19	151133	Software Developers, Systems Software	1,069	1,413	344	32.18%	45	34	11	Bachelor's degree
20	353031	Waiters and Waitresses	2,043	2,379	336	16.45%	136	34	102	Less than high school
21	211093	Social and Human Service Assistants	871	1,193	322	36.97%	51	32	19	High school diploma or equivalent
22	431011	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	1,328	1,643	315	23.72%	68	32	36	High school diploma or equivalent
23	373011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	1,141	1,443	302	26.47%	50	30	20	Less than high school
24	292061	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	1,036	1,324	288	27.80%	57	29	28	Postsecondary non-degree award
25	399011	Childcare Workers	1,207	1,486	279	23.12%	66	28	38	High school diploma or equivalent
26	395012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, and Cosmetologists	743	1,022	279	37.55%	42	28	14	Postsecondary non-degree award
27	131111	Management Analysts	715	967	252	35.24%	37	25	12	Bachelor's degree
28	436014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	1,465	1,692	227	15.49%	43	23	20	High school diploma or equivalent
29	172112	Industrial Engineers	934	1,159	225	24.09%	42	22	20	Bachelor's degree
30	151121	Computer Systems Analysts	635	858	223	35.12%	34	22	12	Bachelor's degree

MVWIB will consequently take the same approach to manufacturing jobs as it has with health care sector jobs – it will team up with specific area employers to seek public and private funds for customized manufacturing training. We have done so as a founding member of the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative (NAMC). NAMC, though currently experiencing a very rough start, should ultimately help this area's unemployed and underemployed people join with area manufacturing employers to successfully compete in the global marketplace.

Before teaming up with employers for larger than average manufacturing-related training and job placement initiatives, MVWIB and VWCCC receive limited commitments to hire which, though unenforceable, should at least increase program graduates likelihood of hire and employer participation in training curriculum and program development.

We have other reasons to be cautious about dedicating inordinate amounts of WIA funding to manufacturing. The following lists the manufacturing industry openings that occurred in the U.S. during the first half of 2011.⁶

All Manufacturing Openings			Production Openings		
Title	Openings	% of Total Openings	Title	Openings	% of Total Openings
Sales Representative	16,936	2.5%	Production Supervisor	4,314	7.9%
Software Engineer	8,695	1.3%	Machinist	2,469	4.5%
Manufacturing Engineer	8,667	1.3%	CNC Machinist	1,786	3.3%
Account Executive	8,021	1.2%	Plant Manager	1,398	2.6%
Intern	7,025	1.1%	Machine Operator	1,189	2.2%
Account Manager	6,783	1.0%	Manufacturing Supervisor	977	1.8%
Merchandiser	6,282	0.9%	Production Worker	893	1.6%
Systems Engineer	5,867	0.9%	Welder	770	1.4%
Process Engineer	4,640	0.7%	CNC Programmer	726	1.3%
Quality Engineer	4,405	0.7%	Assembler	665	1.2%

Non-production jobs accounted for more than 91 percent of all manufacturing job openings during that period.⁷ But few low-income people, i.e. most of the people that we serve, will find work in non-production jobs unless they have a college degree. Most non-production jobs require at least an Associate's Degree. Although we sometimes join with customers and area Community Colleges to split the cost of an Associate's Degree education (with them using private fees or Pell Grants), and hope to do more of that as will be indicated below, it is not the norm because we have so far found private vendors to be more agile in achieving immediate employment goals. We instead prefer shorter-term manufacturing ITAs, OJTs and Customized Training for production workers.

There are other, bigger reasons to be wary of dedicating larger amounts of WIA to manufacturing job openings between now and 2016. This region is part of an area that receives the fifth largest federal contract allocation in the country. Most of this \$10B+ allocation is for advanced manufacturing and related research activities.

Metro Area	Federal Contract Spending Total	Federal Contract Spending Defense	Spending Per Job	Defense % of Contracts
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV MSA	\$79,366,339,680	\$38,328,580,911	\$27,137	48.29%
Northern Virginia, VA MSA	\$44,441,965,054	\$29,665,207,355	\$34,412	66.75%
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX MSA	\$20,050,694,930	\$18,706,396,879	\$6,814	93.30%
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA MSA	\$17,686,539,154	\$13,182,889,858	\$3,313	74.54%
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH MSA	\$14,042,026,287	\$10,565,862,081	\$5,847	75.24%
Phili-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD MSA	\$11,795,232,262	\$7,437,633,267	\$4,567	63.06%
San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA MSA	\$11,699,542,921	\$10,821,383,368	\$9,222	92.49%
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA MSA	\$11,218,634,037	\$7,853,161,914	\$1,371	70.00% ⁸

⁶ U.S. Manufacturing Jobs: Where Companies Are Hiring, Center for Regional Economic Competiveness, November 2011 p.11

⁷ U.S. Manufacturing Jobs: Where Companies Are Hiring, Center for Regional Economic Competiveness, November 2011 p.8

⁸ Source: JobsEQ - www.jobseq.com and FPDS. Employment data as of 2012q4, Spending data FY2010-12 as of 1/15/2013. The areas cited above are the top part of a much longer list.

If defense funding continues to go down as needed and as automatically recurs in the Federal sequester, this area's advanced manufacturing may suffer a significant downturn before 2016. This is somewhat ameliorated by Raytheon, our largest regional employer's diverse number of foreign defense and other contracts⁹. But even if the Sequester doesn't impact this, manufacturing robotics and 3-D printing may reduce the number of manufacturing job openings that will occur as a result of older workers retirement. Though they are likely to keep non-production jobs in MA, if the Commonwealth doesn't find ways to reduce them, larger companies' production facilities can simply go to other parts of the country or overseas where there are fewer overhead costs. (Security and quality control issues elsewhere will prevent a total displacement of MA manufacturing, we here are concerned with continuous percentage drops.)

That is not to say that we should not seek to help bolster area manufacturer's global competitiveness. Manufacturing is this region's greatest wealth producer and may still be the second largest employment sector, though that is hard to see with the increasing number of retail and service staff all around us. Without manufacturing growth we are likely to continue our national decline. But given our uncertain and limited funding situation, and the possibility that ongoing issues will not be significantly addressed and ameliorated in the next three years, we hesitate to allocate large amounts of WIA training funding to manufacturing without at least some employer guarantees between now and 2016. As stated above we will instead seek manufacturer agreements to hire before we persuade large numbers of low-income people to pursue careers in manufacturing.

This region has a large number of 'green' jobs and is possibly the MA WIA with their greatest number throughout the State. Growing green jobs, especially those related to energy improvement, have been a priority for both President Obama and Governor Patrick. But it is likely that many green jobs depend on subsidies from Federal and MA government. Consequently, though their numbers are likely to grow in the long-term, growth is likely to stop and the sector even shrink if Republicans attain control of both houses of Congress in 2014.

Green sector job growth reduction and possible contraction are concern from now till 2016 both due to politics and because of our national debt's inordinate growth. Short-term subsidy cuts are possible in virtually all green sectors. But MVWIB has not reduced its non-WIA funded efforts in this area. We have successfully applied for two Environmental Protection Agency Grants and a Clean Energy Sector grant and were also a past member of a CommCorp State Energy Center Grant.

We are currently negotiating an agreement with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) where we will dedicate WIA and private funds to train prospective and incumbent workers for clean energy municipal infrastructure improvement projects. If successful, this will be a large new initiative. Because of its importance, we include a draft copy of the proposed MVPC MOU in the attachments.

Dislocated and 'Adult' Workers Principle 2. *Narrow who is considered marketable when unemployment is high and expand who is considered marketable when unemployment is low. This especially applies to people formerly employed in high unemployment sectors while other sectors that require similar skills have lower unemployment.*

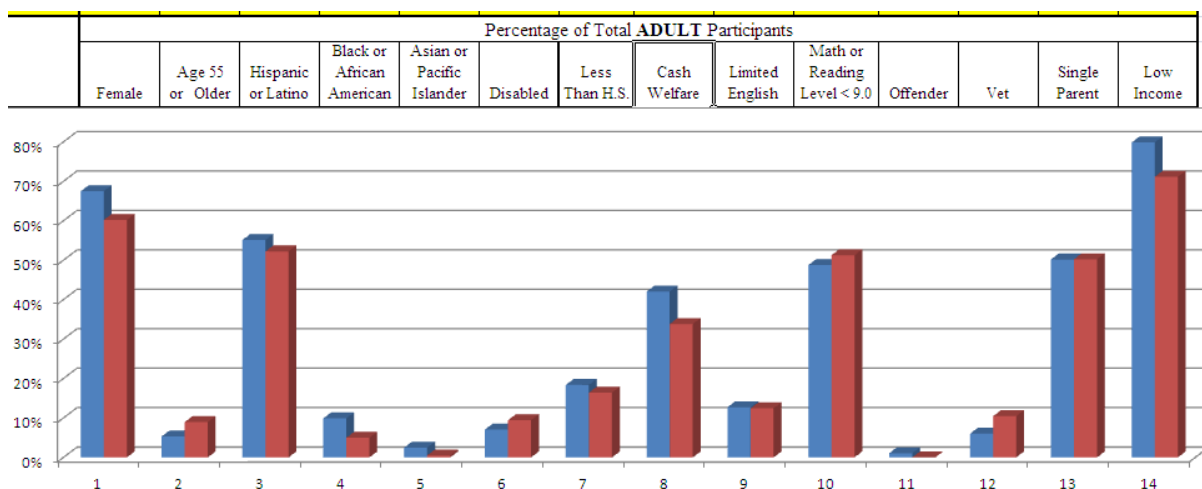
The board decided that, in this time of relatively high unemployment and relatively fewer contributors to the Federal and Massachusetts tax base, we must focus more of our WIA funds on helping to more quickly grow the number of people able to pay regional, Massachusetts and Federal taxes.

⁹ Raytheon President's statement at the MVWIB event we hosted at Merrimack College 11/2012

While unemployment is high, relatively less support will be provided to people who need long-term WIA-funded training because a broader spectrum of people are considered eligible for shorter term WIA-funded training for jobs that pay more than entry-level wages. The below chart illustrates the concept.



Although not exclusively so, for the last two years we have provide more intensive services and WIA funded training to people who can more quickly return to work with less help. The below chart illustrates how slightly fewer low income people were served when previously middle class people not only used dislocated worker funds, but also started to qualify for WIA adult category funding. The left or blue column represent 2011 percentages and the right or red column 2012 percentages.



MVWIB rejects the notion that we are over-serving people who do not want to work. We anticipated possible negative media coverage and collated the information on the below chart. Without counting the number of visits, it shows the percentage of unemployed people VWCC served face-to-face per community in 2012 (Does not include those from NH or other WIBs).

City/Town	2010 Population	May 2012 Unemployment Rate	Number of residents unemployed	Actual 2012 served face-to-face per town	% of unemployed served face-to-face
Amesbury	16,283	5.2	847	330	39.0%
Andover	33,201	4.3	1,428	417	29.2%
Boxford	7,965	4.2	335	48	14.3%

Georgetown	8,183	4.3	352	123	34.9%
Groveland	6,459	4.6	297	115	38.7%
HAVERHILL	60,879	6.4	3,896	2,412	61.9%
LAWRENCE	76,377	13.3	10,158	4,577	45.1%
Merrimac	6,338	2	127	129	101.6%
METHUEN	47,255	7.4	3,497	1,399	40.0%
Newbury	6,666	5.5	367	68	18.5%
Newburyport	17,416	4.3	749	253	33.8%
North Andover	28,352	5.2	1,474	513	34.8%
Rowley	5,856	4.4	258	56	21.7%
Salisbury	8,283	6.1	505	160	31.7%
West Newbury	4,235	4	169	57	33.7%
	333,748		24,459	10,657	

Fewer more educated or driven workers will be eligible for WIA services if the unemployment rate goes down significantly before 2016.

Dislocated and ‘Adult’ Workers Principle 3. *Focus WIA Title I funds on occupational skills training and not on academic remediation. Encourage WIA Title II recipients to dedicate a part of their academic remediation funding towards preparing adult and family literacy students for occupational skills training.*

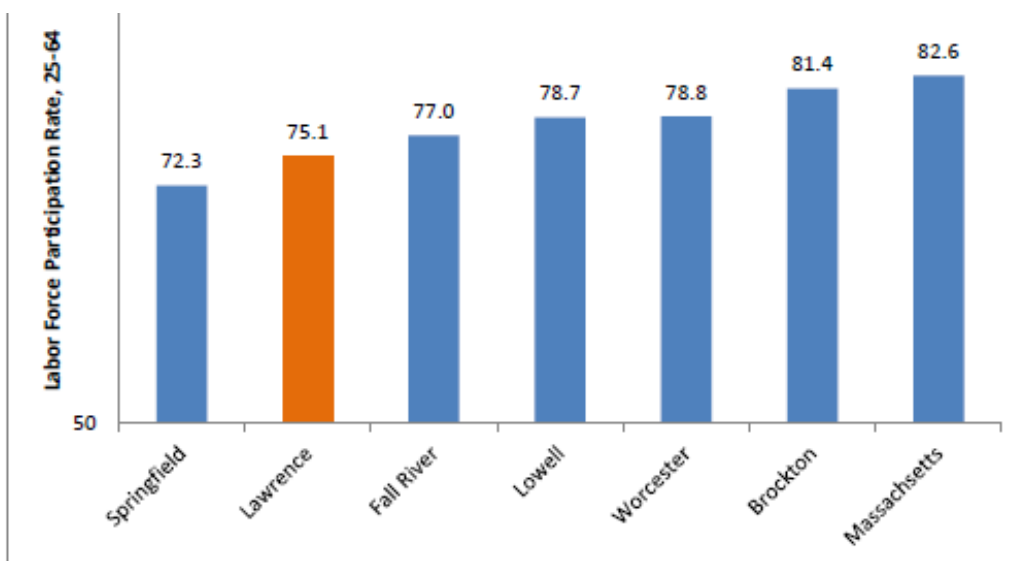
The Board approved that all dislocated workers and ‘adult’ category people have at least an average 7.9 TABE score average before referral to WIA funded training. During times of high unemployment we cannot afford to train less educated people because their likelihood of finding and keeping a job is less than that of people who have mastered at least junior high level academic skills. (We also question whether increasingly smaller WIA Title I dollars can effectively remediate the significant number of unemployed people who have academic skills above grade 7.9.

City of Lawrence residents have historically received the largest part of our WIA intensive services and WIA Training dollars. Lawrencians over 25 years old have the 2nd lowest labor force participation rate in Massachusetts (75%, MA average 83%)¹⁰. Unemployed individuals who are actively seeking employment but are not employed are considered labor market participants. Others are not. So it is possible for an area to have a lower unemployment rate and yet have fewer people working than an area with a higher one.

Under another criteria, Lawrence residents averaged a 71% Labor Force Participation rate from 2007-2011 while 77% of the same ages did so statewide. In either case, the rate was significantly lower. Lawrence’s unemployment rate is typically recorded as being 6% higher than the state average. But its lower Labor Force Participation hides a much higher UI number.

Labor Force Participation Rate of 25-64 Year Old Lawrence and other gateway city residents

¹⁰ Employment and Schooling Activities of Youth in Lawrence- Neeta Fogg and Paul Harrington June 2013 pg. 8 for MVWIB



Source: American Community Survey Public Use Micro Data Files, 2007-2011; tabulations by authors. All estimates are adjusted for CPS-ACS differences. The estimate for Lawrence is weighted by the race-ethnic composition of youth residing in Lawrence City.

The fact that ‘disconnected’ people do not look for work and are consequently not considered in UI numbers greatly impacts this region’s funding. For example, from 2007 to 2011, it seemed that Lawrence had a higher youth employment rate than the state average.¹¹

Since many of this region’s unemployed do not speak English as their first language, MVWIB will continue to make it clear that high math skills can average up low English skills and that we will also provide waivers for motivated people who have, for example, 4.0 English TABE and 10.0 Math.

Planning has also started on a Memorandum of Agreement with this WIA’s ESOL and ABE Title II education providers. The MOU will specify that we will prioritize acceptance of their eligible students when there are funds to meet other Federally and State mandated priorities and when their students have demonstrated a clear interest in employment as witnessed by their attendance, promptness, application to learning and significantly improving ESOL or ABE scores over one academic year.

Unless the economy greatly improves, we expect the 7.9 stipulation to stay in place until 2016.

Dislocated and ‘Adult’ Worker Principal 4. *Continue setting lower limits to how much Title I money should be spent per individual. Base limits on funding availability and sector unemployment levels. Ensure customers have achieved appropriate academic skill levels before placing them in WIA-funded training.*

The need for appropriate academic skill levels was discussed in the previous section. We here add that students often leave early from programs that provide both academic remediation and skills training. Once they learn enough skills to get a job, they leave whether or not they know enough to pass the GED test. Consequently, a while later, many are back on the unemployment line because they do not have a diploma or GED.

MVWIB plans to keep student training costs low to help more people get jobs quickly. Training’s time length usually goes down when training vendors receive less money and the need for lengthy

¹¹ Ibid pg 11

training diminishes if we focus more of our funds on people who have fewer rather than more literacy issues.

We consider this strategy appropriate for periods of high unemployment and growing debt but may increase cost per individual before 2016 ends if more funds are available and national debt accumulation slows.

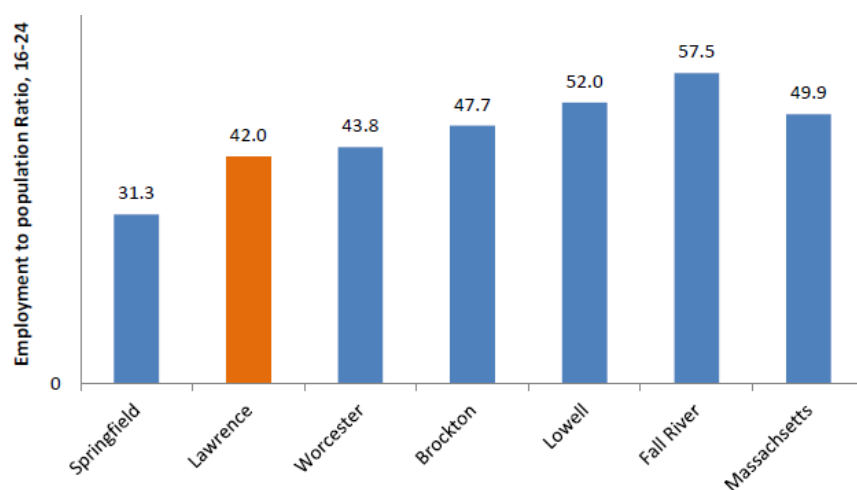
Dislocated and ‘Adult’ Worker Principle 5. *Because of the impact of UI On-line, expand marketing efforts to draw-in people who would benefit from training and other WIA intensive services.*

Although it is too soon to be sure, we expect that the drop in face-to-face career center visitors will result in fewer candidates for referral to WIA services. To compensate for that, our strategic plan includes attention to developing promotional materials where we do not over-promise services when there is less money available, but which increases appropriate client flow and helps WIA-funded Career Center staff choose the most appropriate people for WIA training and intensive case management.

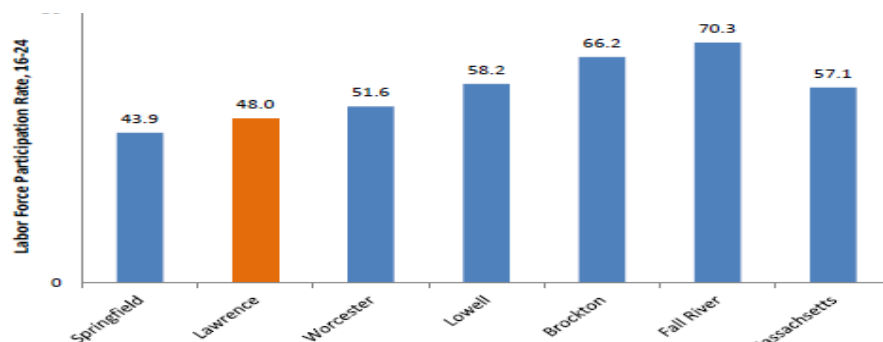
Youth Principle 1. *Help end the idea that the workforce development system is an alternative to acquiring a good academic foundation and graduating from high school. Continue to consider poverty the over-riding barrier to employment (and do not consistently demand that there be still more barriers).*

“Since WIA was created in 1998, and before then during the Job Training Partnership Act, about 80% of our youth training funds have been dedicated to Lawrence youth. Lawrence is our region’s largest City and it has our region’s greatest concentration of poverty. We can be proud of having served many young people who subsequently went on to get and hold jobs. But as was discussed at our last quarterly meeting in January, we cannot keep doing business as usual”.¹²

Lawrence has historically received most of our WIA and CommCorp Youth funding. But, though most of its youth now speak English, it has the second lowest youth employment to population and labor force participation rates in the State. (Both compiled from 2007-2011 ACS data files)



¹² Cal Williams, MVWIA Youth Council Chair, 4/24/14 MVWIB Quarterly Minutes



Most of the kids that don't work also dropped out of school. An unknown number of those who dropped out of school considered the workforce development system as an alternative to finishing school and getting a high school diploma. The MVWIB's plan is to help counter the possibility of youth thinking that the workforce development system can lessen the harm to be done by their not completing high school. It is best that they become aware of that fact while in high school or at least while they're young.

Because of the gravity of the inner city situation, we need to stop using WIA as another chance system for kids who drop out of school. From 2007 to 2011, an average of just 28% of 16 to 19 years old Lawrencians worked at any point in time¹³. Numbers sometimes hide reality because, from 2007-2011, Massachusetts' 16 to 24 year olds were recorded as having a higher average unemployment rate of 12.7% than Lawrence youth who had a lower unemployment rate of 12.6%¹⁴.

Apart from having nowhere near enough funds to act as alternative to the secondary school system, MVWIB wants to be part of a network that holds inner-city schools accountable for their students' learning. We plan to focus and promote our help to low-income youth who learn and graduate from high school and want to work. We plan to provide those low-income youth with a larger number of job-skill related, industry –recognized certificates. We will also look for public and private funds to help low-income youth who want to work while also going to college.

Some may say that MVWIB is discriminating against minority youth by insisting that they have a meaningful high school diploma before being able to receive WIA-funded training. But the prejudice of low expectations is worse. Lawrence Public Schools are moreover about 95% Hispanic and accusations of discrimination ignore that we will help the 60% of Hispanic youth who graduate or who have a GED.

Like everyone else, Hispanic youth need positive role models. It is better that younger low-income see older youth being helped for graduating than for not graduating high school. MVWIB supports and will support the LPS Receivers efforts to greatly improve learning and graduation rather than provide a perceived alternative to good school performance.

The old approach did not work. "The average labor force participation rate of 16- to 24-year old youth was 48 percent in Lawrence over the 2007-2011 period".¹⁵ On average, over the 2007-2011 period, only 28% of Lawrence 16-19 year old teens were employed for one hour or more per week..

¹³ Employment and Schooling Activities of Youth in Lawrence- Neeta Fogg and Paul Harrington June 2013 for MVWIB, p. 25

¹⁴ Employment and Schooling Activities of Youth in Lawrence- Neeta Fogg and Paul Harrington June 2013 for MVWIB, p. 25

¹⁵ Ibid p. 7

Lawrence teens had the second lowest employment to population ratio in the state, second only to Springfield (20%)¹⁶.

The Lawrence Public School district is the only Massachusetts district currently in receivership. A large reason for this is its low high school graduation rate. The 2011 adjusted five year cohort graduation rate for Lawrence high schools was just 60.6%. During that period, about 22% of entering 9th graders graduated together from Lawrence High (LHS) (with an additional 6 percent earning a GED).¹⁷

Five years after entering LHS, 40 percent of students had not earned a regular diploma. Andrew Sum has pointed to the statewide consequences of these numbers:

- Dropouts aged 16-24 are much less likely to be engaged in the labor force or be employed throughout their lives than those who complete high school.
- Teen and young adult female high school dropouts were considerably more likely to have one or more children out of wedlock. Out of wedlock children are more likely to live in poverty.
- 16 to 24 year old high school dropouts are 6 times more likely to be put in jail than their counterparts who finish high school.
- The odds of residing in a household with income below the poverty/near poverty thresholds are sharply higher for young high school dropouts.
- Over their expected working lives, high school dropouts will cost U.S. taxpayers a net loss of about \$5,200 per year---every year-- up to the age of 65.¹⁸

“Youth without early work experience are less likely to develop these skills and therefore are less employable than those who have been exposed to the world of work and have therefore developed the behavioral traits and soft skills that are a requirement for employment in any job”.¹⁹ Many low-income minority youth who worked enough to graduate from high school are not finding jobs because our system often prefers to help low-income minority youth who dropped-out. Both groups of people will ultimately be harmed.

The MVWIB considers disconnected youth one of this region’s, state and nation’s most significant long-term problems. Laws can be passed to make it more difficult for employers to export jobs and, perhaps, to contain college costs. But it takes many years to change the attitudes and habits instilled over generations. Over two years ago, we changed our policies so that MVWIA youth must have a high school diploma or GED to qualify for WIA-funded training. Our strategy posits good public schools in the center of what’s needed for workforce development. It recognizes that the MVWIB, its employer majority and other members, are a junior but very necessary partner in that relationship.

¹⁶ Employment and Schooling Activities of Youth in Lawrence- Neeta Fogg and Paul Harrington June 2013 for MVWIB page 15.

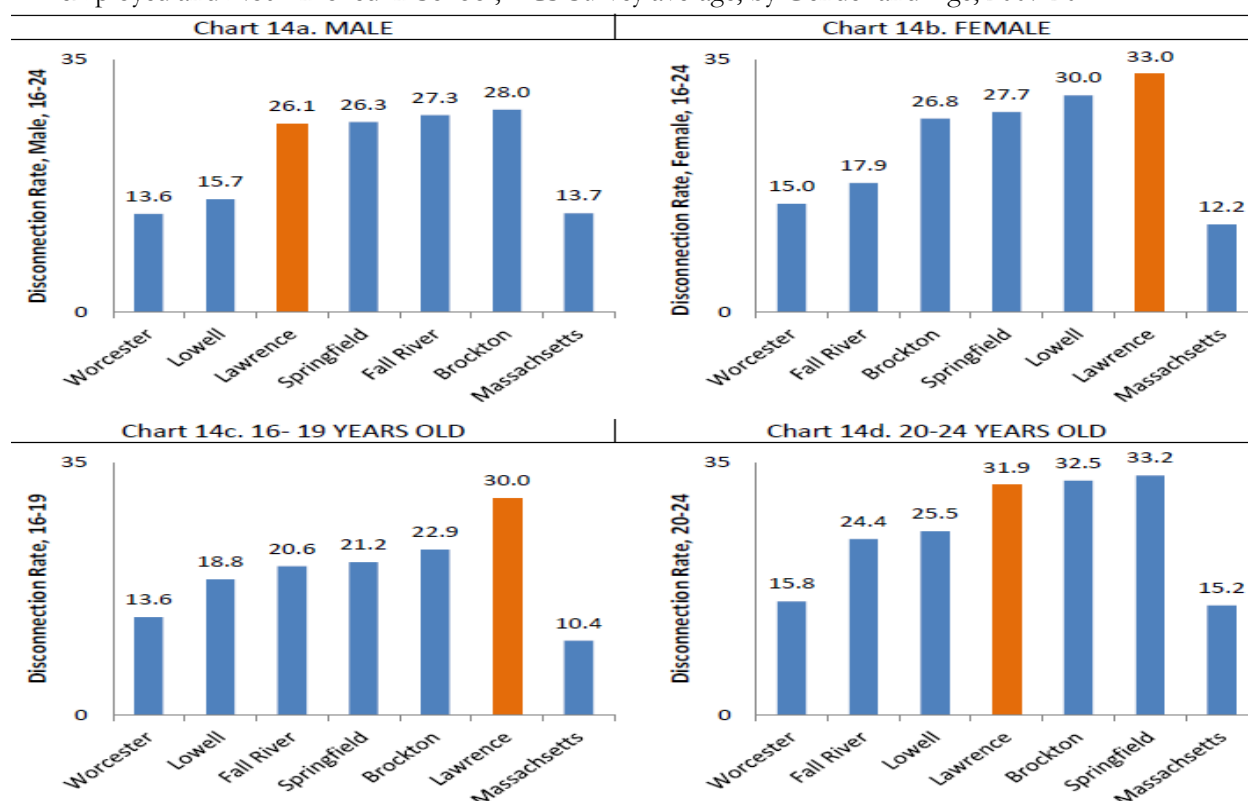
¹⁷ Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, “5-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate 2011 Lawrence,” http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/nsc/gradsattendingcollege_dist.

¹⁸ Andrew Sum, et.al. “The consequence of Dropping Out of High School: Joblessness and Jailing’s for High School Dropouts and the High Cost for Taxpayers,” Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, October, 2009

¹⁹ Employment and Schooling Activities of Youth in Lawrence- Neeta Fogg and Paul Harrington June 2013 for MVWIB.

As the charts below illustrate, Lawrence has the State's highest number of 'disconnected' 16 to 19 year olds and the third highest number of 20 to 24 year olds. More young females receive public support than males do and young and 'adult' category females have historically received most WIA-funded training. Apart from the fact that they most often stay home with babies and young children, it may not be a coincidence that, contrary to national trends, more 16 to 24 year old females are disconnected in Lawrence than are 16 to 24 males. Young Lawrencian females had the highest rate of disconnection from school and work (33%), more than twice as high as that of young women residing in Worcester (15%)²⁰. A case can be made that undemanding and concentrated public support in a small area and over two or three generations has helped create and sustain this situation.

The Proportion of 16- to 24-Year Olds in Lawrence and Five Gateway City Areas who were not employed and Not Enrolled in School, ACS Survey average, by Gender and Age, 2007-2011



“Disconnection from work and school places these [people] at a much higher risk of joblessness and idleness in the future. Furthermore, disengaging from school and work also increases the risk of socially deviant behaviors.... Three out of ten teenagers and nearly 32 percent of young adults between 20 and 24 years old in Lawrence were out of school and out of work. A comparison of disconnection rates of young residents by race reveals a sharp difference; 12 percent of non-Hispanic White residents of the area were disconnected from work and school compared to 34 percent of their Hispanic counterparts. Non-White and Hispanic youth were at a considerably higher risk of disconnection (nearly three times as high) than their non-Hispanic White counterparts”²¹.

²⁰ Ibid p 22

²¹ Andrew Sum, et.al. “The consequence of Dropping Out of High School: Joblessness and Jailings for High School Dropouts and the High Cost for Taxpayers,” Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, October, 2009

To confront this situation, the MVWIB has generally adopted the remedies suggested by Dr. Paul Harrington in the study we commissioned him to do with part of our High Performing WIB \$100,000 grant. He suggests “that secondary high schools, local community colleges and workforce development organizations are the best positioned institutions to assist teens and young adults who are disconnected from the labor market.”²²

His recommendations are here included verbatim as part of this Strategic Plan. “Reinforcing behaviors like attendance and punctuality can be imbedded into school and community settings. More generally, these organizations must see themselves as responsible for helping build the skills necessary to find and keep a job. What exactly can these organizations do?

- Help teens overcome the challenges of employer screening by demonstrating how screening mechanisms work—teaching young people how to think about on-line applications and to understand the underlying reasons for each question that is posed on the application.
- Provide students with help in acquiring the savvy required to get a job in today’s labor market. Provide coaching and training in work readiness and career exploration and especially in life skills like punctuality, taking direction and initiative so that young people can find and keep a job. Programs in basic job hunting and job retention should be offered to all working age high school students, with a strong emphasis on understanding how employers make their hiring decisions.
- Take responsibility for brokering relationships between young people and local businesses. Employers are sometimes more willing to take some risk in hiring a young person with little or no work experience if they know that the local high school or community college is engaged in screening these youngsters and will support both the job applicant and the employer to make a successful new hire.
- Provide an easily navigated, unified point of entry for employers who are potentially interested in hiring young people for entry level positions. This means offering employers screening services they value along with a chance to support youth programming in other ways in addition to hiring.
- Comprehensive high schools should place a stronger emphasis on attendance and discipline. District leadership should develop methods to closely monitor and manage attendance, punctuality and discipline and self-control issues on a daily basis. Improvements in these areas will sharply bolster credibility with area employers. Indeed, one of the mainstays of success for the state’s CTE programs has been a strong emphasis on managing student behavior—which many believe helped substantially improve CTE MCAS scores over the years.
- Workforce development efforts should include supporting an in-school professional who connects students with employers. Their task is to build long term credible relationships with local employers and work with young people who do not have their own networks into the labor market to find work.
- Use subsidized work programs as springboards into employer paid positions. Young people in subsidized jobs should come away from those positions with job seeking and job readiness skills. This means that there should be competition among students for subsidized jobs and students must pass the signal and screen tests that are found in the unsubsidized sector of the labor market.
- Employers who participate in subsidized work programs must structure the experience in such a way as to reinforce positive work behaviors including attendance self-discipline, initiative and honesty.
- An important idea about creating teen staffing agencies emerged from the Merrimack Valley youth employer focus group. Employers often have short-term projects that require a few days or weeks of work. Youth serving organizations should develop a teen staffing agency model to place young

²² Employment and Schooling Activities of Youth in Lawrence- Neeta Fogg and Paul Harrington June 2013 for MVWIB page 30

people with area employers on a short-term basis. Such teen temp help firms would be located at retail malls or other central locations where a number of employers may be looking for temporary help. Teens who perform well in their temp duties will have the added possibility that an employer will hire them on a more permanent basis or recommend them to another firm for a permanent job".²³

Before commissioning Dr. Harrington, MVWIB had reached many of the same conclusions and had decided to try and to put a career center annex into Lawrence High School. The MVWIB Deputy and Executive Directors had already participated in many of the Receiver's initial studies and recommendation sessions. The Executive Director had also been Chairman of the Lawrence Superintendent Search Committee that decided not to recommend any applicants for Lawrence School Committee review because of the gravity of Lawrence's situation. That resulted in the Mayor of Lawrence's request for Massachusetts Receivership.

In 2012, the MVWIB worked together with President Lane Glenn of Northern Essex Community, Receiver/Superintendent Jeff Riley and VWCC Executive Director Arthur Chilingirian to apply for a U.S. Department of Labor Innovation Grant to place a ValleyWorks annex in Lawrence High. Our proposal was, unfortunately, not funded but, as reflected in the below letter, a part of MVWIB's strategic plan is to try again as opportunities arise.



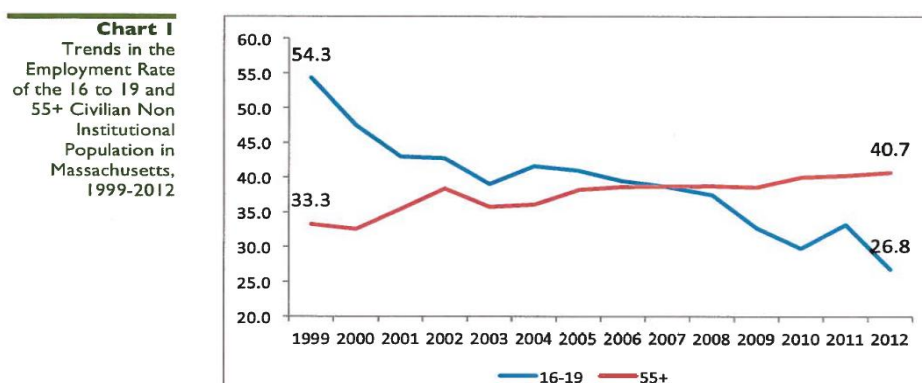
²³ Employment and Schooling Activities of Youth in Lawrence- Neeta Fogg and Paul Harrington June 2013 for MVWIB page 31-32

Youth Principle 2. *Continue to allocate a portion of youth subsidized employment money by lottery while also dedicating a portion to rewarding low-income youth who have maintained good grades/comportment or who have significantly improved them.*

“By 2012 older workers in Massachusetts were 15 times more likely to be employed than were teens -a partial result of rising employment rates among older workers, but largely a consequence of unprecedented decline in the employment rates of teens”²⁴. In Lawrence, Methuen and Haverhill’s poorest areas, at least 4 out of 10 out-of-school 16-24 year olds are neither employed, nor looking for work.

“Part of the reason young people are more vulnerable to changes in economic conditions is that they are frequently viewed as less productive workers, relative to adults. Indeed, we have seen considerable evidence of firms substituting older workers for young people in even the most low skilled of occupations”²⁵.

As indicated by the below chart “This trend of substituting older workers for teens became particularly pronounced beginning in 2007 with the onset of the ‘Great Recession’²⁶



Employers place great emphasis on trusting the referral sources or the sources of information they use in making their hires. That is one of the reasons why vocational high school have such high graduate employment rates.²⁷ A recent employer survey results indicate that employers often rate teens poorly with respect to their work behaviors or what are sometimes called non-cognitive skills²⁸

In the past, this region’s workforce development system focused its youth workforce development efforts on low-income youth with a variety of additional barriers such as dropping out of school. MVWIB now thinks that the inner-city youth employment situation is bad enough to warrant focusing our efforts on all low-income youth. In order for them to be hired into unsubsidized jobs, we must provide our employer partners with youth that they can rely on. In order to stop the

²⁴ *Boosting Teen Employment Prospects*- Paul Harrington, Nancy Snyder (CommCorp) pg 9

²⁵ Neeta P. Fogg and Paul E. Harrington, *The Increased Presence of Older Workers in the Massachusetts Labor Market: implications for Workforce Development Policies*, Workplace Accommodation, and Universal Design. Commonwealth Corporation, July, 2011

²⁶ Paul E. Harrington and Nancy L. Snyder, “Signaling Success: Boosting Teen Employment Prospects, Prepared for Commonwealth Corporation, Boston, Massachusetts, April 2013

²⁷ Employment and Schooling Activities of Youth in Lawrence- Neeta Fogg and Paul Harrington June 2013 for MVWIB, pg 29

²⁸ Paul E. Harrington and Nancy L. Snyder, “Signaling Success: Boosting Teen Employment Prospects, Prepared for Commonwealth Corporation, Boston, Massachusetts, April 2013

perception that misbehaving low-income youth receive more public support than well-performing ones, we must provide well-performing youth with more support.

In a 1990's study, Christopher Ruhm found that, 6 to 9 years after graduation, those who worked 20 hours per week during their senior high school year had annual earnings that were 22 percent greater than those who did not work. They were employed in higher level occupations than those who did not work in high school and were more likely to have health insurance and participate in an employer pension plan.²⁹

VWCC TABE tests show that many inner-city Hispanic youth with recent, U.S. high school diploma can barely perform at an 8th grade academic level. Those youth are by nature no less intelligent than white or Asian youth. We must do our part to change the inner-city culture and institutionalized low expectation that retard their academic progress. We should especially help low-income the middle skilled minority youth to better compete in the marketplace. Like every other group, most minority youth are middle skilled. If we do not help provide opportunities to low-income youth who have a better chance of qualifying for unsubsidized employment, we may be keeping both them and misbehaving low-income youth poor.

Youth Principle 3. *Seek, encourage and counsel economically disadvantaged youth who have a good academic foundation to both work and go to college. Tangibly encourage their dependability as appropriate.*

There is also no doubt that education and training is the key to successful employment, especially STEM-related skill acquisition. More than half of all new career ladder jobs require an Associates degree or higher and there is virtually no occupational area that doesn't require at least some basic computer skills.

The critical challenge facing the MVWIB is ensuring that the workforce development system is responsive to and understands industry needs as they continue to grow and evolve and that workers are prepared with the education and skills to maintain those industries in the Commonwealth.

One of the key priorities in HPW and this updated Strategic Plan is the expansion and development of activities that will support access to higher education and advanced training and retraining for current and future job seekers and employees in the region. It is our current estimate that we cannot reasonably promote college enrollment to everyone. Our country can no longer afford it, employers increasing that their tax dollars are misused in trying to do so and many just look for reliable employees with basic academic skills that they can train.

Although 80% of 2012 high school graduates entered college or certificate programs nationwide, only about 33% percent may graduate from college and an unknown number attain useful certificates. Historically unprecedented low numbers of college graduates currently find work related to their college degrees. The situation is considerably worse for minority students.

Lawrence high school graduates go to college in high numbers. Within 16 months of high school graduation, about 78 percent of the Lawrence graduating class of 2009-10 had enrolled at a post-secondary educational institution. This was greater than the 74 percent statewide college enrollment mean. But most Lawrence graduates were unlikely to complete a degree or certificate program. Most of them a two-year college and the two-year college three year cohort graduation rate averages about

²⁹ Christopher J. Ruhm, "The Extent and Consequences of High School Employment," *Journal of Labor Research*, Vol. 16, No 3. Summer 1995, pp. 293-303

16 percent, with the additional three year cohort transfer rate averaging about 22 percent.³⁰ There do not seem to be records of what happens to those who transfer to 4-year colleges.

This MVWIB strategic plan recognizes that all workers may not be college graduate material, but nearly all of them must have or learn basic academic skills and new technologies and ways of doing things. We must develop ways to better propel those who can succeed in college and those cannot. Through different types of education and training we must help develop worthwhile options for all.

“High school attendance and suspension [are] powerful predictors of dropping out of college. So it is no surprise to find that employers’ reluctance to hire young people without a college degree is associated with the same negative behaviors of poor attendance and self-control (as measured by disciplinary suspension) that cause secondary and post-secondary drop-out problems. Indeed, many employers point to poor discipline at school and home as the source of shirking behavior among young people.³¹

As part of its strategic plan, MVWIB will try to help build a sense of responsibility in all youth and their parents.

Evidence suggests that the labor market highly values a college degree even in bad economic times but additional years of post-high school schooling with no degree or certificate make much less of a difference for both employment and wages. “Perhaps the most heavily relied upon signal in the hiring process is the level of educational attainment which is thought to be positively connected to the productive abilities of job seekers. Employers use educational credentials as an indicator - albeit an imperfect one - to determine which applicants are more likely to be productive.³²

MVWIB hopes to help guide low-income youth who can succeed in college to enroll in it while they work. “The impact of working while in school is also positive at the post-secondary level— especially among male community college students. Audrey Light finds that among men, those who work while in school are more likely not to drop –out and that they do better academically. Statistical models indicate that the long-term estimated economic gains are more than 25 percent greater than when students don’t work while in-college.³³ This also implies that one quarter or more of the net earnings premium associated with earning a college degree may in fact be “the product of working while in school—and not a product of the college degree per se”³⁴.

Zimmer-Gembleck and Mortimer found that students who work for an extended number of weeks while in school, but more limited hours of work (less than 20 hours per week) are substantially more likely to earn a bachelor’s degree than students who do not work or who work more intensively over the course of a week.³⁵

Whenever possible we will try to help appropriate low-income working kids enroll in community college. If kids with good middle-skills attend while they work, they will not only prepare

³⁰ Ibid p. 26

³¹ Employment and Schooling Activities of Youth in Lawrence- Neeta Fogg and Paul Harrington June 2013 for MVWIB page 31

³² Ibid p. 28

³³ Audrey Light, In-School Work Experience and the Returns to Schooling, *Journal of Labor Economics*, January 2001

³⁴ Employment and Schooling Activities of Youth in Lawrence- Neeta Fogg and Paul Harrington June 2013 for MVWIB page 28

³⁵ Melanie J. Zimmer-Gembleck and Jeylan T. Mortimer, Review of Educational Research, Winter 2006 pp. 537-566 and Mortimer Working and Growing Up in America.

themselves to earn more in the future and to keep jobs longer, they will also help create a dynamic where more low-income hires may occur.

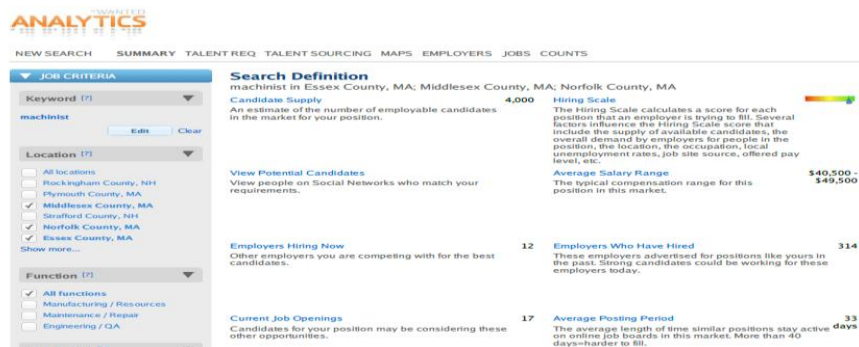
“Current employees were viewed by many employers as a superior way to screen workers for a job. They believed that workers with good work values and behaviors were more likely to be associated with individuals with similar values and behaviors.”³⁶

Partner Relations Principle 1. *Seek out ways to cost-effectively obtain data that helps gauge the effectiveness of career center services and vendor offered training. Data should help gauge their respective effectiveness in both the short and long term. Work with employer, educator and other partners to adjust action in accordance with the changing economic and workforce development situation.*

During the next three years, we will focus maximizing the opportunities for future success for all Merrimack Valley youth, adult and dislocated workers. We strive to ensure that education and training providers receive up to date information on the labor market and skill requirements for employment in the primary labor market, and that collaborations between workforce development organizations, employers, education and training providers and other key stakeholders serving youth are continued and expanded.

That is currently difficult to do because relevant data is often delayed and because information on customers served is often anonymous. Due to confidentiality issues, we do receive information on which customer get and lose jobs and when that happens. It would be very useful to obtain if not real time information, at least timely news that we can use to gauge vendor and career center staff performance. We find it especially difficult to get prompt ITA outcome information. Due to the system currently in-place, vendors are hurt if they promptly report details of their student job placement in TrainingPro and we must instead depend on overworked career center case manager reports to extend vendor training eligibility status. MVWIB will work to obtain or create systems that track employer satisfaction and unemployed and underemployed worker progress

Because the State now provides less timely lay-off and employment info, MVWIB has been using WantedAnalytics since 2011.



As with Dr. Paul Harrington and his team, MVWIB also plans to contract Subject Matter Experts whenever discretionary funds become available and work with them to inform higher authority as appropriate.

³⁶ Ibid p. 28

**CITY OF LAWRENCE
MERRIMACK VALLEY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD (MVWIB)
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT**

CONTRACT NUMBER: SRVS - 6457 - 85

CONTRACT START DATE: 3/5/2012
CONTRACT END DATE: 6/30/2012

NAME OF FUNDING AGENCY AND ADDRESS

City of Lawrence, Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board
439 South Union Street, Bldg. 2
Lawrence, MA 01843

CONTRACTOR NAME AND ADDRESS

Center for Labor Markets and Policy
Drexel University, 3001 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

TOTAL MAXIMUM DOLLAR AMOUNT OF CONTRACT:

\$23,500.00

CONTRACT FUNDING TITLE:

FY 11 MVWIB High Performance Board

CFDA NUMBER (if applicable)

17.260

MODIFICATION NUMBER (if applicable)

The following sections herewith constitute the articles of this contract between the two parties named above:

Section I:

Scope of Services

Section II:

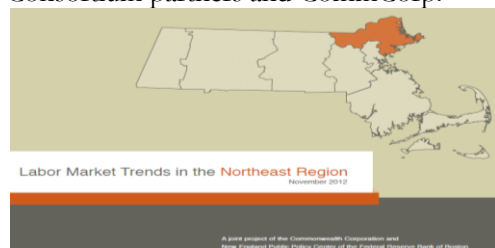
Work Program and Schedule

Our in-house administrative information systems are excellent and their results will be shared with all interested parties. We will also continue to improve them as we can.

65	NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE	MACHINE OPERATOR CNC	\$2,495	\$2,495	\$4,990	2		WIA ITA	\$59,011
66	NOTRE DAME EDUCATION CENTER	Nursing Assistant Training Program			\$2,294	1		TRADE	
67	NOTRE DAME EDUCATION CENTER	NURSING ASSISTANT PROGRAM	\$9,578	\$7,182	\$16,738	7		WIA ITA	\$19,052
68	PETERSON SCHOOL	BOILER TECHNICIAN 2ND FIREMAN LICENSE			\$1,550	1		TRADE	
69	PETERSON SCHOOL	3 COMBO A HVACR, REFRIGERATION, OIL & GAS HEAT	\$11,950		\$11,950	2		WIA ITA	
70	PETERSON SCHOOL	BOILER TECHNICIAN 2ND FIREMAN LICENSE		\$1,550	\$1,550	1		WIA ITA	\$15,050
71	PORTER & CHESTER INSTITUTE	DENTAL ASSISTING	\$6,000		\$6,000	1		WIA ITA	\$6,000
72	QUALITY & PRODUCTIVITY SOLUTIONS, INC.	Master Export Consultant Course (30 Days, PMP or Supply Chain 180)				2	\$30,000	TRADE	
73	QUALITY & PRODUCTIVITY SOLUTIONS, INC.	PMP PLUS SIX SIGMA GREEN BELT CERTIFICATION	\$6,000		\$6,000	1		WIA ITA	
74	QUALITY & PRODUCTIVITY SOLUTIONS, INC.	SIX SIGMA BLACK BELT CERTIFICATION	\$6,000		\$6,000	1		WIA ITA	\$42,000
75	RED CROSS	CERTIFIED NURSE ASSISTANT	\$2,206	\$1,103	\$3,309	3		WIA ITA	\$3,309
76	SALEM STATE COLLEGE	ADVANCED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING	\$6,000		\$6,000	1		WIA ITA	\$6,000
77	SEACOAST CAREER SCHOOLS	HEALTH CLAIMS SPECIALIST	\$6,000		\$6,000	1		WIA ITA	\$6,000
78	TRAINING UNLIMITED	Accounting with Bookkeeping and Finance				1	\$5,000	TRADE	
79	TRAINING UNLIMITED	ESL / GEO				1	\$7,000	TRADE	
80	TRAINING UNLIMITED	ESL /Nurse Assistant/Home Health Aide				3	\$14,550	TRADE	
81	TRAINING UNLIMITED	ESL Basic English				29	\$138,334	TRADE	
82	TRAINING UNLIMITED	COMPUTER SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	2		WIA ITA	
83	TRAINING UNLIMITED	MEDICAL ADMINISTRATIVE ASST	\$15,000		\$15,000	3		WIA ITA	\$189,884
84	UMASS LOWELL	Security Management and Homeland Security				1	\$7,380	TRADE	\$7,380
85	WILLIAM GEORGE ASSOCIATES	Comprehensive PMP Leadership (over Six Days) (PMP or Supply Chain 180)				4	\$39,980	TRADE	
86	WILLIAM GEORGE ASSOCIATES	CAPM PLUS SIX SIGMA GREEN BELT	\$6,000		\$6,000	1		WIA ITA	
87	WILLIAM GEORGE ASSOCIATES	LEAN SIX SIGMA GREEN BELT CERTIFICATION	\$9,900		\$9,900	2		WIA ITA	
88	WILLIAM GEORGE ASSOCIATES	PMP / CAPM PLUS SIX SIGMA GREEN BELT CERTIFICATION	\$12,000		\$12,000	2		WIA ITA	
89	WILLIAM GEORGE ASSOCIATES	PMP PLUS SIX SIGMA GREEN BELT CERTIFICATION	\$18,000		\$18,000	3		WIA ITA	\$85,880
			Sum of WIA TOTAL TUITION, BOOKS & FEES	Sum of WIA PARTICIPANT Count	Sum of Trade Cost			WIA ITA / TRADE	SUM WIA & Trade
90	TRAINING VENDOR NAME	COURSE NAME	Sum of ARRA RESP AMOUNT	Sum of WIA ADULT AMOUNT	Sum of WIA YOUTH AMOUNT	Sum of WIA VETERANS AMOUNT	\$562,523	\$ 620,733	\$ 1,183,256
91									

Partner Relations Principle 2. *Clearly advise State and Federal administrators on regional perceptions of federal and statewide policy and process changes as they impact direct services and service outcomes. Raise issues important to employers, educators and the unemployed.*

We work and speak with everyone who will listen. In 2012, we hosted the President of Raytheon at Merrimack College in North Andover along with our Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium partners and CommCorp.



During the application process for funds in order to provide manufacturing training in northeast Massachusetts, we took issue with prospective funding scenarios.



439 South Union Street, Suite 102
Lawrence, MA 01843
Phone: 978-682-7099
Fax: 978-794-1901

December 14, 2012

President Nancy Snyder
Commonwealth Corporation
2 Oliver Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA, 02109

Dear Nancy,

Massachusetts' Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) have been asked to do cross-region planning as a way of improving efficiencies and as a way of addressing prospective cuts in Federal funding. The Patrick-Murray Administration's strategic plan *Choosing to Compete in the 21st Century* cites advanced manufacturing as worthy of support because it is an essential part of the Massachusetts innovation economy.

In response to these two priorities, four north-east Massachusetts WIBs, three Community Colleges, several technical vocational high schools and members of the Housing and Economic Development Secretariat have spent several months working together to address manufacturing sector workforce development needs in the North Shore, Greater Lowell, Metro North and Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Areas (WIAs). It was not easy to reach agreement but we together decided to submit one Workforce Competitive Trust Fund Grant (WCTF) under a funding limit that I considered unnecessarily low.

So it is concerning to read that Commcorp may fund a Northeast Region WCTF proposal that has an out-of-the Northeast region WIB or Career Center as a partner. Attached is a copy of the emails that led me to this conclusion. I find it difficult to envision a good workforce development design that does not have the signed concurrence of at least one of the four WIB and many Career Center Directors situated in north-eastern Massachusetts.

We hope that your organization sees the value in working together to implement joint, cross-region advanced manufacturing employee training activities at a funding level that makes productive results possible. Commcorp's participation should improve the advanced manufacturing workforce development efforts that our four WIA consortium is working to implement.

Our willingness to be clear about our concern has enabled us to partner with various organizations not typically involved in our workforce development efforts.



November 22, 2011

Diane Kelley
US EPA Region 1
5 Post Office Square Suite 100, Mail code: OSRR7-2
Boston, MA 02109-3912

439 South Union Street
Lawrence, MA 01843
Phone: 978-682-7099
Fax: 978-794-1901

Dear Ms Kelley,

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) strongly supports the City of Lawrence's application to the EPA Brownfield Assessment program. The MVWIB is a workforce development organization comprised of over thirty-five regional business, industry, labor, education and training leaders. It spans fifteen cities and towns that include Lawrence, Methuen and Haverhill. Our mission is to help foster sustained employment and business growth for regional prosperity.

MVWIB recently entered into a \$300,000, two-year cooperative agreement with the US EPA via an Environmental Workforce Development and Job Training Grant in support of "Training for Sustainability". The program job-trains unemployed or underemployed, low income individuals living in contaminated and economically depressed areas for living-wage environmental remediation jobs in the Green Economy. It brings together private sector employers, residents, community-

The MVWIB also supports the development of proposals and projects by other entities that build workforce capacity in the region.



July 22, 2013

Ms. Jessica Andors, Co-Director
Lawrence Community Works
168 Newbury Street
Lawrence, Ma. 01841

Re: City of Lawrence Working Cities Challenge Proposal

Dear Ms. Andors:

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) and its chartered ValleyWorks Career Center (VWCC) serve one of the Commonwealth's fifteen workforce investment regions. The MVWIB is responsible for the planning and delivery of employment, education and occupational training programs for the 15 cities and towns that comprise the Lower Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Area. The MVWIB receives Federal, State and private resources to carry-out its mission alongside the City of Lawrence, which serves as the grant recipient for our principal funding source - the federal Workforce Investment Act.

We support the proposed Family Resource Center because it plans to require parental engagement in support of their children. It will also provide an opportunity for us to connect with a significant portion of the community in a positive way. The Center will assist us to better identify barriers that may be discouraging Lawrence youth and adults from accessing WIB and Career Center services that would help them find, apply for, and retain jobs. We want to prevent

The WIB has actively worked with local institutions of higher education in support of funding for new curriculum and program offerings in the healthcare and manufacturing sectors. It provides technical assistance and linkage with appropriate training providers for employers seeking funding through the Workforce Training Fund.

The MVWIB is active in creating and strengthening links between the workforce system and educational institutions. A number of activities have focused on ensuring that the region's youth are receiving information and learning skills that are relevant to the future workplace including educating school staff in the career pathways, job opportunities and workplace-specific skills required in the regions critical and emerging industries. Employers are providing externships for teachers that provide workforce/industry context to academic content. We are also developing close relations with Northern Essex Community College which has a new and very entrepreneurial President who is bound to make it a much more agile player in economic development.

We will work with all public and private officials as constructively as possible in these times of increasingly severe budget cuts and growing uncertainty.

The Mission of the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board is reflected in the content of this Strategic Plan: "Through consensus building and coordination the Board will create a leadership framework for the collective action 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 impartial convener, broker and manager of relationships."

In keeping with this Mission, the Merrimack Valley WIB will:

- Build the Merrimack Valley's competitive workforce advantage.
- Through its oversight of the local workforce system, promote and enhance the region's economic development strategies

- Identify opportunities to leverage new private and public investments through collaborations and initiatives designed to improve the local labor supply and ensure that Merrimack Valley businesses have the human capital needed to compete in the national and global economy.
- Ensure that opportunities exist for all citizens to engage in and become productive members of the workforce.
- Build a demand driven workforce system linking regional workforce investment activities with economic development organizations..
- Includes continuous improvement as a priority in all MVWIB activities.

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Board (MVWIB) determined that the Governor's three required priorities reflect and incorporate other strategic issues and initiatives that had been identified by the Board as priorities in FY'08 planning documents and discussions. The Governor's priorities are:

- Building the capacity of the workforce system
- Closing the Skill Gaps in key industries and sectors
- Enhancing the youth pipeline to education and employment

Within these overarching priorities are additional issues identified by the MVWIB that are incorporated in the activities of the Strategic Plan:

- Skill attainment and reemployment of dislocated workers
- Older worker employment and retention
- Enhanced career awareness, support and workforce preparation for at-risk youth
- Expanded ABE/ESOL combined with employment preparation activities
- Skill attainment, re-integration, and employment for ex-offenders

We have identified Strategic Issues:

Strategic Priority: Capacity Building

The Executive Committee and MVWIB staff in consultation with other Board members, workforce stakeholders and state and local officials took responsibility for identifying the objectives and benchmarks which address the strategic priority of building the capacity of the WIB.

Strategic Priority: Addressing the Skills Gap

The Skill Gap issue in the manufacturing and healthcare sectors in the Merrimack Valley have been addressed in our previous discussions.

As we have previously noted the demographics of the region workforce describe a diverse population with overall educational and wage levels that are below the state average. Nearly 66% of unemployed adults accessing services through the Valley Works Career Center are basic skills deficient, meaning their reading and math skills are lower than 9th grade levels. Nearly a third of dislocated workers, meaning formerly employed, were basic skills deficient.

Twenty two (22) of the 30 area industry sectors require at least an Associates Degree. Also distressing is that the Merrimack Valley awarded smaller shares of associate's degrees in engineering and computer science than the other areas of the State.

At the beginning of this decade, the number of degrees awarded in the region had dropped 12% in the previous ten years while increasing statewide by 15% and across the United States by 27%. There is also a disconnect between fields of study and employment opportunities. In the Merrimack Valley, typically only 6% of Bachelors are in Engineering and Computer Science, 42% of college graduates receive degrees in Arts and Humanities.³⁷

These unfortunate statistics are not unique to the region or Massachusetts but are of genuine concern relative to our future economic vitality. The choice being made by college students also speaks to the need for career awareness and exploration activities for both youth and adults accessing education and training.

Activities are focused on identifying new shorter-term and less expensive education and training options that are relevant to the needs of employers in the region. We will seek to build collaborations between employers and workforce development professionals to ensure that resources are utilized effectively and productively to achieve real results. We will also support programming that is gender neutral and incorporate outreach strategies geared to attracting more male participants in education and training activities.

Strategic Priority: Enhancing the Youth Pipeline

The majority of career ladder jobs being created in the Merrimack Valley require post-secondary education and/or training.

An organizer for the Painters and Allied Trades Union has been actively working with the MVWIB for many years to encourage linkages with the Union and apprenticeships for local youth. We will also be exploring anticipated opportunities through the Plumbing, Heating & Cooling Contractors Association of Greater Boston.

Our Manufacturing Partnership has a strong interest in promoting youth career in the machine tool and customized manufacturing industry. Youth will be recruited for our NAMC manufacturing program

A special emphasis will continue to be engaging more males in Career Center activities and in training program. This is a segment of the population that has been difficult to reach.

MVWIB will increase awareness of the role, resources and workforce information available through the MVWIB in the region.

Activities, Timeframe, Benchmarks/Indicators

Activity:	Timeframe	Benchmarks/Indicators
A. Increase MVWIB profile through media and strategic		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of updated press kit and MVWIB fact sheet

³⁷ National Center of Education Statistics, Integrated Post Secondary Education Data System, Tabulation by Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, March 2008.

events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going • On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and dissemination of MVWIB newsletter • Identify key press contacts in each MVWIB city and town. • Identify opportunities to participate in appropriate forums and panels.
B. Retain and expand MVWIB Organizational Memberships on key workforce development advisory groups, committees and Industry organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memberships on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ MV Economic Development Council ➢ Merrimack Valley Planning Commission CEDS Committee ➢ Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce ➢ Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce ➢ Gr Newburyport Chamber ➢ Amesbury Chamber Salisbury Chamber Health Care Learning Network Advisory Board ➢ Northeast STEM Advisory Board ➢ MV AHEC Advisory Board ➢ NECC Occupational Advisory Board ➢ National Assn of Workforce Boards ➢ Mass Workforce Board Assn
C. Expand MVWIB website offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going • On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly update information on web site. • Post monthly and quarterly reports, labor market information, funding opportunities on website.

The MVWIB will promote activities that support and increase the economic vitality of employers and workers in the region.

Activity:	Timeframe	Benchmarks/Indicators
A. The MVWIB will identify and collaborate locally and jointly with other workforce development partners in efforts to expand resources for employers and job seekers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going • On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key workforce partners for joint activities. • Advocate for policy and funding changes that will increase resources in the region.
B. The MVWIB will engage in cross regional initiatives including special projects and grant opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The MVWIB will collaborate in at least one cross regional initiative annually.
C. Regularly communicate with local political leaders and other key stakeholders to ensure awareness of workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite and encourage regional political leaders to attend MVWIB meetings. • Hold legislative breakfast annually in collaboration with ValleyWorks Career

development issues and needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing 	Center.
D. The MVWIB will participate in CQI activities that will support the effectiveness of the Board.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ongoing ● On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The membership of the MVWIB will participate in planned WIB Institute training. ● The MVWIB requires CQI to be an ongoing activity in Career Center operations.
E. The MVWIB will actively recruit members from the identified critical sectors in the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The MVWIB ensures that at least one employer from each critical sector is represented on the MVWIB.
F. The MVWIB will engage in activities designed to promote and advocate for policy changes at the state and federal level that will support workforce activities in the region and State.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The MVWIB will participate in joint efforts with local and state partners to advocate for additional workforce resources.

The MVWIB will utilize demographic, labor market information and other relevant data from employers to identify and address education and training needs in key employment sectors.

Activity:	Timeframe	Benchmarks/Indicators
A. Promote development and partnerships with education and training providers focused on development of appropriate coursework for industries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-going ● On-going ● On-going ● On-going ● On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure the participation of educational institutions on industry focus groups. ● Creation of new course offerings in collaboration or consultation with employers. ● Facilitate employer involvement on curriculum committees and in evaluation of program designs and effectiveness ● Facilitate employer partnerships with vocational schools, proprietary schools and trainers. ● Require employment involvement in all MVWIB funded skill training activities
B. Articulate opportunities for employment/training in key sectors for “middle skilled” individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-going ● On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with employers and trainers to identify demand employment opportunities in key sectors requiring less than a college degree. ● Provide information to Career Counselors/Training providers, etc.

C. Facilitate engagement of employers in the design and development of skill acquisition programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-going ● On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue focus groups in key sectors for employers, education and training providers and other stakeholders. ● Facilitate involvement of employers in curriculum development, feedback and evaluation of effectiveness of programs for workers.
D. Better inform customers of their training and education options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FY 2014 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish list of vetted providers in key skill areas. ● Post list on MVWIB website.
E. Support and encourage opportunities for access to post secondary education or further training for the employed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The MVWIB works with employers to facilitate links with higher education/continued training for employees.
F. Provide incentives for employers to invest in employee learning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-Going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The MVWIB ensures that employers are aware of resources available through the WTF, WCTF or other sources for incumbent worker training.
G. Promote utilization of on-line or remote education for employees by employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FY 2014 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish list of providers offering on-line or remote education in key sectors.
H. Ensure youth serving organizations receive information on current and future workforce skills gap, education and training options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support, develop, and promote collaborative activities that link skills gap activities to youth pipeline activities.

The MVWIB will ensure the quality and appropriateness of training options and providers.

Activity	Timeframe	Benchmarks/Indicators
A. Utilize vacancy surveys to identify key demand occupations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-going ● On-going but will be strengthened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify gaps in education and training in demand occupations. ● Provide information to trainers, career counselors, and community based agencies.
B. Analysis of the utilization and performance of current vendors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annually ● On-going ● On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Report results to MVWIB Planning Committee. ● Assess quality and quantity of training opportunities in key sectors (Healthcare, Professional/Technical Services). ● Help sustain key providers/programs

		during this time of severe budget cuts Remove non performing vendors from approved training list.
--	--	--

The MVWIB will create and distribute current labor market and other informational materials to schools, education and training providers, career counselors and other stakeholders.

Activity	Timeframe	Benchmarks/Indicators
A. Identify and disseminate information on job openings, skill requirements, and education and training opportunities on a regular basis.	● Ongoing	● The MVWIB will provide links to all appropriate data sources.
B. Promote and provide informational sessions on the labor market and workforce issues.	● Ongoing	● The MVWIB will provide at least one labor market presentation per year for each school district in the region.
C. Provide information regarding critical and emerging employment sectors and occupations for use by job seekers, students, educators and trainers.	● Ongoing	● Disseminate via MVWIB website and newsletter distribution.

The MVWIB will support and facilitate the expansion of programs providing ABE and ESOL in the region that provide pathways to future employment.

Activity	Timeframe	Benchmarks/Indicators
A. Identify and support successful programs that create pathways for ABE/ESOL participants with Community Colleges and VWCC	● Ongoing	● Work with SABES program project, focused on facilitating transition of ABE/ESOL students to community colleges.
B. Identify and support successful program models that combine ABE/GED/ESOL with occupational skills training.	○ Ongoing ○ Ongoing ● FY2014	● Provide Technical Assistance to employers developing proposals. ● Support ESOL demo project with collaborating employers. ● Create a MOA prioritizing WIA training access to dedicated ABE/ESOL learners who cannot find work
D. Support the inclusion of Career Exploration and Guidance within ABE programs.	○ Ongoing	● Support and promote intention of DOE to add these activities in 5 year plan.
E. Increase the transition of unemployed ABE/ESOL to skill training activities.	○ Ongoing	● Increase percentage of individuals transitioning from ABE/ESOL programs into ITAs or group training.
F. Expand linkage between	○ Ongoing	● Require linkage with Career Centers

ABE/ESOL programs and Career Centers,		for all MVWIB funded activities for the unemployed or underemployed.
---------------------------------------	--	--

The MVWIB will promote and support activities that will retain or expand employment opportunities for older workers, ex-offenders, people with disabilities and others with perceived barriers to employment.

Activity	Timeframe	Benchmarks/Indicators
A. Identify and develop strategies that will support the hiring and retention of older workers; support employment of people with disabilities; and provide employment opportunities for ex-offenders and other groups with barriers to employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-going ● On-going ● On-going ● On-going ● On-going ● On-going ● On-going ● On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build on previous job retention initiatives. ● Support collaborative proposal with Operation Able to U.S.DOL. ● Provide information to employers on the impact of baby boomer retirements. ● Disseminate information on best practices in hiring/retaining older workers. ● Seek funding for focused older worker projects within the region. ● Participate in forums and events focused on retaining/hiring older workers ● Engage in at least one collaborative effort to increase resources for people with disabilities each year. ● Ensure employers and employment counselors are aware of tax credits available when hiring individuals in targeted groups. ● Provide information and training for staff on assisting individuals with CORI issues to obtain employment.

Youth in the Merrimack Valley Workforce Investment Area will all have access to appropriate services that maximize future employment opportunities.

Activity	Timeframe	Benchmarks/Indicators
----------	-----------	-----------------------

A. All MVWIB youth will have the opportunity to pursue a high school diploma or GED on-site at VWCC or at ABE/ESOL vendor sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RFPs will encouraged education at ABE/ESOL vendor sites ● WIB support for GED/ESOL programs will increase each year.
B. Career Pathways/ Connecting Activities/ Summer programs will be linked to MCAS remediation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going ○ On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The MVWIB will require Career Center staff to provide a list of MCAS remediation providers to all eligible youth coming to the Centers. ● The MVWIB will prioritize youth in need of MCAS remediation for enrollment in Summer Jobs and Connecting Activities programs.
C. Training and educational initiatives will be aligned with high growth and emerging industry sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop targeted training programs through dialogue with employers and education/training providers. ● Require collaboration between education/training providers and employers in the development of all program proposals.
D. Require career exploration and awareness activities within all MVWIB funded programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify employers and other relevant information and materials that will provide technical assistance to vendors designing activities.
E. Develop and expand activities designed to promote increased transition to post secondary education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing ○ On-going ○ On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Convene post secondary providers to develop collaborative outreach activities in region. ● Occupational Career Days in schools. ● Continue presence of Community College staff at Career Center.
F. Promote value of post secondary education for parents and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide Career Awareness programs for youth and parents throughout the region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Utilize Cable TV ➤ Radio stations ➤ CBOs and FBOs ➤ Social networking sites ➤ Community forums for parents and youth.

The MVWIB will facilitate relationships between employers and education and training providers to ensure the delivery of relevant academic and vocational instruction as appropriate.

Activity:	Timeframe	Benchmark
A. The MVWIB will facilitate and coordinate forums for employers, education and training providers and other workforce stakeholders to exchange information on skill needs and requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meetings will be scheduled for the manufacturing, healthcare and life sciences industries. ● Representatives from both vocational schools are active Youth Council Members.
B. The MVWIB will assist educators in obtaining employer participation in curriculum review, development, and evaluation for programs focused on STEM skill acquisition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The MVWIB will identify volunteers /mentors from industry interested in participating in this activity.
C. Additional externships for teachers will be developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The number of externships will increase each year.
D. Linkage and involvement of appropriate employers will be required in all MVWIB funded training activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Applicants must demonstrate involvement of employers in design and evaluation of program activities.
E. Align training and educational initiatives with new stimulus/recovery proposals, e.g. green jobs (construction, retrofitting of buildings and others) healthcare, manufacturing, life sciences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased number of related training programs and placements for youth that offer career advancement opportunities in industries particularly attractive to males. ● Increased employment in the numbers of work-ready youth filling related jobs.
F. Expand and improve youth work readiness services, including soft skills and internships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going ○ Ongoing ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emphasize soft skills and work readiness preparation as an integral part of all youth programs. ● Identify successful workforce preparation curriculum for replication. ● Expand high school internship programs. ● Promote exploration of the development of a recognized work readiness certificate for youth either Statewide or locally.

G. Facilitate access to training and apprenticeship programs for youth in the Merrimack Valley.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing ○ Ongoing ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Form focus group of representatives from municipalities and the construction and building trades to advise on stimulus bill infrastructure activities and program development. ● Encourage hiring requirements for local residents on projects. ● Work with NCMP focus group to develop pipeline activities in manufacturing industry.
H. The MVWIB will continuously monitor and review vendor quality and performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going ○ ○ ○ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quarterly Performance reviews. ● Bi Annual on site monitoring. ● Program Monitoring reports. ● Participant evaluations.
I. The MVWIB will actively support collaborations of youth serving organizations that provide a continuum of progress toward future employability through integrated programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ○ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The MVWIB will research and identify potential models for replication. ● The MVWIB will prioritize these models for funding

The MVWIB will support and vendor program options to engage youth, adults and dislocated workers who have significant barriers to employment or are under-employed.

Activity	Timeframe	Benchmarks/Indicators
A. Support and seek resources to expand the program options providing ABE/ESOL/GED preparation for youth and adults with less than a high school diploma.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify potential program models for expansion or development. ● Promote and support proposals for additional revenue for services to targeted populations.
B. Examine effectiveness of One-Stop Career Center services to meet the unique employability needs of adults, dislocated workers and unemployed youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased engagement of older youth, with an emphasis on males in activities at the One-Stop Career Centers. ● Partnerships developed with vendor providing new options in vocational training.
C. Increase in numbers of training options that are more gender neutral.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More males enrolled in education and training activities. ● More females engaged in training in non-traditional occupations.

D. Support development of non-traditional education models that incorporate educational curriculum and vocational training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going ○ Ongoing ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue and expand externship programs to build teacher awareness of “real” job requirements and needed skills. ● Support the development of occupational simulations as a teaching and skill development tool. ● Convene educators, providers and industry at least once a year for a presentation on MV labor market information and/or roundtable discussion with critical industry employers.
E. Increase outreach and marketing for youth in places where youth receive services, reside, play, hang-out, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On-going ○ Ongoing ○ Ongoing ○ Ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MVWIB Youth Council will establish a marketing committee of members and other youth programming stakeholders. ● A marketing plan will be developed. ● Marketing materials and strategy developed. ● Plan executed. ● Increase number of at risk youth in region who are aware of and access services at CC.
F. Cultivate role models and mentors for youth and adults from industry, neighborhoods, and successful graduates of career center programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mentors will encourage targeted youth to enroll in WIB related programs. ● The number of at risk youth participating in career center programs will increase each year.
G. Develop employment pathways for court involved youth and adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide CORI-related training to career centers and youth serving organizations to assist youth with criminal records. ● Identify models and support development of programming for court involved youth and adults.

Merrimack Valley WIB Strategic Plan Evaluation Method

We work to meet the performance outcomes listed in our Annual Plan. The Merrimack Valley WIB will review progress on its Strategic Plan at least quarterly utilizing the benchmarks, indicators and timeframes delineated in the preceding pages. A status report on the progress made in achieving

planned objectives related to the goals and activities will be provided to all MVWIB members at quarterly meeting and will be available to other system stakeholders and interested parties on the MVWIB website bi-annually. In addition the MVWIB provides quarterly reports on the website for all funded activities under the oversight of the WIB including customer utilization statistics and performance data.