



**MERRIMACK VALLEY  
WORKFORCE BOARD**

**MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board  
WIOA Local 4-Year Plan  
2022 - 2025**

**July 30, 2021**

## WIOA Local 4-Year Plan 2022 - 2025

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

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

The Northeast Labor Market Blueprint, which encompasses the Merrimack Valley, Greater Lowell, and North Shore regions of Massachusetts, and from which we draw much of the local region’s strategic priorities was completed in 2018 and was updated in 2020. The content below highlights more local dynamics and data points. For more information on our 2018 Regional Blueprint, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3xM0bn0>. For the 2020 update, please visit: <https://bit.ly/3xNwkdG>.

### Economic Conditions<sup>1 2 3</sup>

Merrimack Valley Average Household Income	<b>\$120,486</b>
Population	<b>360,903</b>
Employed	<b>172,441</b>
Unemployed	<b>15,997</b>

The region has seen an increase in population of 3.2 % from 2017 to 2020, which is down from 4.7% growth between 2012 and 2017.

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<sup>1</sup> Merrimack Valley Planning Commission Data Portal, <https://mvpc.org/data-portal/>

<sup>2</sup> Merrimack Valley Planning Commission Data Portal, <https://mvpc.org/data-portal/>

<sup>3</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Labor Force and Unemployment Report, <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/LMI/LaborForceAndUnemployment>

There has been an increase in total number of jobs from 2017, despite the COVID-19 downturn in 2020 and 2021. Total jobs have increased by 16.7%, from 147,730 to 172,441, although that increase most likely would have been higher if not for COVID-19. Average household income has continued to rise and can still be attributed to a tight labor market and the increase of the state’s minimum wage, until right before COVID-19.

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

INDUSTRY	EMPLOYMENT 2018	EMPLOYMENT 2028	(+/-) JOBS	CHANGE %
Health Care & Social Assistance	29,076	31,372	2,296	7.90%
Manufacturing	24,025	24,589	564	2.35%
Educational Services	14,440	14,453	13	0.09%
Retail Trade	12,331	11,799	-532	-4.31%
Accommodation & Food Services	11,250	11,681	431	3.83%
Food Services & Drinking Places	10,674	11,021	347	3.25%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	10,629	11,318	689	6.48%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	8,993	9,564	571	6.35%
Self Employed and Unpaid Family Workers, All Jobs	8,377	8,605	228	2.72%
Social Assistance	8,032	8,855	823	10.25%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation	7,842	7,824	-18	-0.23%
Construction	7,388	7,477	89	1.20%
Administrative and Support Services	7,059	7,092	33	0.47%
Specialty Trade Contractors	5,560	5,878	318	5.72%
Wholesale Trade	5,252	4,743	-509	-9.69%

The region is projected to see increases in jobs in Health Care & Social Assistance, Manufacturing, and Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services, among others. Per the Northeast Regional Blueprint<sup>5</sup>, and the 2020 Blueprint update<sup>6</sup> the highlighted industries have been identified as priorities.

### In Demand Occupations (Top 15)<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Long-term Industry Projections, <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/LMI/LongTermIndustryProjections>

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

<sup>6</sup> Northeast Labor Market Blueprint 2020 Update, <https://www.mass.gov/doc/northeast-regional-final-report/download>

<sup>7</sup> Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics, <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/LMI/OccupationalEmploymentandWageAllIndustries#>

OCCUPATION	MAY 2020
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	17,080
Production Occupations	11,820
Healthcare Support Occupations	11,320
Management Occupations	10,680
Sales and Related Occupations	10,480
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	9,410
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	9,240
Educational Instruction, and Library Occupations	9,210
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	9,140
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	8,120
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	7,120
Construction and Extraction Occupations	6,280
Cashiers	4,780
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	4,730
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	4,440

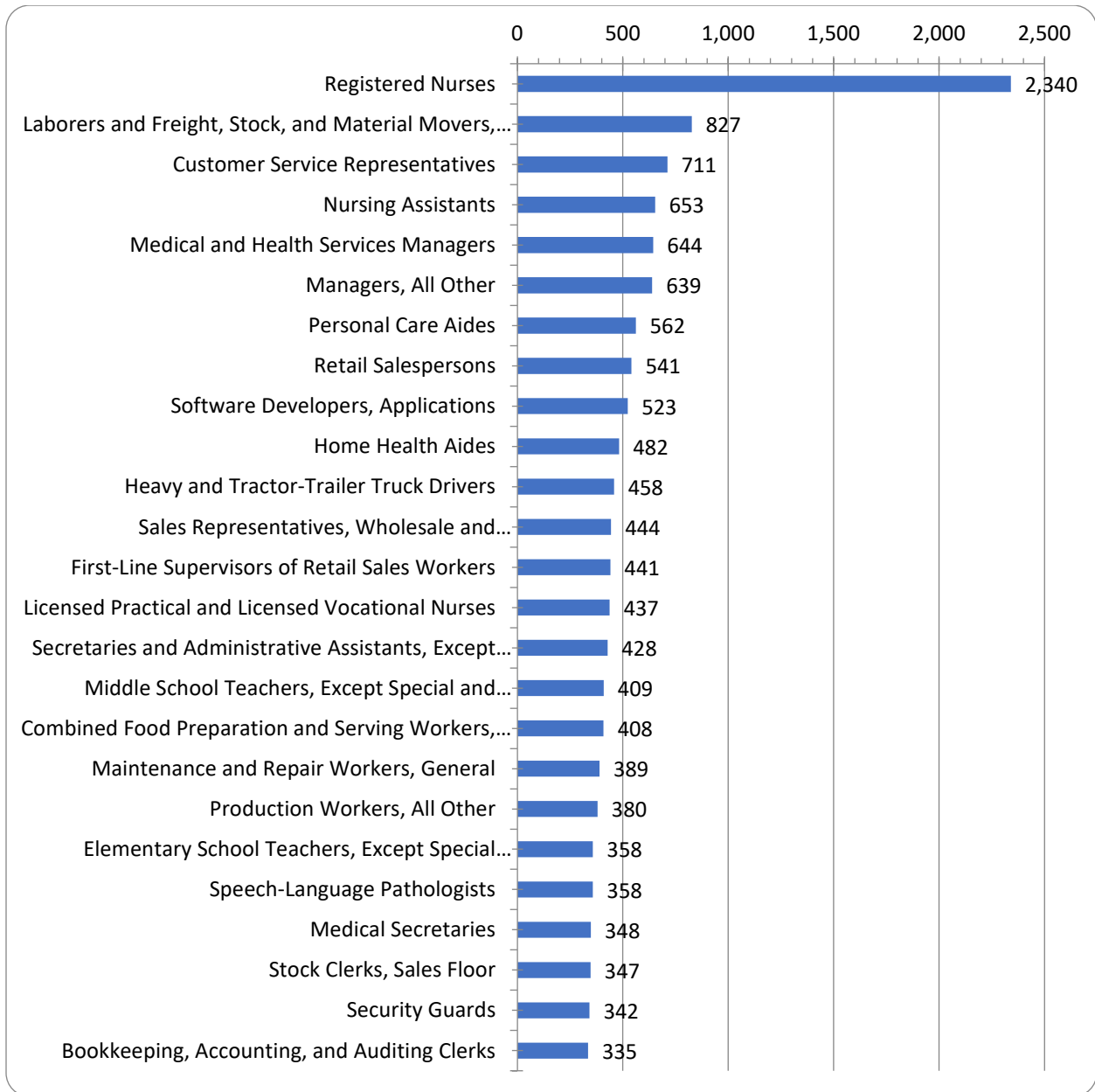
The chart above highlights the occupations with the most employees in the region. The highlighted occupations are ones that have been highlighted in the Northeast Region’s Local Market Blueprint<sup>8</sup> as well as the 2020 blueprint update<sup>9</sup>. The chart below tells a similar story of active job postings reflecting occupations with the highest demand in real time.

### Top 25 Job Postings<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Northeast Labor Market Blueprint 2018, Priority Occupations, <https://masshiremvwb.org/wp-content/uploads/Blueprintsigned3-30-18FINAL.pdf>

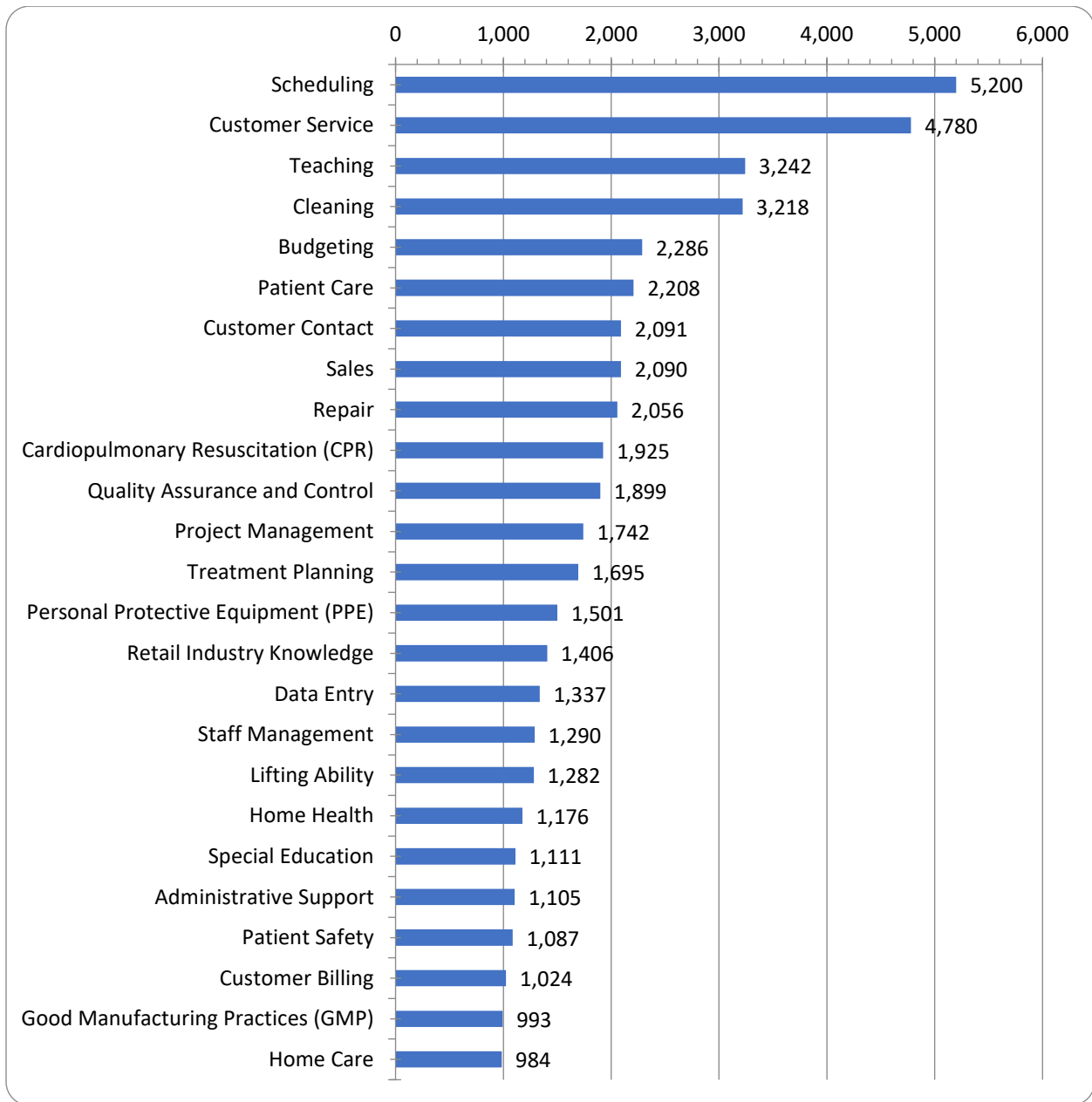
<sup>9</sup> Northeast Labor Market Blueprint 2020 Update, <https://www.mass.gov/doc/northeast-regional-final-report/download>

<sup>10</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, Labor Insight, Regional Analysis, Lower Merrimack Valley WDA, Jun. 01, 2020 - May. 31, 2021



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

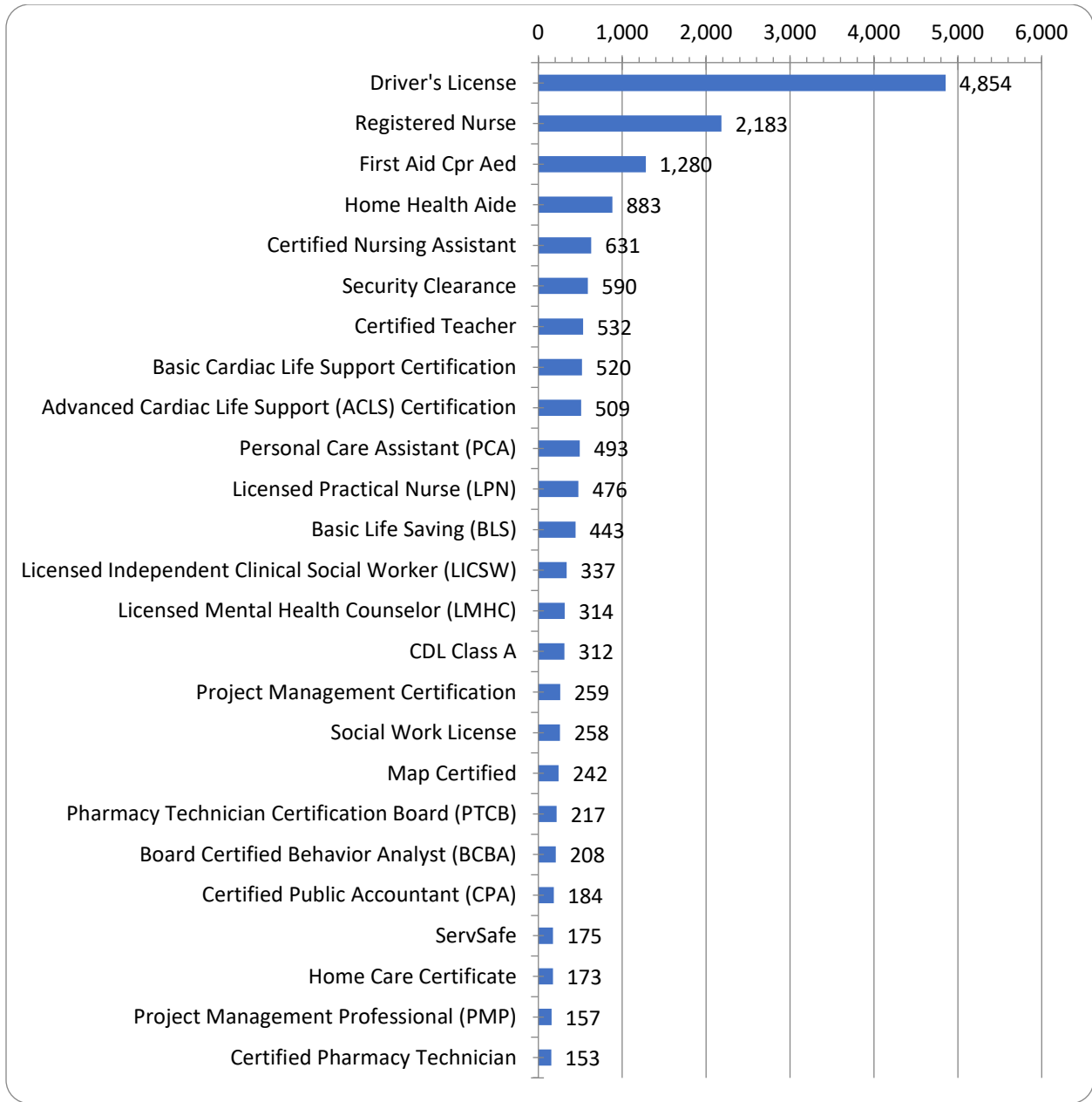
### Most Requested Skills<sup>11</sup>



### Most Requested Certifications<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, Labor Insight, Regional Analysis, Lower Merrimack Valley WDA, Jun. 01, 2020 - May. 31, 2021

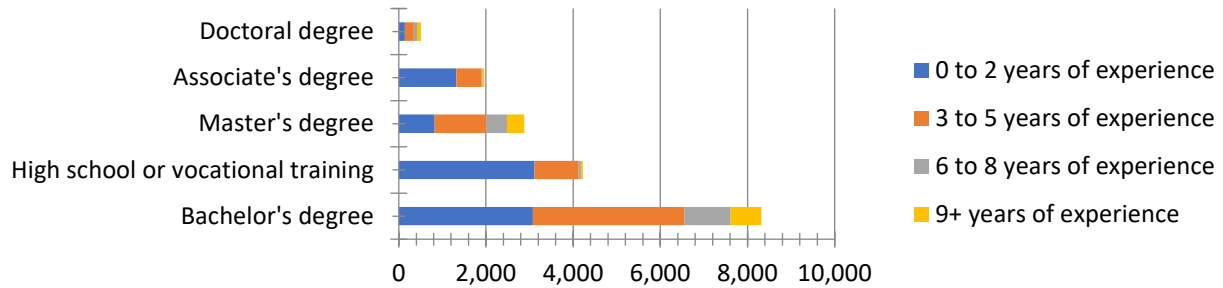
<sup>12</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, Labor Insight, Certification Analysis, Lower Merrimack Valley WDA, Jun. 01, 2020 - May. 31, 2021



### Education and Experience Required by Employers<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, Labor Insight, Regional Analysis, Lower Merrimack Valley WDA, Jun. 01, 2020 - May. 31, 2021

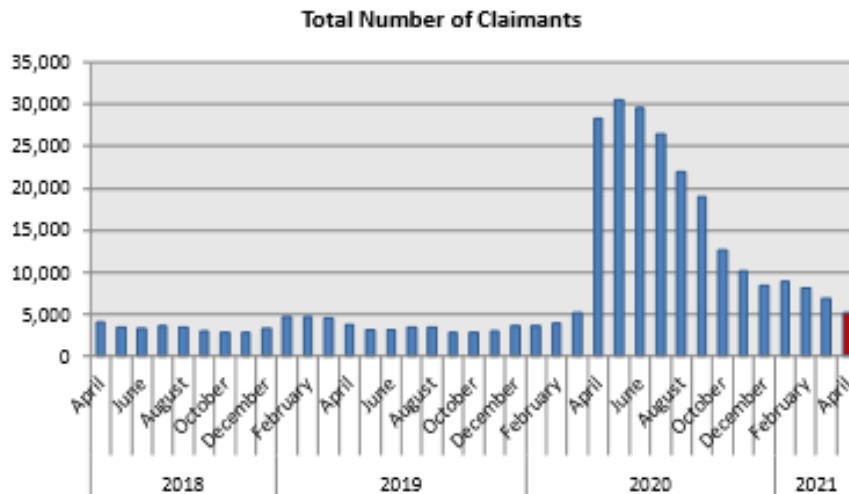
## The following levels of education and levels of experience are requested



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

### Merrimack Valley Unemployment<sup>14</sup>

As the chart below shows, the number of unemployment claims in the Merrimack Valley remained under 5,000 a month for two years from 2018 to 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began.



### Workforce<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance, UI Claimant Characteristics, Week Ending Apr. 17, 2021, <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/LMI/ClaimantProfiles>

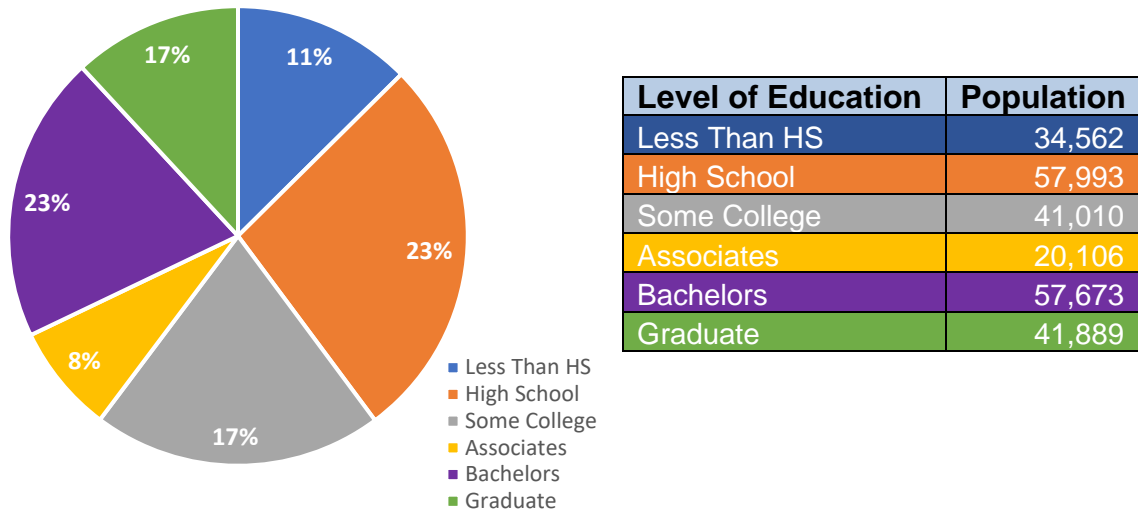
<sup>15</sup> Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Labor Force and Unemployment Data, <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/LMI/LaborForceAndUnemployment>



<i>Month</i>	<i>Labor Force</i>	<i>Employed</i>	<i>Unemployed</i>	<i>Area Rate</i>	<i>Massachusetts Rate</i>
May-21	191,152	176,888	14,264	7.5	6.1
Apr-21	189,837	176,061	13,776	7.3	5.9
Mar-21	189,742	174,706	15,036	7.9	6.6
Feb-21	190,561	174,170	16,391	8.6	7.3
Jan-21	189,339	172,708	16,631	8.8	7.5
Dec-20	188,438	172,441	15,997	8.5	7.3
Nov-20	188,626	171,928	16,698	8.9	7.7
Oct-20	187,599	170,183	17,416	9.3	8.1
Sep-20	185,914	166,542	19,372	10.4	8.9
Aug-20	187,099	167,253	19,846	10.6	9.1
Jul-20	184,217	162,685	21,532	11.6	10.1
Jun-20	190,879	158,374	32,505	17	14.8
May-20	183,513	151,074	32,439	17.7	15.4

The Merrimack Valley’s workforce has increased steadily since May 2020, the height of layoffs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

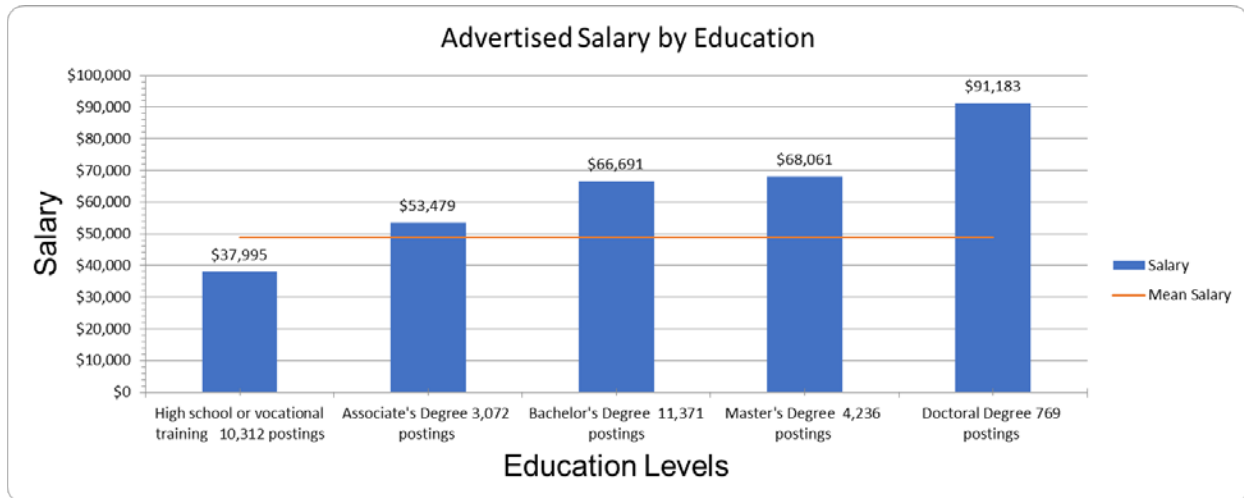
### Educational Attainment<sup>16</sup>



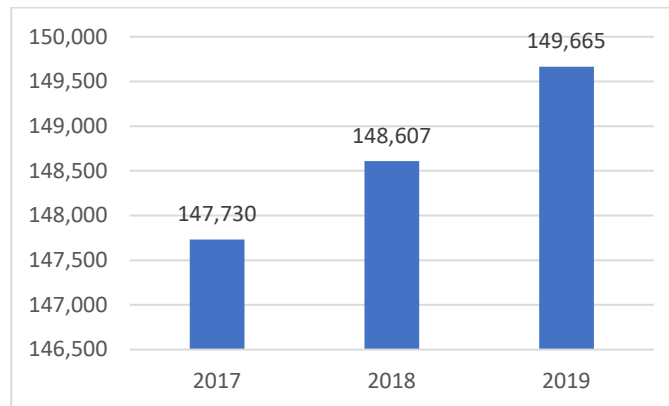
In the Merrimack Valley, 88% of the population has a high school degree or above. The numbers of residents with some college or an associate’s degree has declined while those with a bachelor’s degree or higher has increased.

<sup>16</sup> Merrimack Valley Planning Commission Data Portal, <https://mvpc.org/data-portal/>

### Salaries by Education Level<sup>17</sup>



### Total Jobs by Year 2017-2019<sup>18</sup>



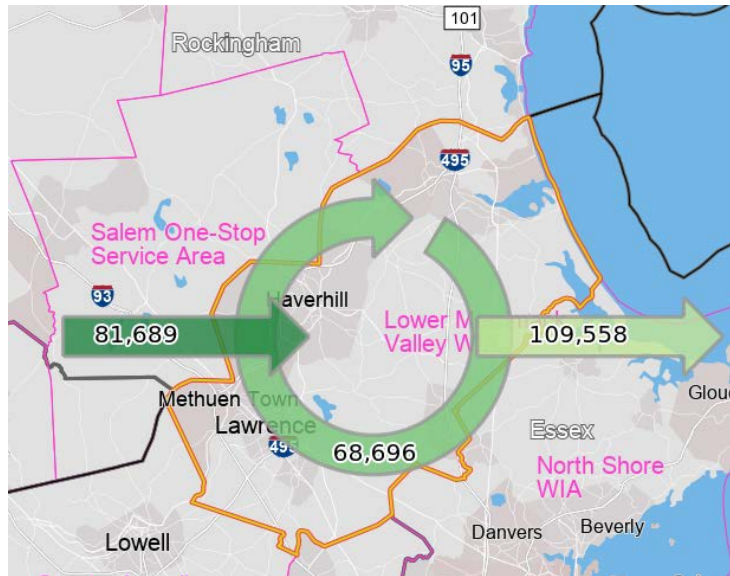
There has been an increase of approximately 2,000 jobs in the region since 2017.

### Employee Inflows and Outflows for Jobs in Merrimack Valley<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Burning Glass Technologies, Labor Insight, Salary Analysis, Lower Merrimack Valley WDA, Jun. 01, 2020 - May. 31, 2021

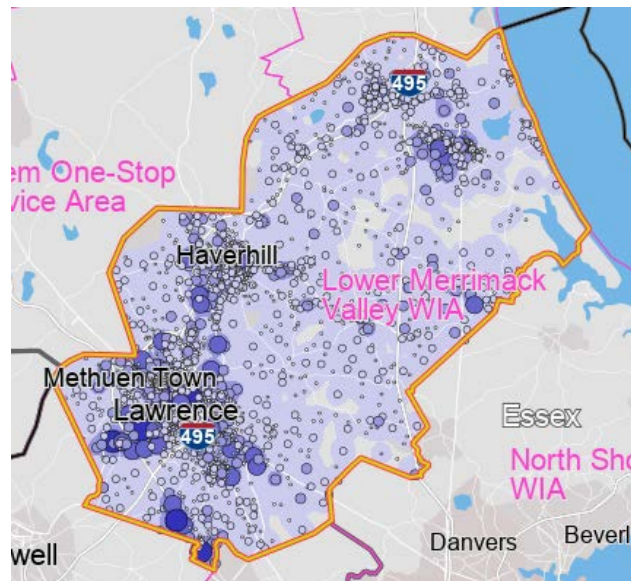
<sup>18</sup> Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Employment and Wages Survey (ES-202), <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/labor-market-information>

<sup>19</sup> US Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, Inflow/Outflow Analysis, 2018, <https://lehd.ces.census.gov/>



**81,689** employees come into the region for work  
**68,696** live and work in the region  
**109,558** leave the region for work outside of the region

The “Heat Map” below shows the concentration of jobs/employment within the region. The larger and darker the area the greater the concentration of jobs.<sup>20</sup>



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

<sup>20</sup> US Census, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, OnTheMap, Regional Analysis, 2018, <https://lehd.ces.census.gov/>

- a) *include strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities*
- b) *address the capacity to provide the workforce development activities around:*
  - I. *Education and skill needs of the workforce;*
  - II. *individuals with barriers to employment;*
  - III. *employment needs of businesses.*

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

- Continuing the Northeast Region's effort to develop and update the Northeast Regional Blueprint. This effort is in partnership with MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board as well as MassHire North Shore Workforce Board.
- Leveraging the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium to continue to develop apprenticeship and manufacturing related training.
- Developing a Health Care Hub modeled after the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium
- Maintaining industry clusters for our Business Service Representatives to focus on. Those areas include Manufacturing, Trades, Health Care, and Professional Services.
- Coordination of Employer-Facing organizations to better align outreach efforts.
- Recognizing that there is a larger Spanish speaking population, efforts have begun to study best practices around bilingual manufacturing floors. The premise being that if language is a barrier for employment, and businesses need the help, are there steps employers can take to leverage the Spanish speaking workforce without disrupting operations.
- Our One-Stop Operator, Norther Essex Community College, has introduced a process to gain credentials using foreign degrees. This helps immigrants utilize their years of post-secondary education here in the United States.
- Continue to support occupational training programs in priority industries

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

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

- a) *The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;*
- b) *The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wagner-Peyser Act Program (as amended by Title III)

WIOA Title I Adult Program

WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program

WIOA Title I Youth Program

Veterans Programs

TRADE Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for Workers Programs whose activities are authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974

MassHire BizWorks / Rapid Response

Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment RESEA Services

National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) programs

Adult Education Programs (Title II)

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

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

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), EOHHS

Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), EOHHS

Senior Community Service Employment Program, Operation ABLE

Greater Lawrence Community Action Council

School to Career Connecting Activities (MA DESE)

YouthWorks Summer subsidized employment/training (Commonwealth Corporation)

YouthWorks Year-Round grant (Commonwealth Corporation)

Leadership, Employment, Advocacy Development program (LEAD), formerly Bridging the Opportunity Gap Program (BOG), Department of Youth Services, EOHHS

Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC) funded advanced manufacturing occupational skills trainings and apprenticeships (Various funders, with the latest from the General Electric Foundation)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grants for ESOL-Enhanced Training (Manufacturing) and Placement Programs

Northeast HealthCare HUB Workforce Consortium, led by the MassHire North Shore Workforce Board in partnership with MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board and MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board to ultimately design programs for targeted healthcare occupations and build capacity

Joint U.S Department of Labor grant application with the State and Franklin Hampshire to support the individuals impacted by the opioid crisis. Training opportunities to include health worker, recovery coach, paramedic & EMT.

Partnered with an area non-profit and Greater Lawrence Technical School to secure funding through EOHEd's Urban Agenda Grant Program. The grant allowed the team to support parents of Lawrence Public School students access IT training.

Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grants (WCTF FY19) for a Medical Assistant Training (MAT) Program. An incumbent worker training also available to unemployed and underemployed.

Career Technical Initiative aimed at training skilled trades workers over the next four years to help close skills gaps and meet the needs of businesses across the Commonwealth.

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

The MassHire MVWB supports and works with the Northern Essex Community College (NECC) operated MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center which carries out WIOA Title I and Title III core programs. MassHire MVCC is staffed by both NECC and MassHire Department of Career Services staff. An annual umbrella contract governs our relationship, and the MassHire MVWB provides oversight and monitoring of all key performance indicators established in the work statements of each program operated by MassHire MVCC.

Collaboration with OSCC Partners, many whom carry out WIOA Title II and Title IV core programs, was outlined in the WIOA Partners MOU ensures service alignment. The key areas of focus are highlighted in the following 10 Assurances found in the MOU:

1. Enter into a local MOU with the MassHire Workforce Board relating to operation of the MassHire Career Center delivery system.
2. Participate in the operation of the MassHire Career Center delivery system consistent with the terms of this MOU, the requirements of WIOA, and the requirements of Federal laws authorizing the programs and activities.
3. Agree to serve Shared Customers and define how multiple providers, services and resources should support youth, job seekers, and businesses.
4. Utilize the MassHire Career Center Customer Flow and incorporate partner agency points of referral whether in-person or virtual to ensure accessibility and availability of programs and services for shared customers.
5. Ensure the effective use of modern tools and technology that enable shared customers to access needed services to complete program participation and achieve training and employment goals.
6. Develop a process for partner communication, referrals, enrollment, and sharing outcome information on shared customers to staff. Develop a process to review data on shared customers.
7. Use a portion of the funds available for programs and activities to maintain the MassHire Career Center delivery system, including infrastructure and shared costs of MassHire Career Centers, through methods agreed upon by the Local Board, Chief Elected Official, and Partners. If no consensus on methods is reached, the Governor, after consultation with the Chief Elected Official, Local Board, and State Board shall determine the portion of funds to be provided (WIOA sec. 121(a)(h)(1)(C)).
8. Provide representation on the Local Workforce Boards to the extent possible and/or participate in Local Board ad hoc activities/events or on standing committees.
9. Convene locally as an MOU Team at least quarterly and agree to the roles and responsibilities each Partner will have in the development of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive integrated service delivery strategy that meets the needs of customers and businesses.
10. The MOU will be reviewed, and if substantial changes have occurred, renewed, not less than once every 3-year period to ensure appropriate funding and delivery of services. The MOU must be updated to reflect any change in the MHCC Partner infrastructure cost contributions.

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

Our Connecting Activities program provides internship supports to both programs, as well as to Methuen High School's Chapter 74 program in Biotechnology and in Programming & Web Development.

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



- (i.) *Expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;*

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

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

- (ii.) *Facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and*

- (iii.) *Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable);*

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

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

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

Ensuring co-enrollment of customers whenever possible and appropriate between different core programs is also a priority of the Board. Co-location of WIOA core partners at the MassHire MVCC facilitates this process, and career center staff has received training in partner programs, and vice

versa, to better determine which customers are a fit for co-enrollment. We are also in the process of streamlining eligibility and enrollment between WIOA and non-formula funded programs so customers can access all services for which they qualify, and which would be beneficial. The WIOA partners will meet regularly in 2021 and beyond to further advance co-enrollment and ensure access to career pathways.

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

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

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

- (ii.) To serve agricultural businesses including plans to improve those services;*

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

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

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

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

The MassHire MVWB works closely with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC). The former Executive Director of the MassHire MVWB played a key role in the development of MVPC's 2018-2023 Merrimack Valley Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy completed in June of 2018.

*(v.) To strengthen linkages between reemployment assistance and unemployment insurance programs;*

MassHire MVCC staff link unemployment assistance with reemployment assistance offered through the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program, which helps unemployment insurance claimants return to work faster. Permanently separated claimants are required to participate in the RESEA program. The program includes a Career Center Seminar, a Career Action Plan, and 1-on-1 assistance.

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

*(vi.) Describe how your Board coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide Rapid Response activities;*

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

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

*(vii.) Please describe procedures to offer MassHire Career Center Business Services and MassHire BizWorks programs to local businesses;*

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

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

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

- Incumbent worker training: BSRs and the MassHire Workforce Board regularly explore with employers how to collaborate to provide subsidized pre-employment training for workers to qualify for entry level jobs, and then have employers contribute to strengthening their workforce and promoting individuals by investing in incumbent worker training. This has been done successfully in the youth healthcare program described in section 2. iii, and in our EPA funded trainings where employers maintain worker qualifications by supporting short-term incumbent worker training.
- On-The-Job training: In 2018, MassHire MVCC hired a BSR with significant experience in OJTs. With this new expertise on board, the career center has ramped up OJT placements over the 3-year plan period.
- Customized Training Programs: MassHire MVWB currently operates three customized training programs for returning citizens or court-involved youth, and two additional customized programs – one for pre-school parents and another for unemployed adults. We also operate a Medical Assistant Training (MAT) Program. An incumbent worker training also available to unemployed and underemployed.
- Industry / Sector strategies: Our most successful sector strategy is NAMC, which addresses employer labor market demand in advanced manufacturing. We have developed a healthcare sector strategy in collaboration with the state’s initiative, and we are still considering consolidating our construction-related programs into a trades sector strategy initiative.
- Career Pathways: Strategies discussed in section b) 2. (iii.)
- Utilization of effective business intermediaries: Select business intermediaries, in the form of reputable staffing agencies, are considered employer partners in the Merrimack Valley workforce system. They are identified and recruited in two ways. First, through the Business Service Unit at the career center. Business Service Representatives engage with staffing agencies to understand their labor needs and how they coincide with the employment needs of job seeker customers. Staffing agencies are included in hiring events and their vacancies are included in job listings. Second, business intermediaries are sometimes partners in our grant funded job training programs. In both cases, the employment opportunities offered by staffing agencies fulfills the needs of some job seekers – especially those who lack transportation so are served well by an agency located close-by, or for those who need work experience to be competitive for direct hire. As a rule, both the Board and the Career Center refer job seekers to direct hire employment with priority industry employers, rather than through a business intermediary, whenever practicable.

*(4) Please provide a description of how your Board:*

- *Coordinates local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities*

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

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

In response to COVID-19, the MVWB has provided support services to businesses in the affected area. More specifically, the MVWB along with MVCC will deliver:

1. A job fair, or series of job fairs, designed to provide qualified workers to businesses who lost their workforce during a period of closure and now need new workers to continue and grow their businesses
2. Training for business owners and/or current workforce on a topic or topics to be determined (possibilities include ESOL, Operating a Small Business, Finances and Emergency Loans for Small Business Owners)
3. Training and job placement services for workers who have lost their jobs due to slowed business or closure of their employer who was affected by the gas explosions and fires.
4. Help connect local food business with grants to provide meals to those affected by COVID while simultaneously helping those businesses stay afloat

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

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

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

As part of the planning process of designing new group trainings for in-demand occupations, we form employer advisory groups to counsel us on soft and hard skills and credentials needed to prepare job seekers for these jobs. We then work with local or regional education providers to

ensure training availability – and if it does not exist, we have invited trainers to our region, have assisted local trainers to offer a new course or include transportation support services for trainees to travel to the training site. Further, we counsel trainers on how to qualify for the Eligible Training Provider List and get courses approved for Section 30 and in our region – so WIOA training funds can be used through ITAs for these new trainers and courses.

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

*(ii.) How the Board facilitates access to services provided through the MassHire Career Center(s), including in remote areas, through the use of virtual services, technology and other means;*

The Merrimack Valley Workforce Development Area is comprised of towns, cities, and suburbs, with no truly remote areas. Nonetheless, we are facilitating access to MassHire MVCC services using technology and plan to continue expanding this ability over the next three years.

The COVID-19 pandemic put the development of virtual services on a fast-track for MMVCC. Shortly after the onset of the pandemic, MMVCC converted all services to virtual. This included membership desk welcoming and communication with customers; delivery of career center seminars and workshops; individual employment counseling sessions; basic skills assessment; access to online basic, computer and software, and job readiness skill development; and employer recruitments, job fairs, and other services.

Tools that have been launched and for which staff have been trained to use include MS Teams for interoffice messaging and impromptu online meetings; Google Voice for phone communication with customers; Amazon WorkDocs and OneDrive to replace in-office user file storage with a cloud-based system; MS SharePoint to replace local server files with a cloud-based system that staff can use to collaborate on projects and store and share documents; MS Outlook with the encrypted email feature active; Commonwealth Secure Email System for sensitive customer document requests; Zoom, WebEx, and GoToMeeting FaceTime, and WhatsApp; used for audio and video remote communication with customers; Premier Virtual for virtual job fairs; WorkKeys for math and reading level assessment and skill level improvement; SkillBase – platform developed by Harvard University that contains curated sites where customers can study and practice basic English language skills, improve math and reading skills, and reinforce job search skills; an enhanced version of Rosetta Stone to practice English language skills; and an enhanced version of Professor Teaches to study Microsoft Office Suite programs online.

On-site technology upgrades have been made to enhance both virtual and in-person services including an upgrade of the Lawrence Computer Lab with state-of-the-art computers; webcams added to all staff computers; new headsets issued to all staff that interface with customers; new printers that can wirelessly print from a mobile device; single sign-on using Windows Hello to simplify staff computer access; dedicated workstations equipped with video cameras and headphones that customers can utilize to attend online workshops/webinars and virtual job interviews - workstations will be pre-loaded with remote tools such as Zoom, Teams, and WebEx;

and iPads deployed for proprietary Apple apps such as FaceTime and employer chat using iMessage for companies.

This description is provided to illustrate MMVCC's capacity to use technology to provide services virtually when determined to be needed and to best serve customers.

As the pandemic subsides, decisions will be made regarding the menu and mix of services that will be provided both virtually and in-person. Providing high quality services that meet customer need and demand will drive decisions regarding the mix of in-person and virtual services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The MassHire MVCC is a comprehensive one stop career center with offices in downtown Lawrence and in downtown Haverhill. They provide a full range of WIOA adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities as described in the table below.

<b>ADULT &amp; DISLOCATED WORKER JOB SEEKER ACTIVITIES</b>		
<b>BASIC CAREER SERVICES</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL CAREER SERVICES</b>	<b>TRAINING</b>
<b>WIOA BASIC CAREER SERVICES ARE SELF-SERVICE AND/OR INFORMATIONAL.</b>	<b>WIOA INDIVIDUALIZED SERVICES ASSIST THROUGH THE EXPLORATION OF CAREERS, TRAININGS, AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.</b>	<b>TRAININGS ARE FUNDED BY WIOA AND OTHER SOURCES; TRAINEES MUST MEET SPECIFIC ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA TO PARTICIPATE.</b>
Outreach, intake and orientation to the information, services, program tools and resources available in the local workforce system.	Comprehensive & specialized assessments of skill levels and service needs.	Occupational skills training through WIOA funded Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)
Initial assessment of skill level(s), aptitudes, abilities & support service needs.	Development of an Individual Employment Plan (also known as a Career Action Plan) to ID employment goals and services to achieve goals.	On-The-Job Training
In- and out-of-area job search assistance (including information on in-demand industry sectors & non-traditional employment.	Information on eligible training providers and referral to training.	Registered apprenticeship work & learning opportunities
Information on labor market demand, vacancies, and job skills needed to apply	Individual counselling & career planning	Industry sector partnership trainings, such as through NAMC.
Eligibility determination for Adult, DW & Youth programs	Case management for individuals seeking training, and for individuals during job search, referral, and placement.	Incumbent worker training
Referrals to & coordination of activities with other programs, esp. WIOA partners, and services, esp. support services.	Workforce preparation workshops on job seeking and job readiness topics such as punctuality, communications, resume writing, interviewing skills, financial literacy, professional conduct, etc.	Grant funded group occupational skills plus soft skills training opportunities for in demand occupations
Performance of local area on accountability measures	Work experience, transitional jobs, registered apprenticeships, & internships	Referrals to adult education & literacy activities in combination



		with training services (all provided by AEFLA providers)
Information in Spanish – the 2 <sup>nd</sup> most common language in the region.	Post-employment follow-up services and support, including additional counselling, contact with employer, peer support, info. on additional education.	
Information & assistance on UI claims.		
Assistance in establishing eligibility for financial aid for non-WIOA programs.		

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- The Employment Advancement Reentry NOW! (EARN) program will provide at least 95 court involved 18-24-year-old Lawrence residents with wrap around services and occupational skills training to achieve employment or enrollment in higher education. In early FY19 we became the recipient of the US Department of Labor Reentry Project (RP) grant that will support EARN implementation. We are contracted with Lawrence Prospera, Inc. through their SISU Youth Center, the United Teen Equality Center (UTEC), as well as our career center and NAMC, to collaboratively reach EARN goals. Trainings will be supported with funds leveraged from our WIOA, NAMC, and YouthWorks Year-Round grants. Enrollment has been challenging and was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic as access to criminal justice institutions was curtailed.
- The Leadership, Employment, Advocacy Development program (LEAD) replaced the Bridging the Opportunities Gap (BOG) program which improves the life chances of Department of Youth Services (DYS) court-involved youth through education, work experience and ongoing support that encourages pro-social behavior and personal advancement. Participants gain job readiness skills, an increased awareness of post-secondary options and the knowledge of careers available to them, as well as the opportunity to identify their areas of personal interest. Youth are also able to take advantage of job shadow, short-term internships, and subsidized employment. This is an open enrollment opportunity and only individuals referred by DYS are eligible.

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

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

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

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

- Connecting Activities - which links schools to careers in area priority industries. It is operated in collaboration with 8 local high schools, including Lawrence High School, Lawrence Learning Center, Methuen HS, Haverhill HS, Newburyport HS, Amesbury HS and Whittier Regional Technical School and Greater Lawrence Technical School. Our school year 2021-2022 goal is to place 350 students in jobs / internships, provide pre-placement job readiness workshops to all 350 students, ensure 75 are Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) placements, and offer Career Development Activities such as Company Tours, Job Shadow Days, and employer panels. Our 3-year CA Plan called for increasing STEM placements by 20 each year, increasing parent outreach, and working in closer collaboration with the MassHire MVCC BSU and with Chapter 74 schools and programs.
- YouthWorks Summer – subsidized employment for in school and out of school income eligible youth between the ages of 14 and 21 who live in Lawrence, Haverhill, or Methuen. During summer 2021 we plan on enrolling over 300 youth in YouthWorks. They will gain employability skills, exposure to career pathways and the opportunity to identify their areas of interest through a series of workshops. Then all will participate in a subsidized work experience with a local non-profit, public or private sector employer, where feedback on performance will be gained through the Work-Based Learning Plan. This program enhances school-year internships and job shadow days held by schools and / or our Connecting Activities program.

*(9) How does the Board coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area? Please include a description of how other programs and services in your local area are leveraged to compliment workforce investment activities.*

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

Supportive Services are provided with the understanding that customers will not become dependent upon such services, but rather self-sufficient and able to make their own arrangements by the time they complete participation in program(s) accessed through the MassHire MVCC. Such services are provided

only to customers who are without the means to pay for such services themselves or through other resources. Therefore, we partner with local WIOA Partners and nonprofit agencies to refer customers for assistance prior to being considered for WIOA Support Services.

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

Additional appropriate support services are provisioned to coordinate with WIOA Title I workforce investment activities. This includes support for medical services, High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) costs, uniforms & tools, childcare, other testing, and certification fees. WIOA customers must follow the Support Services Policy guidelines and prescribed process to receive support service benefits.

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

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

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

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

- (12) *Please describe how the Board coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA title II? This description must include how the Board carries out the review of local applications submitted under title II consistent with WIOA secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec. 232:*

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

- a) of how funds awarded under this title will be spent consistent with the requirements of this title;*
- b) any cooperative arrangements the eligible provider has with other agencies, institutions, or organizations for the delivery of adult education and literacy activities;*
- c) how the eligible provider will provide services in alignment with the local plan under section 108, including how such provider will promote concurrent enrollment in programs and activities under title I, as appropriate;*
- d) how the eligible provider will meet the State adjusted levels of performance described in section 116(b)(3), including how such provider will collect data to report on such performance indicators;*
- e) how the eligible provider will fulfill Career Center partner responsibilities as described in section 121(b)(1)(A), as appropriate;*
- f) how the eligible provider will provide services in a manner that meets the needs of eligible individuals; and*
- g) information that addresses the considerations described under section 231(e), as applicable.*

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

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

- Providing representation of the workforce system at adult education sponsored community events

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

The MassHire MVWB has been designated by the City of Lawrence to be the Fiscal Agent. Executive Director Brian Norris is the contact person; his phone number is (978) 682-7099 or (978) 857-5394, and his email address is [bnorris@masshiremvwb.org](mailto:bnorris@masshiremvwb.org).

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

*Describe how the Local Board/Career Center intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partnerships with local service providers (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements). (Note: There is a statewide collaborative agreement in place between DCS and the New England Farm Workers' Council (NEFWC), the WIOA Sec. 167 Grantee. A copy of the agreement will be included as part of the consolidated State Plan).*

Please find attached the executed Memorandum of Understanding between required WIOA partners, which defines how all local service providers will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in our Career Center delivery system, including efforts to enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. The MassHire MVWB intends to build upon our already existing collaboration with partners through maintaining quarterly meetings as described in Section IV., Assurances of the MOU. The Assurances found in Section IV. of the MOU also describe how relationships will be maintained and joint service delivery will be continuously improved.

Closer partnerships have been established with the adjacent workforce boards – the MassHire North Shore WB and the MassHire Greater Lowell WB. Linkage has been strengthened through the

Regional Labor Market Blueprint development process, where together we also formed much stronger ties with economic development agencies, private sector employers, and institutions of higher education and vocational schools. Shared goals for the 2018-2022 are listed below, followed by a December 2020 update:

Northeast Regional Labor Market Blueprint		
By 2018, we accomplished...	By 2020, we accomplished...	By 2022, we will...
<p>Increased understanding of the region’s economic development, workforce development, and education services resources through completion of first annual resource inventory focused on education and training opportunities for our priority industries. This included a review of existing ESOL programs, particularly those that are focused on our urban areas, to ascertain where additional resources should be focused.</p> <p>Increased participation in the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Coalition (NAMC) cross-region sector initiative by 100 students and 10 industry participants.</p>	<p>Additional awareness of the Northeast Regional Planning Team’s efforts by increasing the distribution list, use of social media, by 50%.</p> <p>Advised the State in establishing and providing data for a dashboard. Identified key data points and sources and establish regular data reporting times from all partners.</p> <p>Increased the number of completions in priority occupations by 1% or 100 completions per year.</p> <p>Established a second industry sector initiative from among the priority industries and targeted training to serve the industry sector</p>	<p>See positive movement in the total job numbers for priority industries.</p> <p>Increase number of completions in priority occupations by 1% or 100 completions per year.</p>

**NORTHEAST REGIONAL LABOR MARKET BLUEPRINT UPDATE 2020**

**Priorities**

We are ready to work with several health care companies in different subsectors on several programs, including HHA/CNA apprenticeships leading to nursing, housekeeping to clean tech to surgical tech pathway, and highly skilled schedulers with strong customer service skills. These and other ideas are being discussed and will become a reality through our new Health Care Hub planning grant.

Within advanced manufacturing, our regional goal is to continue the success of NAMC by pursuing state, federal, and private funding sources. This is a coordinated effort across the workforce boards, vocational technical high schools, and community colleges. New/enhanced areas of training will include robotics as



well as other emerging occupations identified through the Manufacturing USA Institutes, as part of the Mass Tech Collaborative's Mass Bridge initiative.

In IT, we hope to implement a Google IT Certification which includes customer service, networking, troubleshooting, security, and related skills. This new certification is being vetted by business and shows promise for entry-level employment through a primarily on-line learning environment.

### **Partnerships**

Through the Healthcare Hub Planning grant, we envision developing a healthcare consortium to mirror the success of our advanced manufacturing consortium – NAMC. During the plan phase we will bring together three MassHire workforce regions North Shore, Merrimack Valley, and Greater Lowell Workforce Boards to establish an employer lead healthcare consortium that will assess and identify the current industry needs. This 'demand driven' consortium will ultimately ensure development of healthcare related training related programs for residents that meet the needs of the healthcare industry identified.

The Northeast Healthcare Hub (Hub) will recruit healthcare stakeholders including educators and employers representing acute care/outpatient services, long-term Care, community health, and home care services. A Business Leadership Team (BLT) will be developed comprising healthcare employers interested and capable of providing quality direction and support to the Hub. The BLT will ensure that all curriculum developed and implemented meets the real-time needs of the Healthcare industry. In addition, there will be an Educational Leadership Team, comprised of community colleges and other training providers to respond to the ideas and concerns expressed by the Business Leadership Team, and to develop training responses as requested and required. In order to identify current Healthcare industry needs members of the Hub will develop surveys and evaluation questions to disseminate to and interview healthcare employers. Evaluation will occur through surveying, one-on-one interviews, or focus groups. This data will be collected and analyzed along with quantitative data gathered through real-time labor market databases. The Hub will meet monthly to assess the data gathered, provide information on immediate industry needs, provide direction on how to meet these needs, and advice on how to determine training.

In addition, we hope to build a stronger understanding and a new consortium around IT once the Healthcare Hub is off the ground. This could involve a gathering of CIOs/CTOs from across the region, which would provide the basis upon which we move forward in this industry/occupation.

### **Employer Engagement**

Employer engagement continues to be an integral part of the work of the Northeast region. This includes focus groups with employers in the priority and critical industries. As previously mentioned, the Healthcare Hub planning grant will heavily involve employer participation from acute care/outpatient services, long-term care, community health, and home care services. Their feedback and guidance will guide the region's next steps.

Regarding manufacturing, NAMC is guided by the consortium's business leadership team. The team is comprised of regional employers that communicate their workforce development, training, and overall business needs. NAMC pursues funding sources that will directly respond to their needs.

Robust partnerships exist between the MassHire MVWB, MassHire MVCC and local non-profit service providers, training vendors and educational institutions to carry out grant funded occupational skills trainings. These are governed by MOU's or are contract based. Participants are frequently co-enrolled in WIOA or receive Wagner-Peyser services in addition to grant funded workforce development services. Programs are industry sector specific are targeted on specific special populations. The collaborations formed are subsequently built upon and serve as the basis to expand the workforce system's impact. Examples include partnerships formed for the Environmental Technical Training Program, Reintegration through Construction Pathways, Advanced Manufacturing for Pre-School Parents, Reentry Opportunities for Youth, NAMC advanced manufacturing trainings, Healthcare Hub, ESOL-Enhanced Manufacturing, Medical Assistant Training. On-going partnerships are also a hallmark of our youth programs, including Leadership, Employment, Advocacy Development; Connecting Activities; and YouthWorks Summer / Year-Round.

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

The competitive process that is and will be used by MassHire MVWB to award sub grants and contracts for WIOA title I activities follows the guidelines set forth in MA Issuance 100 DCS 01.102 as well as our local Procurement Policy updated 11.7.16. Our Board has a single contract for its regional WIOA Title I activities with Northern Essex Community College which was selected through a competitive process to operate MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center. This process must take place at least once every 4 years and be done in accordance with WIOA, and state laws and policies governing One-Stop Operator procurement. Our second procurement process was completed in June 2021 and Northern Essex Community College was selected to continue the work. A review committee comprised of Board members and local WIOA partners reviews proposals and makes recommendations for selection.

*(15) Please provide the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official consistent with WIOA sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of your local area and to be used by the Local Board for measuring the performance of your local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA title I subtitle B, and the Career Center system in the local area.*

*Local Boards may insert or provide a link to local performance goals. Link must be accessible to ACLS bidders.*

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

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>FY2021 Local Goal</b>	<b>FY2022 Local Goal</b>
<b>WIOA ADULT MEASURES</b>		
Employment Q2	86.5%	86.5%
Employment Q4	78%	78%

Median Earnings Q2	\$5,200	\$6,200
Credential Rate	68%	73.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	40%	40%
<b>WIOA DISLOCATED WORKER MEASURES</b>		
Employment Q2	86%	86%
Employment Q4	85%	85%
Median Earnings Q2	\$7,700	\$8,800
Credential Rate	60%	66%
Measurable Skills Gains	40%	40%
<b>WIOA YOUTH MEASURES</b>		
Employment/Education Q2	80.5%	81.0%
Employment/Education Q4	73%	74%
Median Earnings Q2	\$3,500	\$3,600
Credential Rate	70.5%	70.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	50%	50%

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

PROGRAM ACTIVITY	ANNUAL PLAN
<b>Job Seeker Services</b>	
1. Total Job Seekers Served	6,260
a. Job Seekers Unemployed	5,791
b. Persons with Disabilities	300
c. UI Claimants Served	4/523
d. Veterans Served	271
2. Total Entered Employments	1,400
<b>Employer Services</b>	
1.Total Employers Served	1,217
a. New to Career Center	541
b. Repeat	676
2. Employers Receiving Job Seeker Referrals	261
3. Employers Hiring from Referrals	71
4. Employers Receiving Enhanced Services	
<b>WIOA Adults</b>	
1. Total Participants	82

a. Carry-in Participants	14
b. New Participants	68
2. Total Participants in Training (single count)	71
a. Carry-in Participants	3
b. New Participants	68
3. Program Exiters	39
a. Enter Employment	30
i. Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$15.00
b. Negative Exits	9
<b>Dislocated Workers</b>	
1. Total Participants	76
a. Carry-in Participants	34
b. New Participants	42
2. Total Participants in Training (single count)	53
a. Carry-in Participants	11
b. New Participants	42
3. Program Exiters	50
a. Enter Employment	40
i. Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$18.00
b. Negative Exits	10
<b>Youth</b>	
1. Total Participants	50
a. Carry-in Participants	10
b. New Participants	40
2. Total Participants in Training (single count)	66
a. Individual Training Account (ITA)	40
b. Work Experience	26
3. Program Exiters	24
a. Enter Employment	20
b. Average Hourly Wage at Placement	
c. Entered Post-Secondary/Advanced Trng (double count possible)	1
d. Negative Exits	3

(16) *What are the actions and activities that support the MassHire Board's continued status as a high-performance workforce board?*

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

All members that join the board are provided with a full orientation on matters relating to the board. They include a review of all funding sources, including WIOA and the corresponding activity.

Members are informed of their role on how they can positively affect the boards mission and vision. The Executive Director will also plan regular reminders to the entire board.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*(17) How will training services outlined in WIOA sec. 134 be provided through the use of individual training accounts? if contracts for training services are or will be used, how is/will the use of such contracts be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts?*

- (i) How does the Board ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided?*

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

Provider List and courses must be approved by the MVWB to be available to customers in our region.

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

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

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

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

MassHire DCS issuance DCS 13.110 provides guidance for OJT in Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs and issuance 100 DCS 07.100.1 provides the same for OJT through the Workforce Training Fund Program.

*b) Apprenticeship*

The MassHire MVWB is working in collaboration with the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC) on apprenticeships in our region; the focus is on advanced manufacturing apprenticeships. We anticipate building on this success to develop apprenticeships in other industry sectors.

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

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

*c) Incumbent Worker Training*

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

*d) Work Experiences (paid or unpaid)*

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

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

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

*e) Transitional jobs (§ 680.190 – one that provides a time-limited work experience, that is wage-paid and subsidized, and is in the public, private, or non-profit sectors for those individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have inconsistent work history, as determined by the Local Board. These jobs are designed to enable an individual to establish a work history, demonstrate work success in an employee-employer relationship, and develop the skills that lead to unsubsidized employment).*

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

*f) Online remediation tools for OJT/apprenticeship screening in support of cultivating and demonstrating workplace competencies.*

The MassHire MVWB uses the Career Ready 101 tool as a remediation tool to cultivate and demonstrate workplace competencies.

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

The Merrimack Valley Workforce board will make the plan available for a 21-day review for public comment between the dates of July 9, 2021, until July 26, 2021. In addition to posting the plan on the front page of our website, the plan will also be sent to email distribution lists, board members (including all committees, agency partners, and local elected and appointed officials).

*(20) Describe progress made implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by system partners.*

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

*(21) Please describe how the Board will implement the Virtual Career Pathway tool locally both for customers who can be wholly served by the Virtual Tool and those who will need to request personalized assistance.*

*i. How will the Virtual Tool be used once total public access is restored?*

The Career Center will align jobseeker registration with MDCS Virtual Pathway process on JobQuest. All jobseekers will register for new membership, through JobQuest. As the Career Center Seminar (CCS) is required for membership, jobseekers will schedule CCS on JobQuest. RESEA customers will begin the Pathway to Reemployment. After attending the CCS, RESEA customers will start their Career Action Plan (CAP) and schedule Workshops/Webinars, complete a full JobQuest profile and upload required documents for RESEA reviews. Their progress and activity will be saved on their dashboard. All jobseekers will have access to resume builder feature within JobQuest and will be able to upload their resume. Staff will promote the intelligent job search capabilities and the real-time job feed with JobQuest. Jobseekers seeking training will be directed to JobQuest to search for approved training programs. Jobseekers will have ability to Connect with a Career Coach and will be triaged to determine appropriate referral to Employment Counselor or Recruiter. Partner “shared customers” will also follow the Virtual Pathway process.



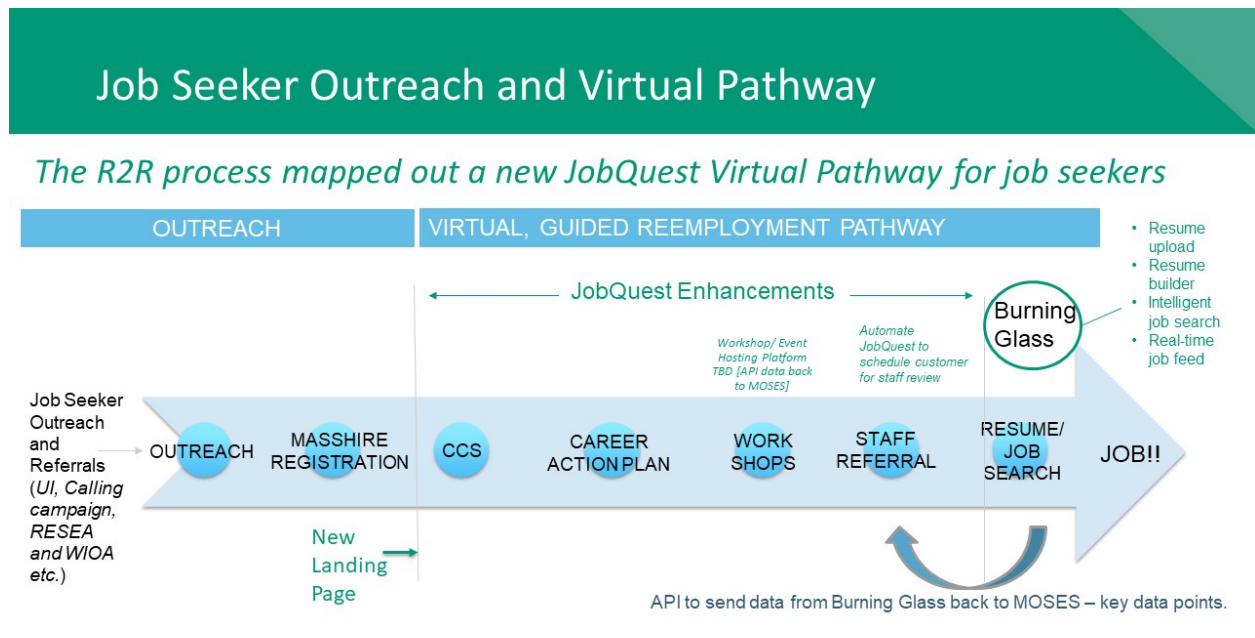
ii. *How will staff be assigned/deployed?*

Virtual Pathway is self-directed. All staff will be familiar with guiding jobseekers through their Pathway to Reemployment. Career Center staff are fully integrated and will continue to facilitate CCS's and RESEA program requirements. Employment Counselors and Recruiters will review benefits of utilizing the Virtual Pathway to gain employment.

iii. *How will MassHire Board and Career Center leadership ensure that all staff are crossed trained to be part of process and ensure seamless customer service?*

All MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center staff will be trained on the Virtual Career Pathway process. Should the state offer training, staff will attend. Training on the process will be provided during regularly scheduled staff training that occurs on the third Wednesday of each month and includes partner staff. Refreshers will be provided should changes in the process occur and as needed. Training on the process will be included in all new hire orientations.

Please see the Virtual Career Pathway process, mapped out below:



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

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

*The Local Board may establish a process that also gives priority to other individuals eligible to receive such services outside the groups given priority under WIOA, provided that it is consistent with the priority of service for Veterans. Please note the local policy and process must be consistent with WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) and § 680.600.*

*POS for Veterans: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/priority-of-service-for-veterans>*

*State Plan: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/fy2020-workforce-innovation-and-opportunity-act-wioa-massachusetts-combined-state-plan/download>*

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

**WIOA Local Four-Year Plan Signatories**

**Fiscal Years 2022 - 2025**


**Merrimack Valley**

Name of MassHire Workforce Board

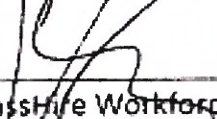
This Local Four-Year Plan shall be fully executed as of the date of signatures below, and effective through June 30, 2025. The Plan may be amended or modified if agreed to by all parties.

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


Typed Name: **Kendrys Vasquez**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Elected Official (or Designee) 7/15/2021  
Date

Typed Name: **Juan Yopez**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MassHire Workforce Board Chair (or Designee) July 13<sup>th</sup> 2021  
Date

Typed Name: **Brian Norris**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MassHire Workforce Board Director (or Designee) 12 July 21  
Date

Typed Name: **Linda Rohrer**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MassHire Career Center Director July 13, 2021  
Date

Typed Name: **Dawn Beati**

*Dawn Beati* (electronic signature) July 9, 2021  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MDCS Operations Manager Date

Typed Name: **Brian Norris**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Title I Fiscal Agent 12 July 21  
Date

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act  
MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board and WIOA Partners  
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

**I. PURPOSE**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlines an accord developed and executed between the MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board (MMVWB), with the agreement of its Chief Elected Official, City of Lawrence Mayor Kendrys Vasquez, and the MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center (MMVCC) Partners, who are described below in Section II, relating to the operation of the MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center delivery of service in the Merrimack Valley workforce area.

This MOU defines the roles and responsibilities of the MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center (MMVCC) and its Partners in striving to produce the best possible MMVCC outcomes for shared customers, be they youth, adults, dislocated workers, other job seekers or businesses.

Partners who have signed this MOU agree with its contents and provisions as consistent with their respective programs, services, and activities, as well as with their authorizing statutes and regulations. Partners also recognize that MOU implementation will require efforts towards continuous improvement that may be affected by economic cycles, unemployment rates, and funding availability.

**II. MASSHIRE CAREER CENTER REQUIRED PARTNERS**

In accordance with WIOA Section 121(c), this Local Memorandum of Understanding has been developed and executed with agreement of the Chief Elected Official of the MassHire Merrimack Valley Area, the MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) MHCC Required Partners as defined by WIOA in WIOA Regulations 20 CFR Part 678.400 as mandatory Partners in the MassHire Career Centers and include:

MMVCC mandatory Partners include:

1. **The Adult Program** (Title I), as part of the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD);
2. **The Dislocated Worker Program** (Title I), as part of MDCS/EOLWD;
3. **The Youth Program** (Title I), as part of MDCS/EOLWD;
4. **The Wagner-Peyser Act Program** (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III), as part of MDCS, EOLWD;
5. **The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program** (Title II), as part of Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Executive Office of Education (EOE);
  - I. Lawrence Adult Learning Center
  - II. Northern Essex Community College/CAE

- III. Methuen Adult Learning Center
  - IV. Haverhill Community Action Inc
  - V. Notre Dame Education Center – Lawrence
  - VI. International Institute of Greater Lawrence
6. **The Vocational Rehabilitation Program** (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV), as part of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)
  7. Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS);
  8. **Federal-state unemployment compensation program**, as part of the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA), EOLWD;
  9. **Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs** (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)), as part of DCS, EOLWD;
  10. **Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program** (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.) as part of DCS, EOLWD;
  11. **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program** (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) as part of Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), EOHHS;
  12. **Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**, (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C.2015(d)(4)), as part of DTA, EOHHS;
  13. **Senior Community Service Employment Program** (Programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.).
  14. **Second Chance Act** (Programs authorized under sec. 212 of the of 2007 Second Chance Act (42 U.S.C. 17532)).
  15. Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, a Community Based Organization (CBO).

### III. DURATION OF MOU

WIOA Section 121(c) (g) requires that the MOU shall be reviewed not less than once every 3-year period to ensure appropriate funding and delivery of services, also including effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility. WIOA Regulations Subpart C 20 CFR Part 678.500 further requires MOU renewal following the 3-year review if substantial changes have occurred.

This agreement shall commence on July 1, 2021 and shall terminate on June 30, 2024, unless otherwise terminated by agreement of all parties or superseded.

### IV. ASSURANCES

The MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board and the MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center Required Partners and non-required Partners agree to conduct the following activities at the local level:

1. Enter into a local MOU with the MassHire Workforce Board relating to operation of the

MassHire Career Center delivery system.

2. Participate in the operation of the MassHire Career Center delivery system consistent with the terms of this MOU, the requirements of WIOA, and the requirements of Federal laws authorizing the programs and activities.
3. Agree to serve Shared Customers and define how multiple providers, services and resources should support youth, job seekers, and businesses.
4. Utilize the MassHire Career Center Customer Flow and incorporate partner agency points of referral whether in-person or virtual to ensure accessibility and availability of programs and services for shared customers.
5. Ensure the effective use of modern tools and technology that enable shared customers to access needed services to complete program participation and achieve training and employment goals.
6. Develop a process for partner communication, referrals, enrollment, and sharing outcome information on shared customers to staff. Develop a process to review data on shared customers.
7. Use a portion of the funds available for programs and activities to maintain the MassHire Career Center delivery system, including infrastructure and shared costs of MassHire Career Centers, through methods agreed upon by the Local Board, Chief Elected Official, and Partners. If no consensus on methods is reached, the Governor, after consultation with the Chief Elected Official, Local Board, and State Board shall determine the portion of funds to be provided (WIOA sec. 121(a) (h) (1) (C)).
8. Provide representation on the Local Workforce Boards to the extent possible and/or participate in Local Board ad hoc activities/events or on standing committees.
9. Convene locally as an MOU Team at least quarterly and agree to the roles and responsibilities each Partner will have in the development of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive integrated service delivery strategy that meets the needs of customers and businesses.
10. The MOU will be reviewed, and if substantial changes have occurred, renewed, not less than once every 3-year period to ensure appropriate funding and delivery of services. The MOU must be updated to reflect any change in the MHCC Partner infrastructure cost contributions.

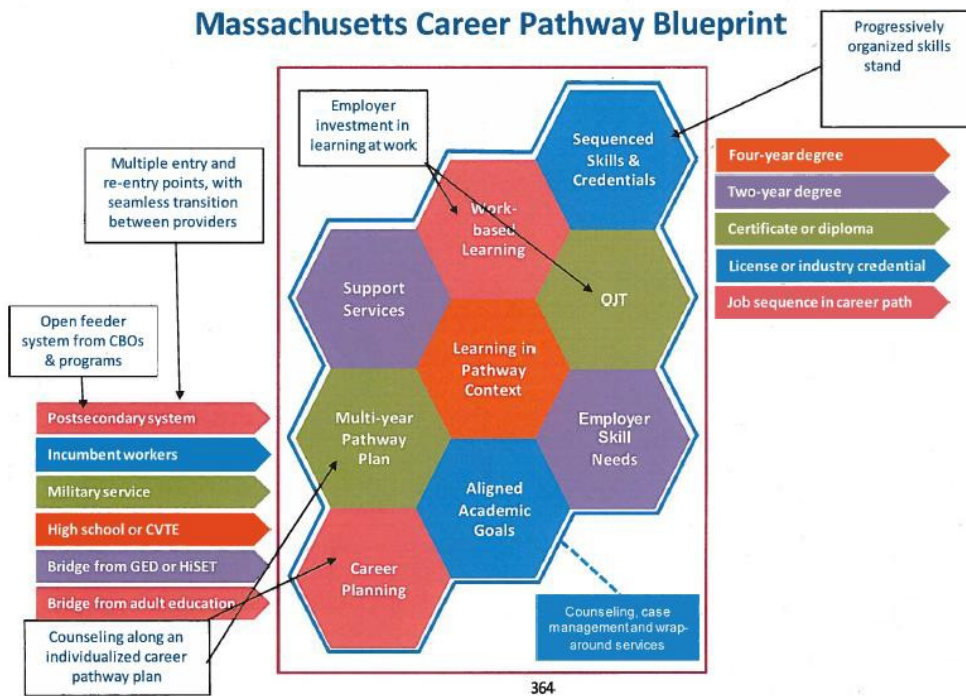
(Information on roles and responsibilities, continuum of services for priority population, criteria used to identify shared customers, how information is captured, as well as intake, assessment and referral process are outlined below.)

## **V. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

1. MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center (MMVCC) Partners here define shared customers as ones either actively job- or employee- seeking and receiving either simultaneous or sequential services amongst one or more career center partners and the MMVCC. Shared customers must also be recorded in a shared data base, normally MOSES or its feeder data sources that may include Job Quest and Workforce Connect.

Merrimack Valley's career pathway model for the priority populations described at V.2 below here follows:

## Massachusetts Career Pathway Blueprint



WIOA customer service priorities have precedence. When all else is equal, if a priority population shared customer, who is recognized as such, asks for individualized, non-training career center services at the same time as a non-priority population member, the priority population shared customer will receive individualized services first. Priority population shared customers will also benefit by needing to complete fewer intake forms when shared databases are in-place, and from requiring fewer but better coordinated contacts amongst partners. Priority populations will also have priority for partner or MMVWB supported training as indicated in bilateral agreements approved by the MMVWB, or by being the focus of successful, joint partner proposals and fund development. Due to walk-in customer identification issues, basic career center services may continue as currently.

The MMVWB strives to ensure that WIOA funds are effectively used to increase employment, job retention, and economic prosperity. Because the need is great and funding is not, it is understood that MMVWB limits the occurrence of individual WIOA Title I paid education or skills training to no more than one program every five years, the clock starting at the end of a program. A customer's assessed education, skills and desire to work also have bearing on MMVWB policies for WIOA Title I training. Regional services will be provided in accordance with regional WIOA WDB policies.

MMVWB WIOA Title I training has learning for employment and job retention as its primary positive outcome. All training enrollees must be able to learn taught material within the timelines MMVWB develops with contracted training vendors. Supplementary, non-WIOA funds may, however, be available to certain individuals previously enrolled in WIOA Title I training and/or education programs or whose desire to work and stay at a job are more questionable. The MMVWB will continue to set policy and prioritize WIOA Title I training fund allocations amongst customers with barriers as needed to maximize effective use of increasingly limited resources.

2. At a minimum, Merrimack Valley priority populations include unemployment insurance claimants; low-income adults including TANF and SNAP recipients; homeless people; Adult Education

participants (Title II); individuals with disabilities (Vocational Rehabilitation Title IV); Veterans; older workers; re-entry populations including those served by programs funded through the Second Chance Act; and, youth, including youth with barriers to employment. All individuals to be served as shared customers will have demonstrated clear interest in finding, keeping, and aspiring to jobs that correspond to their individual educational and skill levels.

Specialized partner services will be supplemented with career center case management or supportive services as warranted and necessary without duplication amongst the specialized partner service providers and MMVCC. To minimize repetitive form completion, we will work to create and use a secure, non-redundant shared database to which information can be added and tracked as needed by partners. We currently expect MOSES, JobQuest and Workforce Connect to fulfill this requirement. The Career Center MOSES database will have 'buttons' developed to indicate partner customer sharing.

The Merrimack Valley contains an increasing number of working poor, other low-income people, disabled people, and others, all of whom have barriers to employment. Job skills training to selected individuals will normally be paid for using WIOA Title I or MRC funds. In recognition that there are insufficient WIOA Title I funds to job train many of them, employment-related academic remediation will normally be conducted by WIOA Title II contractors. WIOA Title II students recommended for Title I training may be enrolled in that training if both the MMVWB, Career Center Director and Training vendor agree.

Other, non-WIOA Title I funds will be sought by MMVWB and MMVCC Partners, often in collaboration with each other. Special populations will normally receive primary services from entities whose mission it is to provide those specialized services. Reinforcing career center services will be provided as possible and necessary for employment and job retention. Services to under-employed or unemployed people will focus on helping them find work and stay in jobs. Services will be designed to match the needs of hiring employers.

Balancing the mix of partner services to under-employed or unemployed people will require ongoing discussions and adjustments based on economic conditions, unemployment rates, and workforce development funding. There is little doubt that partners must work together to deal with actual and future funding cuts. Although no level of joint planning and coordinated service delivery can compensate for significantly reduced funding, they can help us better deal with related issues and better serve our shared customers.

3. The continuum of services available for each of our priority populations is based on a customer-focused design or career pathway model as indicated below. MMVCC partners will take part in the following:

- no less than once every four years, select a career center operator to lead the continuum of services;
- develop a shared vision and culture for the MMVCCs that acknowledges the key role each individual and all partners play in its success; the vision will also acknowledge that we are continuously balancing different customer interests, including different job seeker and employer interests. Partners will have an ongoing dialogue on how to best to balance *What is best for unemployed or underemployed individuals and what is best for employer customers*;
- balance and rebalance unemployed, underemployed and employer interests in ways that maximize both individual and corporate responsibility, workforce development; and economic growth;

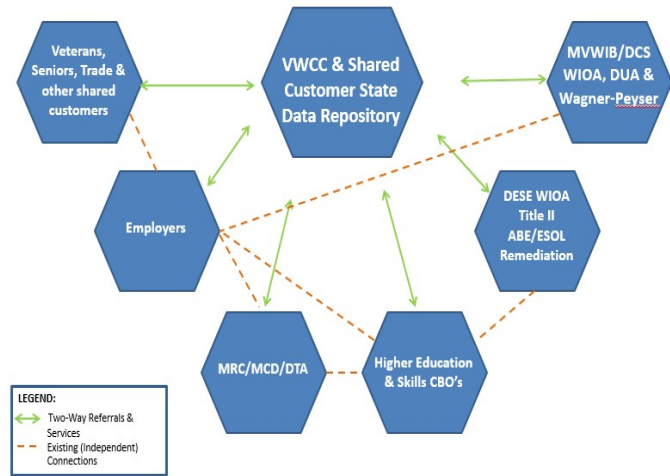


- strive to improve and attain a seamless delivery system with complimentary activities (i.e. workshop presentation, case management assessment, data entry, etc.) that maximize use of the most talented partner and career center staff members in non-duplicative ways – staff integration is fostered but individual professional expertise and strengths amongst partners’ individual staff members are highlighted and shared;
- work with ABE and ESOL partners to refine customer referrals between WIOA Title II and WIOA Title I systems with complimentary funding opportunities sought to support individual career pathway initiatives and area employers;
- consult with, and form a central leadership team among whom there may be Department of Transitional Assistance, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, and Commission for the Blind staff, and other organization’s staff who may be interested, to help continuously improve the provision of career center services to shared customers;
- strengthen MMVCC services to veterans and people with disabilities by balancing compliance with Federal priority guidelines with the well-planned use of staff time in service to unemployed or underemployed individuals and employee-seeking employers;
- coordinate with the MMVWB Board and other career center partners to attract additional resources to the region, including federal, state, and privately funded demonstration grants;
- periodically review MOSES data with partners to help continuously improve effective service delivery to unemployed and underemployed customers. The Career Center MOSES database will have ‘buttons’ developed to indicate partner customer sharing.
- Along with center staff, ascertain the need for any space design changes to continuously improve the quality and efficient delivery of services to career center and partner customers;
- Share respective partner data to analyze their correlation with MMVCC data. Similar, shared data reviews will be offered when they provide information that may improve career center services. Subject to applicable legal constraints, including but not necessarily limited to those contained in G. L. 151A and 20 C.F.R. Pt. 603, the parties of this MOU agree to seek increased data sharing with a view to improving the quality of service-delivery to both jobseekers and business-customers. The Party whose data is requested to be shared shall be the judge, in its sole discretion, of the legal constraints governing whether and how its data may be shared. The parties of this MOU also understand that a shared data system is being designed at the state level to fully support the development and implementation of a state-level data system, subject to the foregoing limitations. Partners will at least minimally track shared customers via emails until the Commonwealth has a serviceable and automatic interface within different State data platforms.

The next page shows a figure outlining customer flow across MOU partners for each priority population. As stated above, the description presupposes that we define Shared Customers as ones ***actively employee-seeking or job seeking and receiving simultaneous or sequential job readiness services amongst one or more career center partners and the career center.*** Not all partner customers may be ‘Shared’ ones.

In the figure to the right, the green lines to the center indicate two-way referrals and services between Partners and MMVCC. The dotted lines indicate existing connections between partners and others that may result in non-shared customers independently connected to employers, higher education or CBOs.

We should remember that current guidance states that there is no penalty in double-counting shared customers. We should strive to do so whenever services are offered by partners and our career centers.



Partners will inform each other of standard operating procedures developed by their line staff in their interactions with each other. CIES, NDWG, services to Disabled people and other joint partner services will be reviewed with lessons-learned articulated verbally and in writing.

a. The following numbers estimate how many shared or unshared clients will be served by partners. Some customers may be double-counted and served by more than one partner in more than one category. Some numbers listed assume shared customer service delivery in line with the definition outlined above.

Partner Funding Source/ Service Recipient Category	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
WIOA Title I 'Adult' Individualized Services	300	300	300
WIOA Title I 'Dislocated Worker' Individualized Services	600	600	600
WIOA Title I 'Youth'	100	100	100
Wagner Peyser	10,500	11,300	11,700
Adult Education and Family Literacy Title II	700	700	700
Vocational Rehabilitation/MA Rehabilitation Commission (*approx. 20 shared)	1600*	1600*	1600*
MA Commission for the Blind – EOHHS	5	10	15
Department of Unemployment Assistance	10,000	10,000	10,000
MA Veterans Grant Programs	100	150	200
Department of Transitional Assistance – Temporary Assistance	500	500	500
Department of Transitional Assistance – SNAP	1000	1000	1000
Senior Community Service Employment – Title V Older Am Act	65	66	66
Higher Education	5000	5000	5000
CBO – Greater Lawrence Community Action Council	1000	1000	1000

b. The below lists 1] the types of supports and services leading to employment that are available for each priority shared customer; and 2] which MOU partners will primarily provide supports and

services.

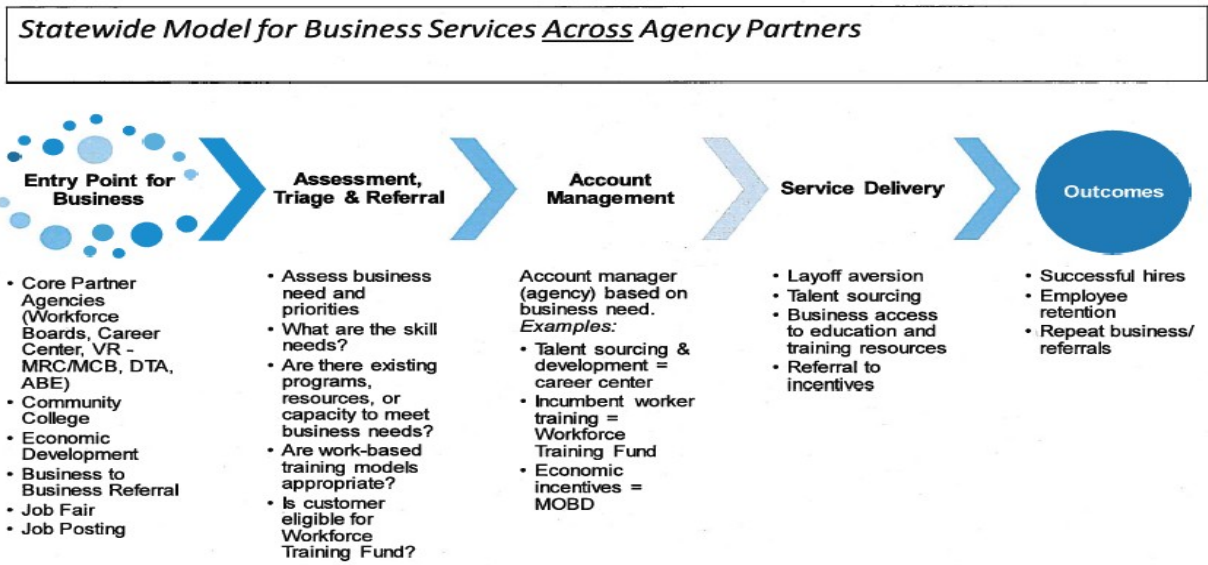
<b>Activities Leading to Employment</b>	<b>Primary Service Provider</b>
Unemployment Insurance Payment	DUA
Recruitment	MMVCC, and partners
Intake	MMVCC, and partners
Assessment	MMVCC, and partners
Orientation	MMVCC, and partners
Case Management	MMVCC, and some partners
DOL funded Supportive Services	MMVCC and some partners
Remedial Education	Title II partners & CBOs
Job Exploration, Employment Readiness and Job Placement Services	MMVCC, SCSEP
Skills Training	MMVWB with Skills Training Vendors
Title I OJT, apprenticeships,	MMVCC, employers and some partners
Title II Educational Remediation	DESE ACLS Title II contractors
Vocational Rehabilitation	MRC
Worksite aids to the visually impaired	MCB
Temporary subsistence benefits	DTA
Temporary food subsistence benefits	DTA SNAP
Veterans Job Assistance	MMVCC, and partners
TAA Assistance	MMVCC, and partners
Child Care	DTA, GLCAC, CAI, MMVCC
Transportation	GLCAC, DTA, ABE, MMVCC
Internships	NECC, MMVCC, SCSEP
Subsidized Youth Summer Employment	MMVWB/MMVCC
Young Adult Year-Round Subsidized Employment	MMVWB/MMVCC
Health Insurance outreach, orientation, and enrollment	GLCAC, MMVCC
Cross Cultural Orientation	DESE ACLS WIOA Title II contractors
Service and Assistance Navigation	DTA, ACLS WIOA Title II contractors
U.S. Civics Education	ACLS WIOA Title II contractors
Basic Career Pathways orientation	MMVCC, DTA, ACLS WIOA Title II contractors
Higher Education Degrees or Credentials	Colleges

c. Methods for referring individuals or business customers between the partners for appropriate services and activities.

Methods	Responsible Party(ies)
Phone coordination - with data base entries recording the coordination	MMVCC and Partners
Email exchanges or notifications - with data base entries recording the coordination	MMVCC and Partners
Signed, hand-carried sheets indicating the person carrying the sheet as a shared customer	MMVCC and Partners

Either walk-in or scheduled appointments will be used as situations warrant.

4. A description of the continuum of services available for businesses in the workforce area based on a customer-centered design or career pathway model, and a map for the business customer flow across MOU partners in the Merrimack Valley area, follow:



MMVWB/MMVCC and MOU signatories will endeavor to do the following:

- partner with local employers to create solutions to their workforce training needs, while creating training and retraining opportunities for the region's unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers;
- generate an increased number of employer-paid training grants with partners and employers;
- partner with employer-based unions as desired and appropriate.

5. Partners will work to ensure the MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center system maintains a welcoming environment where individuals from all backgrounds feel respected, supported, and valued to fully engage in services. Principles of fair treatment, access, and opportunity for all will be upheld. Barriers that prevent full use of services will be identified and eliminated.

6. Apart from two MMVWB/MMVCC IT staff and about two hundred computers, NECC has 2,400 computers connected to a shared network and overseen by an IT Department with 10 full-time staff. The IT Department is responsible for maintaining the network, servers, and computers, including installing and upgrading software, ensuring the integrity of the security system, repairing computers and data lines as needed, and tracking the life- cycles of all hardware for scheduled replacement. NECC IT tasks are

managed using KACE, a state-of-the art systems management software.

NECC's Learning Accommodations Center ensures that the college complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Learning Accommodations Center works with students facing a variety of physical and learning challenges to ensure that they have access to the services they need to maximize their academic experience at the college. The college is also the Regional Center for Gallaudet University, which has led advancements for the deaf and hard-of-hearing for over 150 years.

As stated by a 12/2/16 EOLWD release “Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Boards, One-Stop Career Centers, adult education, community colleges and other partners work together to support long-term progress for individuals along a skills and employment pathway. Several key practices are consistent:

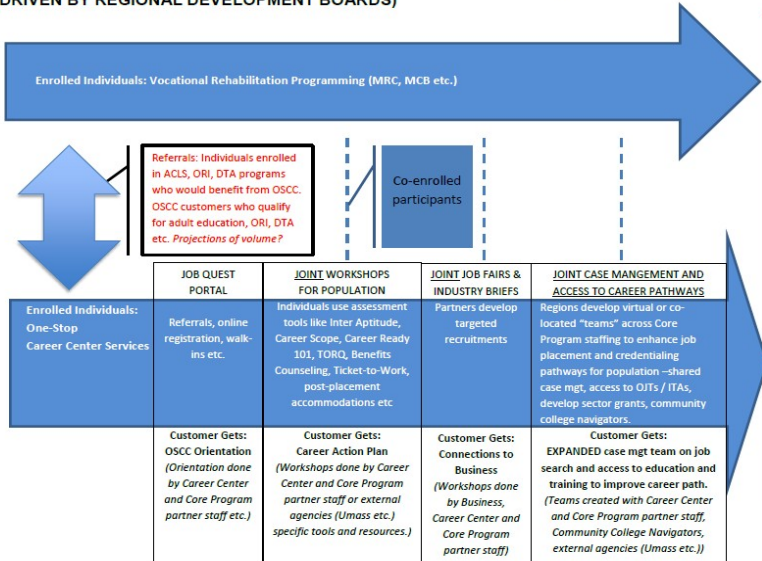
**Referral and Co-enrollment Practices for Performance**

1. Consumer visits the Career Center and discloses to the worker that they have a disability. The consumer is offered MMVCC orientation and assistance with Job Quest Portal. Consumer is asked if he/she is enrolled with VR. If the answer is no, then they should be asked if they would like to be referred to VR.
2. Consumer visits VR agency and develops a Career Action Plan (CAP). After training services are completed, consumer works with VR Counselor and MMVCC counselor on job search and related services.

...the VR agency and the Career Centers would both receive credit for the services provided when the employment goal is achieved. Establishing a good referral process between VR and Career Centers is vital to a successful collaboration with the Career Center and the VR agencies.

The below chart, again from a 12/2/16 EOLWD issuance illustrates how individuals with disabilities will be shared customers with either career centers or MRC or MCB being points of entry for services to individuals with disabilities.

ATTACHMENT C: Customer-centered service design flowcharts for adult individuals with disabilities  
**SHARED CUSTOMER MODEL: SERVICE DESIGN, CAREER PATHWAYS, COSTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY (DRIVEN BY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOARDS)**



BILITY

Employment will be the primary positive outcome

But

An academic or technical credential is also a positive outcome

Case by case refinements of the above will be tracked. Listening to partners and customers is the key to improving and maintaining a professional and welcoming environment. NECC will establish feedback loops, at several steps in the customer engagement process, to enable customers and partners to comment on the facility and the services being delivered. The feedback loop may take the form of a suggestion box, periodic surveys, secret shoppers, a Twitter account, or all of the above. Similarly, MMVCC partners and staff will be encouraged to comment on processes and facilities and suggest improvements.

Comments and suggestions from the customers and the staff will be handled by the MMVWB and MMVCC Director for appropriate action.

7. MMVCC hours of operation will be from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. In addition, and if requisite funding is available, the career center will be open one night a week until 8:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The center will periodically survey partners and customers to determine if the proposed hours accommodate their needs or if they should be modified to allow greater access, especially for employed and underemployed customers and individuals with childcare or other family responsibilities.

In addition to the Lawrence location, Northern Essex Community College has a satellite center in Haverhill. The college's downtown Haverhill location will offer greater access for job seekers and local employers.

The Lawrence Center is closer to residents of Lawrence, Methuen, Andover, and North Andover; while the satellite would offer greater convenience to residents from Haverhill, Merrimack, Boxford, Georgetown, and Groveland. To ensure that the communities in the north/east sector (i.e. Amesbury, Newburyport, Newbury, West Newbury, Rowley, and Salisbury) have access to services, the college will work with local libraries, not-for-profit organizations, and town and city offices to coordinate service delivery. The college proposes to explore the use of technology and virtual services as an additional way to provide services in the northeast area of the region.

Please note that the above will be influenced by funding negotiations, actual funding, and state-level approval when individual partner staffing is involved.

8. Career Center partners will work together to articulate a continuum or integrated flow of services to create pipelines of skilled workers for the Merrimack Valley region priority industries which are manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance, and professional services. Measures for evaluating the effectiveness of the pipelines will be established and tracked.

9. MMVCC Operator Northern Essex Community College is committed to staff development and training. As one of the college's strategic initiatives for the coming years, the Dean of Academic Innovation and Professional Development has created a comprehensive catalogue of career development and training options, including courses, certificates, and programs offered by NECC, as well as options offered by external providers.

Cross training will occur at all-staff meetings that include Career Center and partner staff. Cross-training will occur at both career center and partner sites.

The MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center will adopt the staff development process used by the

college, which starts with an initial benchmark profile of each staff person. The college requires all staff to take a Strengths/Quest analysis. As the name implies, the analysis presents a profile that emphasizes the individual's strengths. Examples of identified strengths include: Discipline, Analytical, Context, Relative, and Achiever. The Strengths/Quest profile gathers facts about the individual's education, credentials, work experience, specific skills, interests, and personal, career, and education goals. The next step involves a plan, with a timeline, to identify the professional development opportunities the individual would like to access. MMVCC staff will be eligible for a range of professional development options, and, in some cases, may be eligible for college tuition waiver programs for staff and their families. MV MMVCC partners will be invited to participate in some of the above activities as financially reasonable and possible.

10. Partners will collaborate to develop and implement an overall marketing plan for career center system services. The marketing plan will express system vision and goals and will outline partner implementation responsibilities to be undertaken that will lead to the achievement of system goals. Progress on implementing the marketing plan will be reviewed at each quarterly meeting of the local partners. The marketing plan will be updated annually.

11. Partners will participate in annual MassHire Awards Nomination Process to recognize exceptional innovations in workforce service delivery in support of the MassHire Mission and Vision. Nominations will reflect the work of career center and partner staff that serve shared customers as well as nominations that reflect the work that indirectly impact shared customers. Categories for nominations include; Collaboration, Ingenuity, Reliability, Respect & Living MassHire.

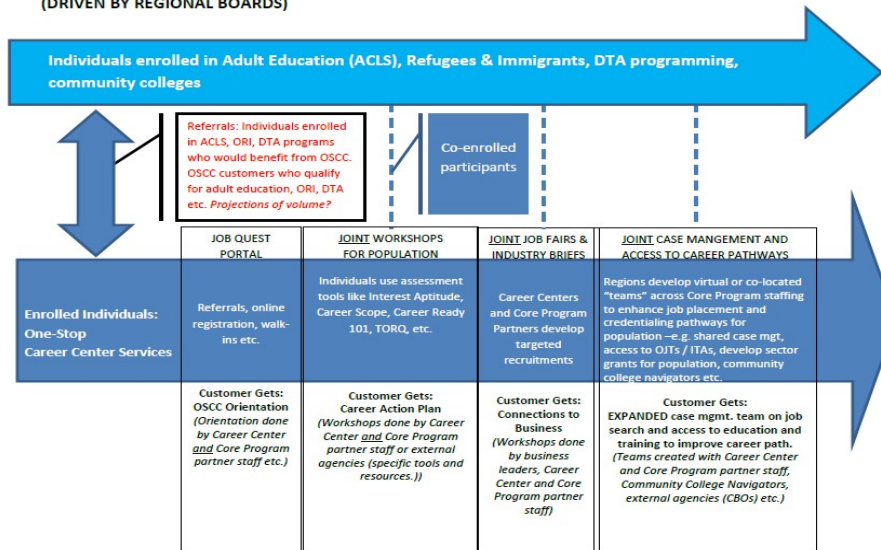
12. We assure Federal and State authorities that Merrimack Valley MMVCC Partners will participate in the FY 2021 competitive selection process for the MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center Operator/ Service Provider in the Merrimack Valley Workforce Area.

13. The parties of this MOU agree that, at the state level, Partners will work together to develop the formula for distribution of shared and infrastructure funding based upon local data for each of the 16 workforce areas. Inter-Agency Service Agreements have been executed with MassHire Department of Career Services, who is the State Workforce Agency (SWA), and each required WIOA State Partner to utilize the current integrated budget format to show in-kind and shared costs, including infrastructure costs as a method to record joint costs.

MMVCC and DTA concluded bilateral negotiations for their local relationship and other partners are encouraged to do so when so guided by their parent Secretariat. They are also encouraged to share contract details with other area career center partners via bi-lateral contracts to be included as addendums to this MOU. Merrimack Valley funding agreements satisfy the requirements of WIOA section 121(h) for purposes of funding the one-stop system in PY 2017 and 18.

The following chart, from a 12/2/16 EOLWD release, illustrates the broad outlines of State or Regional Career Center/Partner process agreements.

SHARED CUSTOMER MODEL: SERVICE DESIGN, CAREER PATHWAYS, COSTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY  
(DRIVEN BY REGIONAL BOARDS)



Employment will be the primary positive outcome

But

An academic or technical credential is also a positive outcome

DUA will provide information under this agreement to another party to this agreement only:

- upon the determination by the DUA Director that the information lawfully may be provided in accordance with applicable law, including, but not limited to, G. L. c. 151A, § 14P and § 46, and 20 C.F.R. Pt. 603;
- following approval by DUA of an Application for Unemployment Insurance and/or Wage Reporting Data (there is a current form in the attachments to this agreement which DUA reserves the right to modify in its sole discretion); and
- following execution by DUA and an approved applicant of a Data Sharing and Cost Reimbursement Agreement (currently in the forms attached for confidential data and for non-confidential data, which DUA reserves the right to modify in its sole discretion).

DUA will not be bound by any provision of this agreement that does not expressly mention DUA by name.

14. The parties of this MOU agree to negotiate with WIOA Required Partners locally when state level infrastructure agreements are not in place.

15. This MOU is effective from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2024 unless otherwise terminated by agreement of all parties or superseded by Federal or State action. If individuals who sign this MOU resign or otherwise leave their position, its guidelines will be observed by the entities they represented unless terminated by agreement of all parties or otherwise superseded.

16. WIOA Sections 12I(c) (g) requires that this MOU be reviewed not less than once every 3-year period to ensure appropriate funding and delivery of services, effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility. WIOA Regulations Subpart C 20 CFR Part 678.500 further requires MOU renewal following the 3-year review if substantial changes have occurred or an extension if changes



are just minor. The Merrimack Valley Career Center Partners agree to these requirements.

17. The MOU will contain the assurances outlined in Section IV of this policy guidance.

18. The following provisions are agreed to by all parties insofar as they are consistent with partner services and activities, authorizing statutes, and regulations:

a. When two or more customers simultaneously request services, shared customers will receive priority for individualized services over non-shared customers. Service priority implies that individualized service wait times will be shortened for shared customers.

b. Partners will sponsor shared customer and staff internships at each other's' work sites when such internships enhance customer services and result in more benefits than costs.

c. Partners will share staff who have outstanding public presentation, explanatory, motivational, or organizational abilities for short-term customer service events or for staff development when such sharing does not disrupt services at individual partner worksites. Whenever possible, people best at some activity may be used by partners regardless of funding source.

d. Insofar as shared customers can be better served as a result of staff development workshops, partners will offer their staff quarterly or biannual staff development workshops explaining who constitutes their primary shared customers and how those customers are served.

e. Since WIOA does not require a sequence of services and staff are being familiarized with various types of jobs, intake, assessment, data entry and other preliminary work done at one partner site may be used by career center and partner staff to plan or provide other services.

f. Compliance with all applicable Federal regulations is always to be sought while also creatively managing staff and staff time to cost-effectively serve all shared customers.

19. The MOU includes all requirements as set-forth in the WIOA MOU Joint Partner Policy Communication 03.2021, dated March 16, 2021.

20. The Merrimack Valley MOU reflects an agreement of the MOU Partners to jointly review the WIOA mandated performance metrics for the region or metrics negotiated as part of any shared and infrastructure contract costs between the MMVWB and the mandated MMVCC Partners, including incentives and penalties.

The MOU is fully executed when it contains the signatures of the MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board, MMVCC Required Partners, and the Chief Elected Official (CEO) and states the duration for which the MOU is in effect.

As stated above, the MOU must be updated not less than once every 3 years to reflect any changes in the signatory official of the Board, MMVCC Partners, and Chief Elected Official (CEO) or changes to infrastructure cost contributions.

## **VI. COMPETITIVE SELECTION OF MASSHIRE CAREER CENTERS**

The WIOA Required Partners agree to participate in the selection process of MassHire Operators as


required by WIOA, at least once every 4 years.

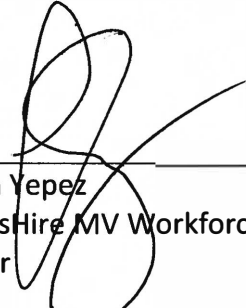
**VII. PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

The MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board, in agreement with the MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center Required Partners, agree to jointly review the WIOA mandated performance metrics for this workforce area and/or metrics negotiated as part of any shared and infrastructure contract costs between the MMVWB and the mandated MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center partners, including incentives and penalties.

**VIII. SIGNATORIES**

By signing this agreement, all parties agree to the provisions contained herein are subject to all applicable, Federal, State, and local laws, regulations and/or guidelines relating to nondiscrimination, equal opportunity, displacement, privacy rights of participants, and maintenance of data and other confidential information relating to MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center customers. By signatures affixed below, the parties specify their agreement:

  
Kendrys Vasquez, MassHire Merrimack Valley  
WB Chief Elected Official

  
Juan Yopez  
MassHire MV Workforce Board (MMVWB)  
Chair

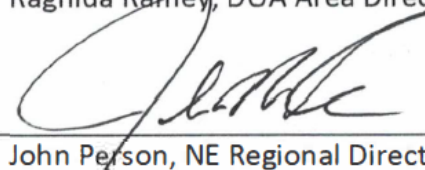
  
Brian Norris, MassHire Merrimack Valley WB  
Executive Director

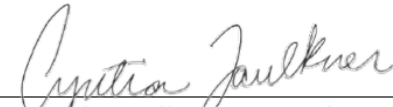
  
Linda Rohrer, MassHire MV Career Center  
Executive Director

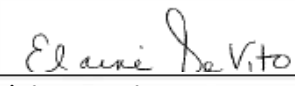
*Dawn Beati* (electronic signature) 6/17/21  
Dawn Beati, MDCS MMVWB Operations  
Manager

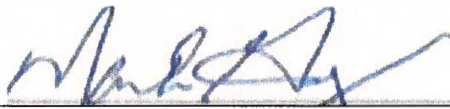
*Raghida Ramey*  
Raghida Ramey, DUA Area Director

*Thelma Williams*  
Thelma Williams, NE Regional Director  
MA Commission for the Blind

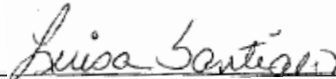
  
John Person, NE Regional Director  
Mass Rehab Commission

  
Cynthia Faulkner, Executive Director  
Notre Dame Education Center

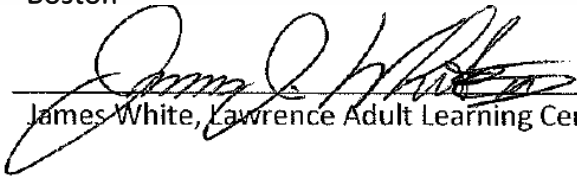
  
Elaine DeVito, Lawrence Transitional  
Assistance Office



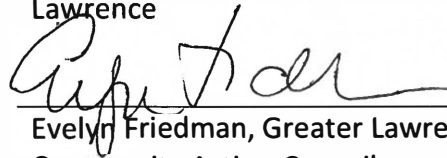
Mark Gyurina, Operation Able of Greater Boston



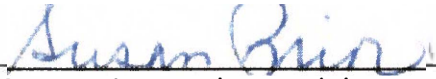
Luisa Santiago, International Institute - Lawrence



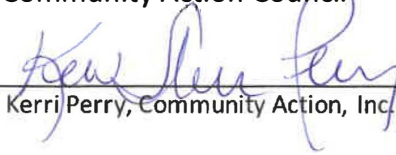
James White, Lawrence Adult Learning Center



Evelyn Friedman, Greater Lawrence Community Action Council



Susan Prior, Methuen Adult Learning Center



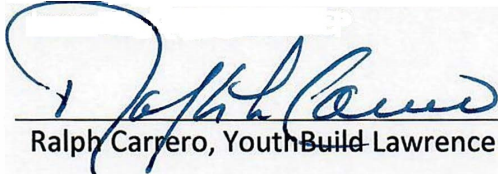
Kerri Perry, Community Action, Inc.



Marsha Parinussa Flynn, NECC CAE



Angela Rackley, Center Director Shriver Job Corps for John Pederson, Senior VP Education & Training Mgmt. & Trng. Corp



Ralph Carrero, YouthBuild Lawrence