



## WIOA Local 4-Year Plan Template

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

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

#### **(1) A regional (local) analysis of:**

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

**Regional plan information may be used as applicable to the local area. However, local analysis that yields information that is not in the regional plan should be included in this response. (Please see 21 d).**

The MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Development Area, made up of forty-three cities and towns, has the largest labor force in Massachusetts at 520,629 residents as of May 2021. This number continues to grow over recent months as more individuals are returning to work post pandemic. The number of unemployed residents has dropped over the past several years and stands at 12,868. The 2020 average unemployment annual rate for the region increased drastically to 6.8% from 2.4% in 2019 due the impacts of Covid-19 related business closures. (MA Department of Unemployment Assistance, Local Area Unemployment Statistics)

Average weekly wages for jobs in Metro South/West has continue to increase slightly over the past several years and is \$1,739 per week. There are 582,675 individuals who live and work in the region or commute in from outside the region. Metro South/West is home to 37,931 business establishments with 247 added in 2020. (MA Department of Unemployment Assistance/Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages)

Prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the labor market had been tight in the past several years as indicated by the numbers of on-line postings for jobs consistently outpacing the number of unemployed residents in the region. During the Pandemic, Metro South/West saw a drastic reversal of this trend as unemployment claims exploded. At the peak of business closures in April 2020, the unemployment rate in the region was 16.3% with 53,521 unemployed residents looking for work. In recent months the

number of unemployed residents has steadily declined. As of March 2021, there were 17,835 active on-line job ads (supply) while at the same time there were 24,441 unemployed residents seeking work (demand). (Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Burning Glass Technologies, Labor Insight data Series)

### Industry Data:

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, in terms of employment share, is the largest industry in Metro South/West with 76,2759 jobs as the most recently available data shows. In fact, 13.5 percent of all the jobs in the Metro South/West region fall under this industry. It is also one of the highest paying industries, second only to Information with average weekly wages of \$2,894. For comparison, the statewide averages weekly wages for the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services is \$2,719.

As seen in Table 1, Health Care and Social Assistance follows closely to Professional, Scientific and Technical Services and accounts for another 13 percent of the jobs in the region. The remaining five largest industries by employment level include Educational Services, Retail Trade and Manufacturing. Of these five industries, Manufacturing is the only sector that has demonstrated a declining trend in employment, having lost over 7,00 jobs since 2014. It is important to note that the majority of industries in the Metro South/West region experienced a decline in employment in 2019 and 2020 due to Covid-19 related closures which has impacted employment growth figures in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Sectors by Employment, (US Census: Quarterly Workforce Indicators 2014-2020)

NAICS Sector	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Growth
<i>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</i>	71,757	72,351	73,632	74,331	75,882	76,964	76,259	6.3%
<i>Health Care and Social Assistance</i>	73,675	75,715	76,363	76,338	76,579	77,737	72,482	-1.6%
<i>Educational Services</i>	55,188	57,414	58,264	59,472	59,161	59,547	56,557	2.5%
<i>Retail Trade</i>	58,168	59,448	60,240	59,951	59,457	58,930	54,806	-5.8%
<i>Manufacturing</i>	50,352	47,961	46,537	45,378	45,068	44,183	42,816	-15.0%
<i>Accommodation and Food Services</i>	38,201	39,617	39,708	40,555	40,433	40,908	30,467	-20.2%
<i>Administrative, Support and Waste Management Services</i>	34,089	36,478	37,142	36,822	37,234	38,358	35,739	4.8%
<i>Wholesale Trade</i>	29,030	29,243	29,274	29,002	26,139	26,419	25,259	-13.0%
<i>Information</i>	29,156	29,396	29,870	29,415	28,731	28,688	28,436	-2.5%
<i>Construction</i>	24,349	26,108	28,323	29,031	29,988	30,824	29,807	22.4%
<i>Management of Companies and Enterprises</i>	23,271	23,271	23,477	24,522	24,970	25,087	24,546	5.5%
<i>Finance and Insurance</i>	20,338	20,080	20,203	20,337	20,269	20,941	21,009	3.3%

<i>Other Services (except Public Administration)</i>	17,405	17,465	18,057	18,484	19,038	19,430	16,668	-4.2%
<i>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</i>	12,969	13,440	14,829	15,129	15,821	15,947	10,661	-17.8%
<i>Public Administration</i>	16,704	17,029	17,253	17,349	17,846	17,940	17,597	5.3%
<i>Transportation and Warehousing</i>	8,225	8,522	8,541	8,444	8,853	9,119	8,037	-2.3%
<i>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</i>	7,498	7,428	7,582	7,668	7,667	8,246	7,938	5.9%
<i>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting</i>	1,221	1,267	1,474	1,555	1,731	2,130	2,147	75.8%
<i>Utilities</i>	1,086	1,177	1,354	1,267	1,246	1,276	1,338	23.2%
<i>Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction</i>	144	159	148	97	93	79	75	-47.9%

### Occupation Data:

Long term projection data indicates that by 2026 the biggest increases in employment volume will be primarily in healthcare occupations, software developers, housekeeping and food services. High numbers of projected openings in other occupations such as teachers, operations managers and construction labors as well, are indicators of a diverse industry base within the region.

As seen in the table below, combined, Personal Care Aides and Home Health Aids account for close to 4,000 openings which will need to be filled, and Software Developers will require roughly 3,000 projected openings to be filled. The major difference in this instance is that these healthcare support occupations have much higher turnover rates, which correlates with below average annual wages for these jobs.

**Table 2: Long Term Employment Projections (MA Department of Unemployment Assistance/Bureau of Labor Statistics, Long Term Employment Projections)**

Occupation Title	Employment Level		Change		Annual Openings	2017 Mean Annual Wage
	2016	2026	Numeric	%		
<i>Personal Care Aides</i>	8,703	11,067	2,364	27%	1,619	\$29,924
<i>Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaner</i>	13,689	15,897	2,208	16%	2,115	\$36,759
<i>Software Developers, Applications</i>	9,410	11,493	2,083	22%	864	\$122,090
<i>Combined Food Prep and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food</i>	9,127	10,680	1,553	17%	1,949	\$26,910
<i>Home Health Aides</i>	3,702	5,248	1,546	42%	653	\$33,660
<i>Registered Nurses</i>	9,700	11,228	1,528	16%	681	\$85,387
<i>General and Operations Managers</i>	14,902	16,245	1,343	9%	1,386	\$157,782
<i>Management Analysts</i>	6,072	7,195	1,123	19%	668	\$119,799

<i>Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists</i>	5,423	6,387	964	18%	658	\$80,487
<i>Financial Managers</i>	5,142	6,063	921	18%	498	\$155,670
<i>Teacher Assistants</i>	6,542	7,429	887	14%	791	\$33,984
<i>Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technic</i>	5,436	6,268	832	15%	480	\$77,016
<i>Software Developers, Systems Software</i>	10,040	10,841	801	8%	736	\$115,663
<i>Accountants and Auditors</i>	8,042	8,803	761	10%	810	\$83,837
<i>Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education</i>	4,968	5,720	752	15%	449	\$80,270
<i>Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers</i>	5,019	5,771	752	15%	712	\$36,698
<i>Waiters and Waitresses</i>	8,685	9,329	644	7%	1,753	\$29,757
<i>Medical Secretaries</i>	3,549	4,148	599	17%	469	\$45,340
<i>Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical</i>	3,290	3,794	504	15%	298	\$75,121
<i>Construction Laborers</i>	4,668	5,170	502	11%	546	\$56,541
<i>Bus Drivers, School or Special Client</i>	2,150	2,592	442	21%	327	\$37,662
<i>Customer Service Representatives</i>	9,987	10,429	442	4%	1,332	\$45,006
<i>Nursing Assistants</i>	3,649	4,084	435	12%	474	\$32,608
<i>Sales Representatives, Services, All Other</i>	3,738	4,170	432	12%	509	\$79,970
<i>Cooks, Restaurant</i>	3,676	4,103	427	12%	582	\$32,145

**(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.**

Skill gaps of applicants is an ongoing issue companies face in the region. Foundational skills for STEM occupations, IT occupations in particular, continues to be a dire need of employers based on anecdotal and empirical data. In a 2021 employer survey conducted by the 495 MetroWest Partnership and Framingham State University’s Metro West Economic Research Center, 35% of business indicated their primary concern was finding qualified talent, both in terms of technical and soft skills.

The challenges business reported in terms of soft skills included:

- A lack of professionalism, the misuse and overuse of social media in particular
- Poor business etiquette
- The inability to receive constructive criticism without being defensive or practically applying constructive feedback

- A poor work ethic where many new employees feel that that the work is “beneath” them
- Unwillingness to investigate an issue or research a solution to a problem

Job posting data in the Metro South/West region over the year confirms much of what was seen in the Framingham State survey and in the Greater Boston Regional Blueprint.

The following tables were developed using job posting data compiled with Burning Glass’ Labor Insight tool over the most recent twelve-month period. For the Metro South/West region, the most prominent needs in terms of occupations, certification and skills of business seeking to fill jobs are broken out by the regions five largest industries: Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, Healthcare and Social Assistance, Educational Services, Retail Trade and Manufacturing.

**Table 3:** Employer Needs Matrix (Burning Glass: Labor Insight 5/2020-5/2021)

<b>Professional, Scientific and Technical Services Industry</b>		
<b>Occupation Clusters</b>	<b>Certifications</b>	<b>Skills</b>
Computer and Mathematical (24%) Management (20%) Architecture and Engineering (8.3%) Business and Financial Operations (8.2%) Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (7.1%) Office and Administrative Support (6.8%) Life, Physical, and Social Science (6.2%) Sales and Related (4.1%) Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media (3.4%) Production (3.3%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security Clearance</li> <li>• Driver's License</li> <li>• Project Management Certification</li> <li>• CompTIA Security+</li> <li>• Project Management Professional (PMP)</li> <li>• Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)</li> <li>• Certified Public Accountant (CPA)</li> <li>• IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) Certification</li> <li>• Certified Veterinary Technician</li> <li>• Licensed Professional Engineer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Management</li> <li>• Budgeting</li> <li>• Scheduling</li> <li>• Biotechnology</li> <li>• Quality Assurance and Control</li> <li>• Customer Service</li> <li>• Python</li> <li>• Software Development</li> <li>• Chemistry</li> <li>• Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP)</li> </ul>

<b>Health Care and Social Services Industry</b>		
<u>Occupation Clusters</u>	<u>Certifications</u>	<u>Skills</u>
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (36.3%) Healthcare Support (15.9%) Personal Care and Service (12.1%) Management (8.3%) Office and Administrative Support (7.5%) Community and Social Services (4.7%) Education, Training, and Library (4.7%) Computer and Mathematical (1.9%) Business and Financial Operations (1.8%) Food Preparation and Serving Related (1.5%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driver's License</li> <li>• Registered Nurse</li> <li>• First Aid CPR AED</li> <li>• Home Health Aide</li> <li>• Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)</li> <li>• Certified Nursing Assistant</li> <li>• Personal Care Assistant (PCA)</li> <li>• Basic Life Saving (BLS)s</li> <li>• Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) Certification</li> <li>• Basic Cardiac Life Support Certification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patient Care</li> <li>• Scheduling</li> <li>• Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)</li> <li>• Customer Service</li> <li>• Home Care</li> <li>• Treatment Planning</li> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Caregiving</li> <li>• Home Health</li> <li>• Cleaning</li> </ul>

<b>Educational Services Industry</b>		
<u>Occupation Clusters</u>	<u>Certifications</u>	<u>Skills</u>
Education, Training, and Library (56.5%) Management (9.5%) Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (5.3%) Community and Social Services (4.6%) Office and Administrative Support (4.5%) Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media (4.3%) Computer and Mathematical (2.5%) Life, Physical, and Social Science (2.1%) Personal Care and Service (2.1%) Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance (1.4%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certified Teacher</li> <li>• Driver's License</li> <li>• First Aid CPR AED</li> <li>• Registered Nurse</li> <li>• Special Education Certification</li> <li>• Child Development Associate (CDA)</li> <li>• Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)</li> <li>• Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)</li> <li>• Registered Behavior Technician</li> <li>• Teaching Assistant</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching</li> <li>• Special Education</li> <li>• Progress Reports</li> <li>• Scheduling</li> <li>• Lesson Planning</li> <li>• Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)</li> <li>• Budgeting</li> <li>• Autism Diagnosis / Treatment / Care</li> <li>• Cleaning</li> <li>• Staff Management</li> </ul>

Retail Trade Industry		
Occupation Clusters	Certifications	Skills
Sales and Related (30%) Office and Administrative Support (28.1%) Transportation and Material Moving (18.1%) Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media (3.9%) Management (3.5%) Healthcare Practitioners and Technical (3.3%) Food Preparation and Serving Related (2.7%) Computer and Mathematical (2.6%) Production (1.9%) Business and Financial Operations (1.7%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driver's License</li> <li>• Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB)</li> <li>• Certified Pharmacy Technician</li> <li>• Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certification</li> <li>• Cosmetology License</li> <li>• ServSafe</li> <li>• First Aid CPR AED</li> <li>• Project Management Certification</li> <li>• Computer Learning Certificate</li> <li>• Optician</li> <li>• OSHA Forklift Certification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer Service</li> <li>• Retail Industry Knowledge</li> <li>• Sales</li> <li>• Merchandising</li> <li>• Scheduling</li> <li>• Customer Contact</li> <li>• Barcode Scanning</li> <li>• Cleaning</li> <li>• Store Management</li> <li>• Printers</li> <li>• Product Knowledge</li> <li>• Sales Goals</li> </ul>

Manufacturing Industry		
Occupation Clusters	Certifications	Skills
Management (21.2%) Computer and Mathematical (16.5%) Architecture and Engineering (15.3%) Production (9.9%) Business and Financial Operations (7%) Sales and Related (5.9%) Life, Physical, and Social Science (5.5%) Office and Administrative Support (5.1%) Transportation and Material Moving (3.9%) Installation, Maintenance, and Repair (2.8%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driver's License</li> <li>• Security Clearance</li> <li>• Project Management Certification</li> <li>• Project Management Professional (PMP)</li> <li>• OSHA Forklift Certification</li> <li>• Certified Public Accountant (CPA)</li> <li>• Six Sigma Certification</li> <li>• Biotechnology Certificate</li> <li>• Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP)</li> <li>• CompTIA Security+</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Management</li> <li>• Quality Assurance and Control</li> <li>• Biotechnology</li> <li>• Budgeting</li> <li>• Scheduling</li> <li>• Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMP)</li> <li>• Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMP)</li> <li>• Customer Service</li> <li>• Product Development</li> <li>• Quality Management</li> </ul>

Overall, employers have seen an increased need for warehouse related occupations that has eclipsed the need for Software Developers and Registered Nurses in the past year as seen in Table 4. It is important to note that the overwhelming majority of these warehouse occupations have been posted by Amazon as a single employer. Amazon’s presence in the region has altered the list of occupations most in demand.

**Table 4:** All Occupations by Posting Volume (Burning Glass: Labor Insight 5/2020-5/2021)

Occupations / SOC Code	Job Posting Count
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	6,084
Registered Nurses	5,572
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	5,245
Software Developers, Applications	5,224
Computer Occupations, All Other	4,955
Retail Salespersons	4,735
Managers, All Other	4,665
Customer Service Representatives	3,723
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	3,387
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	3,084
Marketing Managers	2,537
Medical and Health Services Managers	2,372
Personal Care Aides	1,964
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	1,937
General and Operations Managers	1,799
Nursing Assistants	1,741
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	1,712
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,654
Childcare Workers	1,579
Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education	1,571
Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	6,084
Registered Nurses	5,572
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	5,245
Software Developers, Applications	5,224
Computer Occupations, All Other	4,955

**(3) Please provide an analysis of your regional workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment<sup>1</sup>.**

**Labor Force**

The labor force as defined as “residents who are either working or unemployed and looking for work” stands at 520,629. Of the Metro South/West labor force 497,275 are employed while 23,354 are



unemployed. The number of unemployed residents dropped from 55,895 a year ago as businesses continue to reopen post-pandemic. Of the forty-three cities and towns that make up the region, the highest number of unemployed individuals reside in, Framingham 1,883, Newton 1,861 Waltham 1,794, Brookline, 1,227 and Marlborough 1,161. (MA Department of Unemployment Assistance/Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics)

**Table 5: Labor Force and Unemployment Rate (MA DUA: LAUS, 5/20 to 5/21)**

Month	Year	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Metro South/West Rate	Massachusetts Rate
May	2021	520,629	497,275	23,354	4.5	6.1
April	2021	517,799	495,251	22,548	4.4	5.9
March	2021	519,103	493,633	25,470	4.9	6.6
February	2021	519,644	491,163	28,481	5.5	7.3
January	2021	517,883	488,309	29,574	5.7	7.5
December	2020	517,697	486,745	30,952	6	7.3
November	2020	519,424	484,629	34,795	6.7	7.7
October	2020	515,797	479,250	36,547	7.1	8.1
September	2020	503,461	469,122	34,339	6.8	8.9
August	2020	506,146	471,499	34,647	6.8	9.1
July	2020	498,120	459,993	38,127	7.6	10.1
June	2020	505,656	449,761	55,895	11	14.8

### UI Rates and Claimant Data

As of May 2021, the unemployment rate for the region is 4.5%, which has been consistently lower than the Massachusetts rate which stands at 6.1%. Unemployment Insurance claimants averaged 24,017 on a monthly basis. As indicated in the table below, claimant numbers declined each month as the economy gradually opened and more opportunities for employment were created. Food Preparation and Serving Related occupations were the most common claimants with over 3,900 claims filed each month on average. (MA Department of Unemployment Assistance Unemployment Insurance Claimant Data 6/2020 – 5/2021)

**Table 6: Unemployment Insurance Claims Data, last 12 months Metro South/West Workforce Delivery Area**

Metro South/West Claimant Count			
May 2021	6,234	November 2020	22,393
April 2021	7,606	October 2020	26,741
March 2021	10,844	September 2020	33,338
February 2021	13,652	August 2020	38,594
January 2021	15,112	July 2020	46,633
December 2020	16,038	June 2020	51,015

### Workforce Demographics

The workforce in the Metro South/West region is older on average with 21% made up of individuals 55 or older. A challenge in this region is that younger workers able to potentially fill positions vacated by

older workers are in short supply. According to Quarterly Workforce Indicators from the US Census, there are 58,139 workers aged 14 to 24, which only comprises 11% of the workforce, roughly half of the number of the aging workforce cohort.

**Table 7: Workforce by Age, (US Census: Quarterly Workforce Indicators 2021)**

Age Groups	14-18	19-21	22-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-99
Workforce Count	11,139	18,298	28,702	123,232	114,788	119,160	107,727	39,604

Workers are well educated in the region. 267,562 workers have a bachelor’s degree or higher, which is over half the workforce at 53%. At the same time, there are only 51,005 individuals who do not have a high school diploma or equivalent.

**Table 8: Workforce by Education, (US Census: Quarterly Workforce Indicators 2021)**

Education	Less than high school	High school or equivalent, no college	Some college or Associate degree	Bachelor's degree or higher	Educational attainment not available
Workforce Count	51,005	105,041	139,042	209,423	58,139

In terms of race and ethnicity the Metro South/West Region is predominantly White. Black or African Americans and Asians each make up roughly the same percentage of the workforce at 8.4% and 8.5% respectively. Hispanic or Latinos comprise 9.8% of the region’s workforce. These percentages have increased for slightly for minorities populations over the past five years as the number of white workers has decreased by greater volume during the Pandemic compared to other races and ethnicities. (US Census/Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics 2016-2021)

**Table 9: Workforce by Race, (US Census: Quarterly Workforce Indicators 2021)**

Race	White Alone	Black or African American Alone	American Indian or Alaska Native Alone	Asian Alone	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander Alone	Two or More Race Groups
Workforce Count	455,564	46,581	2,412	47,371	947	9,776

**Table 10: Workforce by Ethnicity, (US Census: Quarterly Workforce Indicators 2021)**

Ethnicity	Hispanic or Latino	Not Hispanic of Latino
Workforce Count	50,533	512,117

### Individuals with Barriers to Employment

Employment barriers that individuals in the Metro South/West face range from poverty, to disabilities, to legal issues. With more employers requiring credit checks as a part of the application process, it can be difficult for low-income workers or the “working poor” to advance. According to data from the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) an estimated 45,419 households in Middlesex County are receiving

aid through the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) or an estimated 7.7% . ACS estimates also indicate that 125,491 people in the region, or 8.2%, are living in poverty.

### Adult Basic Education and Limited English Proficiency

In the Metro South/West region it is estimated that there are just over 50,000 individuals with limited English proficiency and over 30,000 adults without a high school diploma or equivalent. Data supplied from the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE) and 2019 five-year estimates from the ACS indicate that Framingham, Waltham, Newton, Marlborough and Brookline are the cities and town where the biggest need for both ABE and ESOL training exists by volume.

**Table 11: ABE and ESOL need by City/Town (ACS: 2019 Five-Year Estimates)**

City/Town	Population	ABE NEED						ESOL NEED	
		Less than 9th Grade		9th - 12th, No Diploma		Less than 9th + 9th-12th		Limited English Proficient	
		Number	% of Pop	Number	% of Pop	Number	% of Pop	Number	% of Pop
<b>State Total:</b>	<b>6,705,586</b>	<b>220,055</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>251,050</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>471,105</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>525,198</b>	<b>9.9%</b>
Framingham	70,443	2,639	5.4%	2,689	5.5%	5,328	11.0%	10,205	18.3%
Waltham	62,438	2,195	5.1%	2,093	4.9%	4,288	9.9%	6,551	12.2%
Newton	87,675	719	1.2%	776	1.3%	1,495	2.6%	5,869	8.6%
Marlborough	39,425	1,733	6.2%	1,321	4.7%	3,054	10.9%	4,815	15.5%
Brookline	59,132	778	1.9%	594	1.5%	1,372	3.4%	4,631	9.6%
Lexington	32,700	237	1.1%	439	2.0%	676	3.0%	1,995	8.3%
Hudson	19,602	769	5.4%	589	4.1%	1,358	9.5%	1,519	9.8%
Norwood	28,962	549	2.6%	613	2.9%	1,162	5.6%	1,505	6.6%
Natick	34,892	247	1.0%	406	1.7%	653	2.7%	1,436	5.5%
Acton	22,925	209	1.3%	196	1.3%	405	2.6%	1,362	8.0%
Dedham	25,224	447	2.5%	637	3.5%	1,084	5.9%	1,275	6.4%
Needham	29,853	88	0.4%	321	1.6%	409	2.0%	1,091	5.0%
Sharon	17,995	124	1.0%	135	1.1%	259	2.1%	979	7.6%
Wellesley	28,832	107	0.7%	179	1.1%	286	1.8%	930	4.4%
Canton	22,276	214	1.4%	277	1.8%	491	3.1%	882	5.1%
Ashland	17,159	221	1.9%	250	2.1%	471	3.9%	721	5.5%
Bedford	13,921	68	0.7%	162	1.7%	230	2.4%	650	6.2%
Bellingham	16,682	262	2.2%	500	4.2%	762	6.4%	543	4.1%
Walpole	24,796	571	3.3%	522	3.0%	1,093	6.3%	524	2.8%
Westwood	15,094	107	1.0%	181	1.8%	288	2.8%	507	4.6%

Franklin	32,731	269	1.3%	533	2.5%	802	3.8%	443	1.8%
Wayland	13,432	57	0.6%	86	0.9%	143	1.6%	433	4.4%
Sudbury	18,397	95	0.8%	74	0.6%	169	1.4%	422	3.3%
Concord	19,271	282	2.0%	556	4.0%	838	6.0%	401	2.7%
Weston	11,850	38	0.5%	76	1.0%	114	1.5%	397	4.7%
Maynard	10,459	157	2.0%	186	2.4%	343	4.5%	310	3.8%
Foxborough	17,243	183	1.5%	461	3.8%	644	5.3%	285	2.1%
Norfolk	11,660	282	3.4%	534	6.4%	816	9.9%	246	2.7%
Boxborough	5,137	0	0.0%	10	0.3%	10	0.3%	237	6.0%
Holliston	14,197	72	0.8%	210	2.2%	282	3.0%	232	2.2%
Southborough	9,909	98	1.5%	58	0.9%	156	2.4%	203	2.8%
Littleton	9,359	33	0.5%	83	1.2%	116	1.7%	194	2.7%
Millis	8,051	3	0.1%	123	2.2%	126	2.2%	183	3.0%
Hopkinton	15,925	142	1.4%	88	0.8%	230	2.2%	177	1.6%
Carlisle	5,074	27	0.8%	23	0.7%	50	1.4%	174	4.6%
Medway	13,069	142	1.6%	225	2.6%	367	4.2%	172	1.8%
Lincoln	7,270	49	1.0%	51	1.1%	100	2.1%	142	2.8%
Dover	5,814	18	0.5%	20	0.5%	38	1.0%	136	3.3%
Medfield	12,368	3	0.0%	148	1.9%	151	1.9%	96	1.1%
Sherborn	4,245	20	0.7%	20	0.7%	40	1.4%	79	2.6%
Wrentham	11,287	109	1.4%	148	2.0%	257	3.4%	68	0.8%
Stow	6,957	34	0.7%	1	0.0%	35	0.7%	54	1.1%
Plainville	8,735	75	1.2%	220	3.4%	295	4.6%	14	0.2%
Total:	942,466	14,472	2.3%	16,814	2.6%	31,286	4.9%	53,088	7.3%

### Individuals Facing Disabilities

People dealing with disabilities find challenges when looking for work, while others have dropped out of the labor force altogether. In both cases, individuals with cognitive disabilities make up the largest percentage. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, a cognitive disability is any condition that sufficiently impacts learning and knowing. This includes impairments affecting the capacities to learn, process, remember, or communicate information; awareness; and decision-making. The table below breaks out the numbers of people in Middlesex County by their disability type and whether they are seeking work or not.

**Table 12: Disability by Type and Employment Status**

Middlesex County	Estimate
Total Population:	1,037,100
<b>Unemployed:</b>	31,980
With a disability:	2,204
With a hearing difficulty	511
With a vision difficulty	250
With a cognitive difficulty	1,222
With an ambulatory difficulty	533
With a self-care difficulty	157
With an independent living difficulty	325
<b>Not in labor force:</b>	188,431
With a disability:	35,953
With a hearing difficulty	4,687
With a vision difficulty	4,401
With a cognitive difficulty	18,329
With an ambulatory difficulty	16,160
With a self-care difficulty	7,733
With an independent living difficulty	16,555

**Released from Incarceration**

The majority of state-run correction facilities in Massachusetts are located in the Metro South/West Region. Data provided by the Department of Corrections put the number of inmates released to Middlesex and Norfolk Counties at roughly 980 since 2018. On average 327 inmates per year are released in this area. This does not include individuals from facilities under the Norfolk Sheriff's Office or the Middlesex House of Corrections.

**Table 12: DOC Correctional Facilities in Metro South/West**

Name	Location	Security
<u>Massachusetts Correctional Institution - Cedar Junction</u>	<u>Norfolk / Walpole</u>	Maximum/Medium
<u>Massachusetts Correctional Institution - Concord</u>	<u>West Concord</u>	Medium
<u>Massachusetts Correctional Institution - Framingham</u>	<u>Framingham</u>	Medium
<u>Massachusetts Correctional Institution - Norfolk</u>	<u>Norfolk</u>	Medium
<u>Massachusetts Correctional Institution - Shirley</u>	<u>Shirley</u>	Medium/Minimum
<u>Northeastern Correctional Center</u>	<u>West Concord</u>	Minimum/Pre-Release
<u>Old Colony Correctional Center</u>	<u>Bridgewater</u>	Medium/Minimum
<u>Pondville Correctional Center</u>	<u>Norfolk</u>	Minimum/Pre-Release
<u>South Middlesex Correctional Center</u>	<u>Framingham</u>	Minimum/Pre-Release
<u>Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center</u>	<u>Shirley</u>	Maximum

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

**a) include strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities.**

**b) address the capacity to provide the workforce development activities around:**

**i. education and skill needs of the workforce;**

**ii. individuals with barriers to employment;**

**iii. employment needs of businesses.**

The Strengths of workforce development activities in Metro South/West include:

- Development of a much stronger, more cohesive and highly collaborative relationship between the workforce board and the career center to more effectively and efficiently provide workforce development programming and services to businesses and job seekers
- An industry sector-based approach in program design, implementation and execution, with a focus on health care, computers/information technology, advanced manufacturing, retail and STEM
- Regional approach to programming and planning (successful creation of the Greater Boston Workforce Planning Blueprint in 2018)
- Collaboration with the adjoining Central and North Central Workforce Boards to expand our regional impact and influence
- Identifying, applying for and utilizing other sources of funding to sustain budgets, programming
- Optimizing staffing levels to best secure funding and implement programs
- Aggressive development of ex-offender programs, apprenticeship programs and national dislocated worker grants
- Sustained partnerships with regional adult education centers to leverage and optimize career center and adult education services
- Commitment to the WIOA mandated partnerships and to the overarching concept of the 'shared customer' and utilization of the MassHire career center as a hub for services
- Ability to provide virtual services to both Job Seekers and Businesses.

The Weaknesses (or challenges) of workforce development activities in Metro South/West include:

- Metro South/West is a vastly diverse region with the greatest number of cities and towns (compared to all other workforce board regions) and is geographically spread out with over 1,000,000 residents, 550,000 workers and 37,000 businesses, making it challenging to effectively address the many workforce needs
- The career center has experienced significant changes and challenges due to operator-related events and a recent turnover, resulting in less than planned service delivery and goal performance
- Public transportation within the region is fractured and limited, with services typically found in the larger city and town centers, with non-day shift services even more limited
- Housing costs
- Pandemic related labor shortages

The MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board (WB) has, and continues to expand and develop its capacity to address the workforce development needs in the region. The WB has long taken an industry sector approach when designing and implementing programming for the region. Based on regional needs, we have historically focused on health care, technology-based industries, retail/customer service and youth programs. As part of the Greater Boston Regional Plan, we will continue to pursue programs in the health care and computer/IT sectors. Within the region, youth programs have been revamped to integrate in-school and out-of-school programs. This has led to stronger performance and the capacity to serve more participants as well as school districts. We will continue addressing the needs of youth/young adults at-risk and with the greatest need. New or revised programs that can be delivered virtually have been put into place during the Pandemic and will supplement in-person services going forward.

The WB, with the active support of the career center, is taking a new, broader approach to addressing the needs of individuals with barriers to employment. Efforts are ongoing with groups such as low income, ex-offenders, English language learners, adults without a high school diploma or equivalency and recently dislocated workers. Establishing and/or strengthening relationships with WIOA partners such as MRC, DTA, DUA, MCB and SMOC are key to these efforts.

The WB has actively developed and maintained business relationships within the region. Active participation in groups such as the 495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership, MetroWest Healthcare Collaborative, Massachusetts Senior Care Foundation and the several regional chambers of commerce have helped to expand and solidify business relationships and are a vehicle for providing detailed workforce challenges and needs. We have also developed strong partnerships with local community colleges and Chapter 74 programs in an effort to better address the occupational and workplace education needs. The WB developed a Vocational Technical Education Consortium comprised of eight schools offering Chapter 74 programming. As an intermediary, the WB works to bring businesses, educators and supportive service agencies together to work collaboratively and effectively.

**(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**

MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board's (WB) strategic vision to support workforce and economic development and growth in the region has evolved over the years. With the new re-branding of the Massachusetts workforce system, our vision will be further refined and expanded due to a renewed, strengthened focus on collaborations internally and external to the region. The MassHire tagline – "Let's Get to Work" – succinctly states our mission of being a dynamic intermediary that positively impacts our partners, as well as being the end goal for our job seeker and business customers.

**Our Mission** is to "to (a) enable individuals and families to reach economic self-sufficiency through education and training for 21st Century jobs and (b) help companies develop a well-trained workforce so that they might survive and prosper."

We endeavor to provide leadership which results in effective, cost-efficient programs based on research, data and partnerships which meet the needs of businesses and job seekers in the region.

**Our Vision** is to create a labor force in the region that meets the stringent and ever-evolving demands of our businesses, whether large or small. In doing so, we are actively supporting and advancing the regional economic development needs, plans and goals in Metro South/West. We fuel this vision by developing, nurturing and growing relationships between the career center, community-based organizations, traditional and vocational high schools, institutions of higher education, civic agencies, faith-based organizations, and municipal, economic and workforce development agencies.

The Metro South/West region has over 1 million residents, approximately 550,000 workers and 37,000 businesses. The WB seeks to create an economic and workforce environment that not only retains but attracts new businesses to the region, where they are able to find a wide variety of highly skilled and committed workers, ranging from experienced post-graduates to entry-level youth. With a wider variety and an expanding pool of businesses, we also seek to attract new workers who are drawn to opportunities to begin or continue a career and not just find a job. Further, we will catalyze and reinforce the natural synergy between business and worker, creating an economic development model that can grow and become more self-sustaining.

The WB has historically followed three strategies in our efforts to reach our vision:

- Use of labor market information, data and research to inform and drive our work
- Pursuit and growth of relationships, and preferably partnerships, with agencies and organizations that can be leveraged to achieve mutual business and job seeker goals
- Collaborating with neighboring workforce regions to create and implement mutually beneficial programs that draw upon a collective experience and influence base that is far greater than the individual region

The WB has revised and optimized the broader workforce board governance structure and processes in order to more efficiently and effectively develop and approve new regional service programs that support workforce initiatives and our economic development vision. The structure is comprised of the WIOA Workforce Board and several committees staffed by varying volunteer board members.



- WIOA Workforce Board – In partnership with the Chief Elected Official (CEO), is charged with oversight of workforce development and customer service activities in Metro South/West
- Executive Committee – Membership made up of committee chairs plus selected board members, charged with and authorized to conduct the “daily” business of the board
- Finance Committee – Reviews and approves WB budgets, funding strategies and expenses
- Career Center Committee – Reviews career center performance and goal achievement, setting local standards for services in support of state and federal standards
- Youth Committee – Oversees all youth programming, providing guidance and direction on youth support, work readiness and employment activities
- Workforce Strategies Committee – Reviews regional labor market information and the workforce needs of special populations

Elements of our workforce strategy that support the economic development vision are:

- Increase the number of young people in the STEM pipeline
- Increase the number of front-line health care workers, largely minorities, preparing for the health care professions
- Provide an efficient and effective labor exchange through the MassHire Metro South/West Career Center (CC), responding, in particular, to the needs of veterans and ex-offenders
- Reach out to businesses and address their needs through the business services unit in the career center
- Increase youth employment for all young people, but focus on communities like Framingham, Waltham Marlborough and Norwood and where the needs are the greatest and the population has higher than average numbers of minority and immigrant youth
- Working with the MetroWest Chamber of Commerce, Newton-Needham Chamber of Commerce, Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce and the 495/ MetroWest Corridor Partnership to address workforce needs in major areas of economic and business development
- Expand grant funding to better support youth paid internships, youth after-school work opportunities, adult education and vocational training certificate programs, apprenticeships, ex-offender training and placement programs and IT-based re-training programs for long-term unemployed and new-to-the-workforce customers.

The WB, in collaboration with the Career Center (CC), will be concentrating on the following target groups to improve services for each of the groups:

- Veterans - With the continuing discharge of military personnel who served in the Mideast, there was and is increasing demand for services. Veterans representatives are located in each career center (Framingham and Norwood) to provide dedicated, timely services.
- Ex-offenders - The CC is conducting outreach to several of the region’s correctional institutions in order to evaluate implementation of “behind the walls” training and work readiness programs. A new partnership with the MA Department of Corrections has been established to support these efforts.

- High school students and out-of-school youth, with a focus on at-risk youth - The WIOA Youth Program (Career Connections) and the WB Youth Program (Youth Careers) are working toward a new consolidated and streamlined approach to providing youth services that includes organizational changes as well as service model improvements and efficiencies.

**(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.**

Mindful of our oversight “firewall” constraints, the WB has implemented a cohesive, aligned and collaborative team relationship with the career center operator to establish an “Integrated Management” approach. The career center is responsible for providing effective core programming and has overcome significant challenges and transitions in 2017-2018 that had impacted its ability to provide mandated services efficiently and comprehensively. To address issues and support team development, the WB has created an Integrated Management Team (IMT) comprised of career center leadership (operator and state staff) and workforce board leadership which meets at least monthly. The goal of the IMT is to increase communications, engender collaboration, improve the timeliness and quality of decision making and in general, create a sense of comradery and “oneness”. The concept and acceptance of the IMT has been positive with improved practices and results evident to all participants.

The WB went through a thorough, comprehensive process of bringing required WIOA partners together, resulting in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Appendix a.) that was signed by all partners and focuses on serving the “shared customer” with high quality services, results-oriented programming and positive outcomes. The WIOA Partners meet on a quarterly basis to address issues and share updates and best practices. In addition, the WB has created supplemental “local agreements” with key required partners which essentially detail specific processes and procedures that may be unique to the region and the customers served by the partners. Additionally, the WB has recently begun a series of individual meetings with key partners to clarify and address the partnership, reinforcing our desire and need to work collaboratively.

**(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)**

WIOA /Career Center Programs
Title I: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth
Title II: Adult Education
Title III: Wagner-Peyser
Title IV: Vocational Rehab
Trade Adjustment Assistance

DUA - Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment program
MassHire MSW Board / Grant Funded Programs
Connecting Activities
YouthWorks
Innovation Pathways
Early College High Schools
WIOA Partner Programs
DTA - Competitive Integrated Employment Services
DTA -Work Participant Program
Senior Community Service Employment Program

- (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 WB will support workforce programs in the region through effective collaboration with our identified WIOA partners. Together our partners have agreed that successful career centers are the critical component to delivering workforces services across core programs, as previously noted in section a6 above. The partners agree to develop a system in which:

1. Career centers are driven by the needs of employers. In Metro South/West employer needs are the top priority and there are deep relationships between the career centers and employers.
2. Training is closely aligned with employer skill requirements. In Metro South/West job seekers will engage in a combination of work and learning simultaneously to gain market-relevant skills and credentials and achieve good paying jobs with career potential.
3. Technology is employed thoughtfully to enhance services and reduce costs, freeing staff to concentrate on the content and quality of advice and services to both individuals and employers. In Metro South/West well-designed platforms support individual learning, placement, management and continuous improvement.

### **The Work Plan**

In the agreement with our WIOA Partners, the WB will take the first steps to build an employer-driven, high-tech, high-touch career center system comprised of the following objectives:

- Integrate career center and partner services
- Ensure that facilities, and equipment are accessible to the customers or consumers of the Partners both in-person and through virtual means

- Collect and analyze data and take action to respond to changing labor market conditions and to continuously improve services
- Develop a registration form and process to provide for the collection of information to be shared by the career center and its partners until such time as the state-wide intake system is fully functional
- Create and implement a system of referral to services between the career center and the Partners
- Establish a baseline of Partner referrals to the career center

The WB chapter 74 programs will support the improvement of secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs in the region through:

- Regular communication with the region's Consortium of Career and Technical Education providers and writing letters of support for the development of new Chapter 74 programs.
- Providing labor market information data and consultations for Vocational Technical Education Schools and Comprehensive High Schools who are developing new programs in order to ensure programs are aligned with business and economic needs of the region.
- Serving on advisory committees in order to ensure continued quality of Chapter 74 programs.
- Providing technical assistance in regard to the development of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs.

**(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;**

With a goal of expanding access, the WB endeavors to increase the scope and effectiveness of the career center and required WIOA Partner relationships by leveraging its role as an intermediary and facilitator. This is discussed in section a6 above.

Additionally, we will build on our successful collaborative efforts with Partners such as co-authoring grant proposals or agreeing to be a supportive participant in a grant application. We also look to expand the pool of partners to include other agencies (such as local housing authorities and faith-based organizations) who serve customers in need and/or have significant barriers to employment. Our goal is to create similar referral and service processes based on those with our WIOA Partners.

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

The WB, CC and WIOA Partners have been working very closely over the past several months to design and implement a shared customer referral process. We have explored the concept of, and alpha tested, an online-based tool that supported the referral and tracking process while also supporting career pathway customer activities. Unfortunately, the proposed system did not provide the hoped-for ease of use and desired outcomes. We are currently utilizing a traditional paper-based referral system in conjunction with our Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) and utilizing the CC career exploration and case management processes to support shared customers

**(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);**

The WB will adopt a two-pronged approach to this. The first being a data-driven strategy to identify potential gaps between post-secondary credentials and industry recognized certificates being most sought after by business and the availability of training providers. The second component is to increase the pipeline of jobseekers who are able to take advantage of training opportunities.

Quantitative data from job posting information combined with qualitative data received directly from companies through the WB's business engagement efforts as well as establishing credentials associate with priority occupations identified in the Greater Boston Regional Blueprint, will provide a clear picture of where training dollars and resources can create the best return on investment. Secondly, by cross referencing this data with approved training providers that are captured through TrainingPro and Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System data the WB will be able to focus efforts to mitigate these gaps. This mitigation will include:

- Research/Recruit new training providers and work with existing providers to expand credential and certificate options.
- Leverage apprentice training models to encourage employers to provide training in the absence of an identified training provider.
- Expand the use of technology resources and distance learning where applicable.

In order to increase the pipeline of jobseekers, the WB will focus on streamlining the process for individuals to receive training and developing the skills from the region's youth and adult basic education populations which will empower them to successfully complete training. To accomplish this goal, the WB will:

- Pre-package or fast track the eligibility for training for programs that offer high demand credentials, specifically credentials that support the region's most critical occupational groups, Computer and Mathematical, Healthcare Practitioners, and Technical and Healthcare Support occupations

- Work to expand our ABE and ESOL provider base. At the same time collaborate with our current providers and projects to integrate adult basic education curriculum with vocational training content. This will also enable jobseekers to take advantage of fuller range of career pathway opportunities
- Youth programs and activity will have a strong STEM emphasis, which directly impacts the majority of the region’s priority occupations. Through STEM-focused career exploration, education and experiential opportunities such as internships, more young adults will be encouraged to pursue industry recognized credentials.

**(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 WB will use several sources to identify businesses to engage and market our workforce development programs to them. Using Labor Insight from Burning Glass will enable the WB to target employers who are actively hiring in each of our cities and towns. The WB will also use employer databases from ALMIS and InfoGroup to further develop a pool of businesses to reach out to. All of these sources can be parsed by SOC and NAICS codes, which the WB will utilize to align our outreach efforts by industries and occupations critical to the region as noted in section a.

The WB will continue to be an active participant with the numerous chambers of commerce and rotary clubs that make up the region in order to connect with a range of businesses, most importantly, the small business community.

The WB will work together with our MassHire MSW Career Center to deliver a solution-based approach to each business which may include:

- Job posting and recruitments
- Specialized hiring events and job fairs
- Industry specific training
- On-the-Job Training and Apprentice Training
- Workplace safety consultations
- Technical assistance accessing tax incentives
- Local labor market information briefings

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

The Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting industry sector employs 1,200 to 1,500 workers in the region, which is less than a tenth of a percent of the Metro South/West workforce. As such, it is not

a primary focus of the WB. However, the WB will support our workforce partners, such as Norfolk County Agricultural High School, who are engaged in this industry on an ad hoc basis.

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

As noted in the previous responses, the WB and the CC will employ a “solution-based” approach and conduct a needs assessment with each business in order to determine what the most effective combination of services would be.

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

The WB will work directly with the 495 MetroWest Partnership, a public-private collaborative of businesses, municipalities and other stakeholders to primarily address economic development as well as workforce housing, transportation and the development of a skilled workforce in our shared region. Joint activities will include:

- Quarterly Municipal Economic Development Round table meetings
- Input on legislative initiatives in regard to transportation and other resources
- Development of best practices to retain, grow and attract employers

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

The Division of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is an identified WIOA Partner in the WB’s local MOU. The WB will be conducting quarterly meetings as well as monthly conference call updates with WIOA partners, which will serve to give DUA a way to provide input on services delivered through the career center.

The WB in its career center oversight role will ensure that the Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program effectively connect UI claimants to employers and that UI claimants are prioritized when recruiting talent for businesses.

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

As previously noted, the WB will continue to be actively involved with chambers of commerce and rotary clubs, not only as members but as partners on special initiatives, such as the “recovery friendly workplaces” that involves the MetroWest Chamber. This will enable the WB to network with and learn about potential new intermediaries.

The WB will also seek to expand its activity within current partnerships with industry groups including AIM, Mass MEP and other Regional Economic Development Organizations (REDO) such as the Middlesex 3 Coalition. Expanding beyond state-based intermediaries and creating partnership with nationwide organizations such as the relationship the WB has with National Retail Federation will be another component of this strategy.

Additionally, the WB is looking to create new intermediaries and build on a “summit” model carried out with three manufacturing firms in the town of Acton. The “Acton Manufacturing Workforce Summit” is a forum that meets regularly, made up of employers, training providers and MSW MassHire staff to address industry specific workforce challenges. The WB seeks to replicate this model in other cities or towns that rely on a particular industry sector.

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

Historically the WB has taken a lead role in business engagement, and as such has developed of resources that includes employer contacts, needs assessments and other qualitative data.

We will continue to coordinate with our career center’s Business Service Unit (BSU) to share and align these resources derived through our employer engagement efforts. The WB will also include the BSU on employer events through our grant funded youth programs so businesses that may initially be looking to fill a young adult internship position can also learn about the range of other business services available to them.

A BizWorks/Rapid Response staff person will be co-located in our Marlborough Workforce Board office in order to more effectively inform staff of business dislocation events occurring in the region and coordinate delivery of layoff mitigation services, re-training and other reemployment services for dislocated workers. The WB and our Career Center will continue to participate in the Mass BizWorks Central Region’s monthly meetings.

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

The WB will continue to build on its “Solution-Based” approach to business engagement. Programs listed above are viewed as tools in a toolbox to be appropriately implemented based upon the needs of a business on a case-by-case situation and where appropriate as informed by labor market data, scaled-up to groups of employers. This approach is predicated on board members, board staff, our career center and our WIOA partners being well aware of and well versed in potential solutions noted above as well as apprentice training, access to Workforce Training Fund grants and detailed needs of regional



businesses. The WB will integrate staff development and formalized communication channels with our workforce partners and stakeholders to accomplish this.

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

- **Coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local area**

As noted previously, the WB will work directly with the 495 MetroWest Partnership to address economic development challenges in the region. The Executive Director of the WB is a member of the 495 Partnership's board of directors and will be well positioned to leverage resources to support economic development.

The WB, in conjunction with our career center's BSU will also coordinate individually with municipal economic development staff at a city and town level. The WB will continue to work with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's Twin River Inter-Local Committee that comprises economic development staff from several cities and towns in our service delivery area.

The WB is also committed to its collaboration with the Massachusetts Office of Business Development. We will continue to coordinate with Metro South/West region's designated business development director to support effective implementation of statewide economic development incentive programs.

- **Promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services;**

While the WB does not directly fund entrepreneurial skills training, we actively support the Adult Education Centers in the region, who provide individuals with business start-up assistance and help with navigation of the process to become a sole proprietor.

In addition, resources and information will be made available to individuals through our career center including:

- U.S. Small Business Administration resources, funding options, opportunities to receive mentoring and regional contact referrals
- Guidance on the Census Business Builder (CBB) tool from the US Census. This provides potential small business owners key data for their business plan or to better understand their potential market.

The WB will also support local economic development entities in the region, such as the Marlborough Economic Development Corporation, that promotes entrepreneurship as part of its mission.

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

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

The WB continuously reviews the Eligible Training Provider (ETPL) List to ensure training vendors maintain satisfactory performance and offer courses that meet the needs of businesses and job seekers in the region. We also look to expand the ETPL (adding new vendors and courses) via requests from job seekers and businesses, and as a result of LMI studies which may indicate an imminent/future need. As with existing vendors, these new additions are vetted thoroughly to ensure that they meet our standards and needs.

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

The Metro South/West region is geographically large with 43 cities and towns. We have two brick and mortar comprehensive career center locations in Framingham and Norwood. We intend to create three to five affiliated career center sites in areas of the region that are underserved and have need but are not conveniently located to one of the comprehensive sites. We are piloting an affiliated site in Waltham and will take learnings from this experience as we establish additional affiliated sites. The WB has adopted Zoom as its primary virtual communication delivery platform and has provided training and a service-oriented user manual to CC staff.

The CC utilizes WebEx in addition to Zoom to deliver all services virtually to customers and will continue to offer this, as well as in-person services post pandemic. The CC will work to develop broadband services to its customer base through available resources including the Mass Internet Connect Program.

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

Both comprehensive CC sites are in full compliance with ADA regulations including facility access and technology-assisted services. Staff are trained to assist customers with disabilities. Additionally, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) conducts a bi-annual assistive monitoring to ensure compliance and provide guidance for improvements.

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

The roles and resource contributions of all required partners are listed in the fully executed WIOA Partner MOU (Appendix a). All infrastructure funding decisions are made at the state level and provided to the region via an Inter-Agency Service Agreement (ISA). The WB, CC and Fiscal Agent oversee the budget to ensure that all allocations are incorporated into the local integrated budget and managed appropriately. These budget amounts are shared at the local level with our partners to foster discussion and receive feedback on creative programming that can take place to benefit the customer and positive outcomes. Quarterly partner meetings also help to facilitate productive communication and pro-active planning and programming.

**(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 CC provides services in three main categories to adult and dislocated workers. These are basic career services, individualized career services, and training services. The basic services are available to all job seekers as they entail outreach, intake, and orientation. Initial assessment of skills, abilities and needs for supportive services occurs with basic services as do job search and placement assistance, access to labor market information, and in-basic information about training providers.

The next level of service includes comprehensive assessments of skills and service needs, development of an individualized employment plan, referral to training, individual and group counseling, and work-readiness literacy activities. Case management for customers who are seeking training occurs here, as does soft-skills training and supports.

Occupational skills training services are available through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), adult education and literacy activities, on-the-job training and apprentice opportunities, incumbent worker training and other workplace related instruction as determined necessary for the worker to find meaningful employment.

Assessment is effective when the right tools are used to help make evidence-based matches between the current skills of the worker and the skills needed for the workforce. Some of these tools include Career Ready 101 and WorkKeys which can help the job seeker earn a National Career Readiness Certificate. Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) is used to assess a customer's readiness for referral to an ABE center, and for coordination with the local community college. WIOA Youth are tested for literacy/numeracy levels as well. The Transferrable Occupational Relationship Quotient (TORQ) is used by staff to analyze the transferability of skills among various occupations, and to provide information on skills gap, salary levels and job search suggestions.

Numerous workshops are also available to provide support to job seekers.

- MS Word Efficient Formatting Techniques
- LinkedIn 2
- Excel Fitness Level 1
- Identity Theft

- Using Age to Your Advantage
- Excel Fitness Level 2
- Personal Branding
- Federal Job Search- Veteran
- Managing Your Job Search: First Steps to Success
- Labor Market Research – Skills, Careers, Employment Outlook
- LinkedIn Intro: Navigating Your Way Around the Platform
- Sharpening Your Interviewing Skills
- Partner Information Session

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

The BSU of the CC, as noted, will continue to work closely with the Mass BizWorks program. One of the major services offered through Mass BizWorks is the Rapid Response (RR) program, which helps businesses facing downsizing or closings.

When the WB or CC is notified of a layoff or a closing, the Rapid Response Team is alerted to initiate services. Businesses may also submit a formal WARN notice to the Rapid Response Statewide Team.

The RR Team coordinates activities with the WB and CC. The RR Team will schedule a meeting with the employer to obtain information about the dates of layoffs, types of jobs being impacted, number of employees affected. Employee informational meetings are generally scheduled on site, with RR and CC staff providing information about reemployment services including trainings, as well as unemployment insurance. These trainings may be funded through the Dislocated Worker or Trade programs, and some laid off workers may be eligible for Section 30 extensions of their unemployment claims while in training.

Some counseling, workshops, or career center seminars may be provided on site while others are held at the CC. Layoff intervention is provided by linking businesses in growth stages with those business who are laying off similarly skilled workers. The Business Services Representative (BSR) will work with the other staff in the CC to access funding and training opportunities for eligible dislocated workers to upgrade current skills or provide new skills needed to obtain a new job.

The Career Centers actively work with Rapid Response to assist both employers and customers.

Customers Services:

As the Rapid Response staff becomes aware of a layoff and subsequently meets with the impacted job seekers from that employer, the rapid response representative will indicate in MOSES all job seekers interested in receiving more information/services from a career center. From there, the Career Center has two check points with the customer encouraging them to participate in Career Center Activities:

1) Twice a month, the Business Services Manager runs reports that highlights any “currently employed, expecting to be laid off and are interested in CC services” customers. While they are not officially laid off at this point in time, we introduce them to the Career Center’s Business Services Team, our Newsletter, the job openings we are currently working on and instructions on how to participate in Career Center Activities. Customers receive a minimum of two email outreach attempts.

2) When a customer officially becomes laid off, a notification is sent to the Career Center front desk staff indicating the layoff. Career Center staff front desk staff then emails and calls the customer for additional outreach encouraging participation in the Career Center.

#### Businesses:

The MSW Business Services Team actively participates in all Mass BizWorks Committees and reoccurring meetings scheduled by the Rapid Response team. Specifically, the Career Center is active in three regional meetings that occur monthly or quarterly. The Career Center participates and is notified of all upcoming/recent layoffs and WARN notices. Career Center Staff is notified of upcoming layoffs, potential NDWG’s, and initiatives occurring in the region.

#### MassWorkforce Issuances detailing Rapid Response Policies and Procedures:

100 DCS 11.101	1. Massachusetts Rapid Response Process Under WIOA
100 DCS 11.101A	2. Company Questionnaire / Demographic Report
100 DCS 11.102	3. Mass BizWorks Program Continuation and Tracking in MOSES
100 DCS 11.102A	4. Mass BizWorks Flowchart
100 DCS 11.102B	5. Mass BizWorks Program Plan
100 DCS 11.102C	6. Mass BizWorks Committee/Regional Teams Description
100 DCS 11.102D	7. Mass BizWorks Icon in MOSES
100 DCS 11.102E	8. Mass BizWorks Business Cycle
100 DCS 11.103	9. Rapid Response Set-Aside Funding
100 DCS 11.103A	10. Grant Application Process
100 DCS 11.103B	11. Grant Application
100 DCS 11.103C	12. Fiscal Application
100 DCS 11.103D	13. Vouchering Payment Guidance
100 DCS 11.103E	14. Vouchering Master Agreement Template
100 DCS 11.103F	15. Statement of Application Completeness Checklist

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

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

The US Department of Labor, through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, provides funding to support intensive workforce development activities for 100 – 150 teens living below the poverty level and facing additional barriers to employment. MassHire Metro South/West *Career Connections*, the region’s youth program operator, offers a comprehensive young adult development program designed to provide intensive education, employment and training services to meet the needs of disconnected young adults. Participants are between the ages of 17 and 24, reside in the Metro South/West region and meet the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth eligibility requirements.

Approximately sixty percent of the young adults currently enrolled in *Career Connections* have a documented disability. Coordination of services with Special Education departments, Disability Advocates and Mass Rehabilitation Commission is common practice. Case Managers (CMs) participate in transition planning and incorporate WIOA services into a participant’s Individual Plan for Employment.

Young adults with disabilities are provided with accommodations typically outlined in an Individual Education Plan or a formal medical evaluation (e.g., additional time for taking tests) throughout the assessment and planning process. Complementary services with disability partners are frequently leveraged to enhance the young adults’ ability to meet their employment and educational goals.

Disability professionals are consulted to ensure participants have appropriate education/workplace supports (e.g., assistive technology), and are provided with accurate information needed for benefits planning.

Successful collaboration among partners at the Framingham DTA site, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission have been formally established and have proven to be of a cooperative nature. *Career Connections* CMs are trained and knowledgeable in the services provided by the partner organizations and work with agency staff to access available resources. An informal tracking and referral process currently exist.

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

*Career Connections* utilizes a Pathway approach to bridge education and training to our young adults preparing for the workforce. Pathways are customized to meet each individual’s needs and align remediation, employment, training, post-secondary education and supportive services. CMs ensure that the program participant understands entrance requirements, the application process, industry licensing/credentials, remediation (if necessary), prerequisite requirements, apprenticeship criteria, labor market demands, opportunity for advancement and salary potential of the career cluster. Youth continue to develop critical thinking skills as they interpret the demands of the industry, reflect upon

their goals and skills, and take the necessary steps to enter a specific career pathway. These action steps require problem-solving skills to successfully navigate a career pathway.

Extensive research and planning are invested into the development of education and training goals for pathways necessitating classroom training. CMs assist young adults to gain entry into available post-secondary opportunities that align with the demands relevant to the labor market. Participants are offered assistance accessing grant funding, federal financial aid, Massachusetts State Scholarship, institutional grants, and local scholarships.

In-school CMs coordinate with high school administrators to ensure students remain on track to meet graduation requirements. Access to academic supports, including dropout prevention and credit recovery strategies leading to the completion of a secondary school diploma, are facilitated by CMs. Continuous follow-up and benchmark incentives have proven to be effective motivators to keep students on track.

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

The CC intends to continue its efforts to increase accessibility for WIOA Title I participants through the expansion of service delivery sites and increased virtual service capacity. The CC has made considerable efforts to expand services through virtual services such as workshops, orientations, partner focused presentations, out-stationing staff at DTA to support job search efforts.

Career Advisors are able to facilitate workshops at any given location around the region and can be out stationed with partner organizations to enhance career readiness. Workshops and seminars are available in a virtual capacity. Case Managers are able to offer intensive case management services off-site at partner locations or virtually, therefore eliminating the need for the participant to come to the Career Center.

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

The WB procures and oversees the MassHire Framingham and Norwood Career Centers which are currently operated by the Metro South/West Employment & Training Administration Inc (MSWETA). This service provider, MSWETA, will work in conjunction with the operator, Volunteers of America, in the formation of a consortium with three WIOA required Partners, (DCS, DUA, DTA) as well as other regional workforce partners. The main goal of the model is to maximize coordination, reduce duplication, facilitate referrals between Partners and improve service delivery throughout the region.

The current organizational structure is an integrated leadership team which consists of MSWETA and DCS employees. The leadership team is led by a MSWETA Director. All career center staff are responsible for the delivery of services to job and training seekers as well as regional employers, and are a blended team of MSWETA and DCS staff. Staff are cross trained in many functions.

Collaboration with Partners is encouraged. The BSU is assigned geographic sections and come together to provide collaborative services. The BSU works with job ready customers who have completed training, to refer them to openings. The BSU works closely with the Rapid Response team when there is a closing or layoff. The BSU also plans four large scale job fairs per year as well as other business-related events and activities.

Opportunities for expansion of our service delivery sites is being actively pursued. The relocation of the Framingham Career Center will be in place within the next few months as it is planned that the career center will be located in close physical proximity to the Framingham DTA and SMOC office locations.

Services are currently provided at two brick and mortar sites in the region: one in Framingham and one in Norwood. The leadership team strives to see that services are equally available between the sites, moving staff as necessary to coordinate and support each location, while pursuing opportunities to expand our in-person services locations.

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

Signage, written in English and Spanish, is posted in the reception areas of the MassHire Framingham and Norwood Career Centers informing customers of their rights as MSFW employees. Customers are asked if they are a seasonal farmworker as part of the general intake process.

A dedicated MSFW employment specialist will be designated in each center and will connect with that customer. Any MSFW customer has access to all the universal services available to other customers. During the Career Center Seminar (CCS) access to training opportunities is explained, and any MSFWs who may be interested in training are cycled to the case managers for assessment, counseling and intake as deemed appropriate.

Career Center staff will make job referrals to agricultural orders whether obtained locally, through the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS), or the H2-A foreign labor certification program. They will determine the eligibility of a qualified applicant and disclose the terms and conditions of employment prior to the referral by obtaining the employer's application (ETA-790) from the Foreign Labor Certification Unit.

Business services will be made available to agricultural employers who can benefit by pursuing WOTC tax credits, bonding programs, and recruitment services to fill their hiring needs. The Business Service Representative will provide assistance and information to the agricultural employers about labor laws and pertinent regulations.

The Career Center will arrange for initial and refresher training, at least one per year, or more frequently if needed.



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

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

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

The four adult basic education providers in our region are part of our local MOU. As such, we will continue to work with them at a board level. The CC coordinates closely with the Adult Education partners in the region. A Career Navigator has visited each Adult Education partner offering CC workshops and information to students to promote the benefits of becoming a shared customer. The CC also offers space to Adult Education partners onsite at each comprehensive location. Career Navigators coordinate referrals to and from these entities to support students and recruit for special programs.

**(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).***

The WB will continue to develop collaborative efforts with its WIOA Partners through execution of the MOU. (Appendix a.) A primary component of this strategy will be to create staff development training modules that span the partnering agencies. The following modules make up the staff development core curriculum:

- Partner agency missions
- Services offered by each agency
- Target populations served and their characteristics
- Requirements for participant entry
- Accessibility of services (accommodations)
- The referral process to and from the career center and the criteria used to determine when a referral would be made
- Staff sensitivity. What it means to be multi-lingual, multi-cultural, disabled and other special populations and what their needs are

The WB plans to involve Job Corps, Assabet Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School and the Massachusetts Department of Correction more prominently in its planning processes.

In addition, the WB also intends to expand its capacity to provide labor market information to stakeholders by collaborating with the MetroWest Economic Research Center (MERC) at Framingham State University. MERC produces economics reports topic areas that the WB historically has not addressed, such as cost of living and housing. By working with MERC, the WB can provide its access to job posting data and qualitative data from employers to help develop a clearer picture of this region's economic landscape.

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

Carol Wolf, Chief Financial Officer, Metro South/West ETA, Inc., 1671 Worcester Road, Lower Level, Framingham, MA 01701, 508-861-3278

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

Metro South/West Employment & Training Administration Inc (MSWETA) is the non-profit 501(c) 3 which has been designated by the MassHire MSW Chief Elected Official and certified by MassHire DCS as the WIOA Fiscal Agent for the regional workforce funds. MSWETA adheres to a local Procurement and Contracting policy, which is consistent and compliant with Mass Workforce Issuance 100 DCS 01.102, in all matters of procurement and contracting related to funds provided through the Department of Career Services including, but not limited to, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding. The Procurement and Contracting Policy as well as the other fiscal policies has been submitted as part of the Standard Operating Procedures for the region.

MSWETA is the fiscal agent and financial contract signatory authority for WIOA funds in the Metro South/West workforce development region.

The Executive Director and the Fiscal Officer are responsible for the conduct of all formal solicitations and procurements.

The Executive Director and the Fiscal Officer are the only individuals within MSWETA who have the authority to allocate funds to procure goods and services; approve procurement plans, issuance of a solicitation package, selection of contractors, contract modifications and procurements deemed non-competitive and/or sole source; sign contracts as authorized in contractual agreement with regional CEO; and issue notices of contract termination.

The WB conducts the procurement for the operators of the WIOA Career Center and Youth providers, while the Fiscal Agent is the contract signatory authority, following local procurement rules and 100 DCS 03.105.1. The WB designates the Career Center Committee to design the RFP, pending final approval by vote of the WB.

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

**Local Boards may insert or provide a link to requested performance goals.**

The following was submitted to DCS as part of the FY21 Local Plan:

<b>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</b>	<b>FY2020 PROPOSED LOCAL GOAL</b>	<b>FY 2021 PROPOSED LOCAL GOAL</b>
<b>WIOA ADULT MEASURES</b>		
Employment Q2	86.5%	86.5%
Employment Q4	78.0%	78.0%
Median Earnings Q2	\$5,800	\$6,200
Credential Rate	73%	73.5%
<b>WIOA DISLOCATED WORKER MEASURES</b>		
Employment Q2	86.0%	86.0%
Employment Q4	85.0%	85.0%
Median Earnings Q2	\$8,300	\$8,800
Credential Rate	65.0%	66.0%
<b>WIOA YOUTH MEASURES</b>		
Employment/Education Q2	81.0%	81.0%
Employment/Education Q4	74.0%	74.0%
Credential Rate	70.5%	70.5%

The following table represents customer performance goals that the CC and WIOA Youth programs have committed to in the FY21 Local Plan. The WB and relevant oversight committees will review CC and WIOA Youth performance on a regular basis as part of our accountability process.

<b>FY21 Performance Goals (Metro South/West)</b>	<b>Adult</b>	<b>DW</b>	<b>Youth</b>
1. Participants	70	342	88
2. Program Exiters (= 2.a + 2.b)	35	215	56
a. Enter Employment	30	184	38
b. Other Exit Reasons	5	31	8
3. Carry-Out to FY2020 (= 1 - 2)	35	127	32
4. Entered Employment Rate at Exit (= 2.a / 2)	86%	86%	86%
5. Total Participants in Training Activities (single count*)	25	105	88
a. Occupational Skills Training (all including ITA)	25	103	48
b. On-the-Job Training (OJT)	0	2	40
6. Training Participants Obtaining Certificate/Credential	15	31	53
7. Support Services	0	70	63

- (18) What are the actions and activities that support the local boards continued status as a high-performance workforce board? a). What trainings are applicable to Board members?**  
**b). How do business Board members contribute to workforce development in your region?**  
**c). How does your Board support the business services in the career centers?**  
**d). To what extent does inter-/intra-Board collaboration result in positive outcomes for job-seekers and businesses?**

The WB has been recently reorganized and will utilize five standing committees to carry out its responsibilities under WIOA and maintain its status as a high performing workforce board. The committees are listed below:

Committee Name	Committee Charge and Responsibilities
Executive Committee	<p>The Executive Committee is charged with organizing the work of the WB and providing guidelines for board actions. The Committee will make provisional decisions on behalf of the WB and when expedient action is required or warranted, exercise certain powers and duties of the WB. Duties include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve annual budgets and forwarding the four (4) year local plan to the full board for review</li> <li>• Develop legislative/advocacy platforms and position statements</li> <li>• Develop governance, operational and policy objectives</li> <li>• Identify potential nominees on an on-going basis for board vacancies.</li> <li>• Design and oversee a process of board orientation, including gathering information prior to election as board member and information needed during the early stage of board service</li> <li>• Regularly reviews and updates the organization’s policies procedures and makes recommendations to the board. By-law changes are initiated as required</li> <li>• Evaluate the performance of the Executive Director of the MassHire Metro S/W Workforce Board</li> </ul>
Youth Programs Committee	<p>The responsibility of the Youth Employment Committee is to increase the ability of both in-school and out-of-school</p>

	<p>youth to succeed in the workforce. Duties include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and oversee employment related program implementation for youth ages 14-24</li> <li>• Establish goals and performance standards for youth programs</li> <li>• Advocate for resources and initiatives promoting youth employment</li> <li>• Develop and participate in fundraising initiatives to support youth programs</li> <li>• Select WIOA youth vendors</li> <li>• Approve WIOA youth plan</li> </ul>
<p>Career Center Committee</p>	<p>The Career Center Committee is responsible for oversight, program policy and service delivery of the one-stop career center in the Metro South/West region.</p> <p>Duties include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define the role of career centers in workforce development and economic development in the region</li> <li>• Review monthly funding stream and WIOA training expenditures related to the career center operations and approve the annual budget</li> <li>• Establish guidelines for the career center business plan and review and approve the plan</li> <li>• Charter career center operators</li> <li>• Set standards for career center performance and continuous improvement</li> <li>• Establish procedures for measuring career center performance and review monthly</li> <li>• Review and recommend for approval, the selection and designation of a One-Stop Operator, Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth program providers following a competitive procurement process, and if warranted and necessary, decertification of the One-Stop Operator</li> </ul>
<p>Finance Committee</p>	<p>The Finance Committee is responsible for oversight of MassHire Metro South/West funds, but it is not involved in the daily operations of grants and programs. Duties include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and recommend the MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board operating budget</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend allocation of WIOA funds to One Stop Operator(s) after review of each proposed budget</li> <li>• Review all financial reports/documents/audits as needed</li> <li>• Establish, enforce, and review all financial policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Request additional information and reports from One Stop Operator(s) on an as needed basis.</li> <li>• Work with the Executive Director to secure additional grants and funds for the workforce development area and WB</li> </ul>
Workforce Strategies Committee	<p>The Workforce Strategies Committee is responsible for leading strategic planning efforts for the full board and advising on the delivery of workforce services to vulnerable populations as well as prioritize which industry sector-based initiatives to pursue. The committee will also keep the WB apprised of labor market trends, the status of regional economy, and the hiring and workforce needs of employers. Duties include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and present for review the strategic plan for the full board and periodically amend when necessary</li> <li>• Collect and provide information on programs and services to be made available for individuals with the highest barriers to employment, including but not limited to, those with disabilities, veterans and justice involved individuals.</li> <li>• Review labor market data and make recommendations based on the information provided.</li> <li>• Promote participation of employers in the workforce system.</li> <li>• Identify career pathways within priority industry sectors in the Metro South/West Region</li> </ul>

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

The WB has begun work through its executive committee to develop an updated on-boarding process for new members. A key component of the process is a training module that provides an overview of WIOA, the Massachusetts workforce system and the thirteen primary responsibilities of a workforce board as required by CFR §679.310 and §679.370. Members who serve on a standing committee will receive training specific to its work. For instance, members of the Youth Programs committee will learn the core objectives and goals for Connecting Activities, YouthWorks and WIOA Title I Youth.

Labor Market Training is also available to the board members that explains the distinction between industries and occupations, how the North American Industry Classification System and the Standard Occupation Classification System function as well as primer on the Greater Boston Regional Blueprint

In addition, WB staff will be attending WIOA Title I specific training. The WB will make an abbreviated version of this training content to all board members.

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

All board members are asked to attend four quarterly meetings each year. During these meetings of the WB, members deliberate, provide input and vote upon proposals submitted by the standing committee. Board members are also encouraged to serve one of the five standing committees and/or ad-hoc committees to address a specific purpose for a limited duration.

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

While the full board is able to provide direction and guidance in terms the delivery of business services, the bulk of the work is taken up by the Career Center Committee. Board members on the Career Center Committee bring their knowledge and expertise in order to help define the business services component of the center as well establishing quality assurance mechanisms to ensure the services have a high “value add” to stakeholders.

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

Inter-board collaboration will continue through the communication and coordination of executive directors, presidents or chief executive offices representing the sixteen workforce boards. This information will allow us to develop more opportunities for businesses to tap into talent pipelines across workforce delivery areas. Likewise, by keeping our fellow workforce boards apprised of companies who have staffing needs, jobseekers willing to travel or relocate have a greater chance of finding meaningful employment.

The WB collaborates with the Metro North and Boston workforce boards in regional planning effort to align workforce development, education and economic development strategies to support the larger Greater Boston region. The WB will continue to develop updated labor market data and establish NextGen sector partnerships in critical industries across the region

As noted previously, intra-board collaboration is exemplified by the WB through its dynamic of the standing committees carrying out specific work tasks and the bringing back elements and recommendation of this work back to the WB for deliberation and approval.



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

The MassHire career center staff and management team are responsible for most facets of client training, eligibility determination, ITA or OJT development, case management, contract implementation and client follow-up processes. The WB and the Fiscal Agent also play key roles in the design, authorization and compliance of client training activities and expenditures. For process clarity, the roles of the Workforce Board and the Fiscal Agent are further detailed below.

In the client training process, the role of the WB is largely to set the regional training cost cap, approve training vendors in the MOSES system, monitor system processes and mandatory training rates, and review requests for waivers from the standard procedure:

- The training cap is determined during the annual planning process and is a collaborative determination between the career center operator and the WB. The WB sets the cap; any exceptions to the cap should be reviewed and approved by the WB.
- The WB approves eligible training providers on an ongoing basis throughout the course of the fiscal year. All requests for inclusion on this list should be directed to the WB office.
- Any exceptions to established protocol, such as providing training to out-of-region or non-WIOA eligible clients, tuition exceeding board approved cap, etc. is directed to MSW WB office and may require a vote of the WB.

As the Grant Recipient, the Fiscal Agent's role in the delivery of client training is to authorize all ITA and OJT contracts and ensure that related expenditures are adequately documented and compliant with requirements of each funding source. The Career Center ensures compliance and quality assurance of the Individual Training Board process. The Career Center works with the individual customer to conduct assessment, provide advice and counseling. The Career Center provides follow up services both while in training and after completion and works closely with the customer in job development and referrals to employer's openings.

Individual Training Approval Process:

- Customer eligibility is determined and enrollment into the appropriate program is verified and completed, including but not limited to the confirmation of residence in our region, separation from an employer in our region or other designated special circumstances.
- The assigned Career Advisor works with the customer to complete all aspects of the ITA proposal packet. Upon completion and quality assurance review of the ITA packet, an ITA board is scheduled.
- The board consisting of a Career Center Manager, proposing Career Advisor and a third career center staff will review the training proposal justification and take a vote. A unanimous vote will result in moving forward with the contract approval process.

- Upon approval from the ITA board an ITA contract is initiated and submitted to the assigned Career Center Manager for review and processing.
- The Career Center Manager reviews the ITA contract for accuracy and submits the ITA for processing, that is submitted to the vendor with a copy of the contract, EEO, general terms and information related to the billing process.
- Once the signed contract is returned from vendor, it is reviewed and approved by signature by the Career Center Director or designee.
- The partially executed ITA is then submitted to the Fiscal Officer for final review, compliance approval and final fiscal authorizing signature.
- A copy of the now fully executed ITA is retained by the Fiscal office and a copy is provided to the Career Center Manager and Career Advisor for the customer file;
- The original ITA contract is retained in the Fiscal Office.
- The Fiscal Agent will track all expenditures against these contracts; report on mandatory training requirements to management, DCS and the board; notify all parties when training funds are close to depletion or significantly under-spent; and represent the region in federal and state monitoring, as well as independent auditing, of all training-related regional expenditures.

At all stages of the client training process, every effort will be made to review and approve contracts and process payments in a timely manner, communicate frequently and manage the expectations of all involved to ensure that both the client and the training vendor have a positive and successful training experience, and the region's training dollars are spent advantageously and efficiently.

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

- 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**
- Apprenticeship**
- Incumbent Worker Training**
- Work Experiences (paid or unpaid)**
- 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).**
- Online remediation tools (such as WorkKeys Curriculum) for OJT/apprenticeship screening in support of cultivating and demonstrating workplace competencies.**
  - Does the local area utilize the National Career Readiness Curriculum (NCRC) to measure job-seekers work ethic and discipline, basic skills abilities, and job-ready qualifications?**

On the Job Training: The CC devotes a limited percentage of its available WIOA formula training resources for the provision of On the Job Training (OJT) as a training vehicle. Where OJT is utilized, the CC staff provide consideration to utilize all resources available in the successful training placement including, but not limited to additional funding from NDWG Grants or the utilization of the small company waiver providing expanded reimbursement options.

Apprenticeship: The CC staff actively engage in working with both business and job seekers customers in an effort to maximize the use of apprenticeships as an effective training, placement, and employee retention tool. The Career Center partners with other Agencies, Consortiums, and Grant recipients to assist in the execution and management of registered apprenticeships in the Metro South/West Region.

Incumbent Worker Training: The Career Center continue to explore new opportunities to work with local businesses in the development of targeted incumbent worker programming and are currently active utilizing the Apprenticeship Program to assist with the employer Rolls-Royce Naval Marine located in Walpole.

Online remediation tools: The Career Center will extensively utilize the WorkKeys elements of the Career Ready-101 suite of ACT services, Tooling U and Virtual Workshops.

The CC will offer job seekers and area businesses the opportunity to earn a National Career Readiness Certificate through participation in pre-test assessments, work on remediation modules in three foundational skills concentrations, and the opportunity to sit for the NCRC assessment. We work with area WIOA Partners to offer these services to shared customers to earn this credential.

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

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

The WB posted the Plans for public comment on our website [masshiremsw.com](http://masshiremsw.com). Notices of the posting were sent via email to our WB, WB committees, WIOA Partners. Comments can be sent directly to the WB to [info@masshiremsw.com](mailto:info@masshiremsw.com).

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

The Career Center has been working with the local WIOA Partners to identify methods to coordinate referral and intake information for their shared customers. The region supports the work being done at the state level to establish an integrated technology- based intake and case management information data base and is eagerly awaiting its implementation. The Career Center conducts weekly Partner Referral Orientations and the assigned partner services liaison records customer referrals in MOSES and maintains a spreadsheet of cross referrals to use when meeting with partners to keep track of their activity.

Amazon Work Space (AWS) accounts allows Career Advisors to record information when off-site, and will be fully utilized as more access points are established such as DTA, the Massachusetts Bay Community College, South Middlesex Opportunity Council, and others throughout the region.

The MassHire MSW region has access to ZOOM, WebEx, and Microsoft Teams which allows for remote meetings to be conducted throughout the region to share information consistently while reducing travel expenses and time spent out of the office.

The CC Business Services team produces a weekly Newsletter that incorporates relevant resources, events, job openings available through the Career Center for customers. WIOA Partners and community organizations are encouraged to promote the newsletter to their customers.

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

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

**State Plan:** <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/02/09/ma-wioastate-plan-final-4-7-16.pdf>

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

The WB and CC follow the guidance set forth by the MassHire DCS policy issuances, most recently #100 DCS 08.116. The Adult Title I program funds which support individualized training and career services are prioritized for:

- Recipients of public assistance
- Other low-income individuals in accordance with Federal Poverty Guidelines and Lower Living Level Standard Income Levels
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient

Additionally, the WB and CC assure that Veterans receive priority of service in all DOL funded training and employment programs as long as the Veteran meets the individual program's eligibility criteria.

Individuals in these groups are given priority of service over other individuals for the individualized training and career services in the Title I Adult program. Veterans within these groups receive priority over non-veterans.

Local staff determine eligibility for the respective programs and services by complying with state issued procedures and the career center's internal processes for enrollment into training. This process includes the Career Center Training Board, consisting of a Career Center Manager, Career Advisor and the Career Center. This Training Board reviews the customer's individual training proposal justification and votes its approval.

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

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

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

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

**(d) Your local plan must identify the portions that the Governor has designated as appropriate for common response in the regional plan where there is a shared regional responsibility, as permitted by § 679.540(b):**

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

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

There is currently no local policy which would give priority of service to other populations for intensive training and career services. Dislocated Workers have their own eligibility processes and are enrolled for service on their own DW terms. The WB and CC will convene to explore the merits of a local priority of service policy.

Attachments:

- Appendix a. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) July 1, 2021-June 30, 2024, MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board and The WIOA Partners
  
- Appendix b. Agreement Between Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce (the Local Workforce Development Board) and The General Manager of the Town of Norwood, for the Oversight and Administration of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, April 6, 2018 – June 30, 2019. Please note this will be updated to reflect the new signatory for the WB.

*MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board  
and  
The WIOA Partners*

*Memorandum of Understanding  
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024*

May 28th, 2021

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## Purpose and Duration of the MOU

The MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board (MSW WB) has continued to foster discussion and refinement of the career center model, the service delivery system, and the roles and responsibilities of each of the WIOA Partners going forward in a post-pandemic environment. This MOU has been developed and implemented with the agreement of the General Manager of the Town of Norwood and defines the roles and responsibilities of the One Stop Career Center (OSCC) Required Partners to operationalize the delivery of services necessary to produce the best possible outcomes for shared customers – job seekers, businesses and young adults. The MOU may include other provisions agreed to by all parties that are consistent with all Partner programs, services and activities authorizing statutes and regulations.

This agreement shall begin July 1, 2021 and, unless it is substantially changed or terminated by agreement of all parties, end on June 30, 2024. The MOU will be updated not less than every three years to reflect changes in (1) the signatory officials of MSW WB, the Partners, and Chief Elected Official; (2) substantial improvements in the delivery of services; and/or (3) changes to infrastructure cost contributions.

## Partners

The WIOA Partners in the Metro South/West workforce area of Massachusetts include:

- Massachusetts Department of Career Services, including Title I Adult and Dislocated Workers, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Jobs for Veterans State Grants
- The WIOA Youth Program
- The Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance
- Adult Learning and Literacy Programs:
  - Framingham Adult ESL <sup>Plus</sup>
  - Hudson-Maynard Adult Learning Center
  - Middlesex Adult Basic Education
  - Blue Hills Regional Adult Basic Education Center
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Framingham Area Office
- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, Metro West Regional Office
- Department of Transitional Assistance, Transitional Assistance Office, Framingham, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Regional Office and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Senior Community Service Employment Program, Operation ABLE and Executive Office of Elder Affairs
- The Massachusetts Department of Corrections
- Job Corps
- Career and technical education postsecondary programs level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)

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<sup>st</sup>, 2021 and shall terminate on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024 unless otherwise terminated by agreement of all parties or superseded.

## **Process to Develop the MOU, Define the Shared Customer and Map Service Pathways**

This agreement builds on the work that the Partners began in the fall of 2016 which focused on four areas: defining a shared customer, the range of available services, development of career pathways and business services. Since that time there have been several iterations of the initial agreement and additional partners have been brought on board.

The Massachusetts Department of Corrections (MA DOC) joined the Partnership in January of 2019 This has enabled the Partners to better understand the needs of formerly incarcerated individuals and the elements that are critical to successfully reintegrate them back into society. Work readiness, financial stability and access to mental health treatment are all factors that play a role in effectively serving this population and the Partners are in better position now with the participation of MA DOC.

Job Corps is another partner that joined us formally on July of 2020. A federally mandated WIOA partner, Job Corps provides residential vocational training to young adults. Job Corps involvement will benefit us with insight and best practices regarding workforce development for youth, they will benefit from the resources and information available through the One-Stop Career Centers.

MSW WB has continued to convene the Partners during the Covid-19 pandemic remotely through Zoom video conferencing to exchange information about each organization in adapting their customer service models and delivery systems while in-person locations are unavailable. While there were initial challenges experienced by all the Partners in shifting to a virtual service model, it was recognized that there was also an opportunity to leverage remote access technology to communicate amongst each other, deliver services and co-case manage shared customers all more effectively.

A working group was convened consisting of representatives from The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), Framingham Adult ESL Plus, MA DOC and MSW WB to develop a new MOU that maintained the “good DNA” of previous MOU’s including our definition of a shared-customer, target populations we serve and the documentation of a continuum of services. At the same time, the working group also identified opportunities for change and adaptation to a service delivery model that incorporates a much greater degree of virtual services than before. Several key themes emerged from the working group:

- Developing a flexible system that does not hardwire into one particular tool or delivery method
- Reducing the footprint of physical locations
- Creating the most beneficial ratio of in-person services vs. virtual services
- Re-examining out-stationing and co-location strategies
- Establishing commonly used technology services and products, reducing the number of disparate technology resources.
- Implementing a virtual case conferencing process

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This MOU will be reviewed in the fall of 2021 as we continue to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic. It will be revised as necessary based upon what we learn about the ongoing rules and regulations regarding in-person services, the effectiveness of particular technology resources and what our base of shared customers feel is the best service delivery model going forward. We commit to incorporating the cornerstones of the original work developed by the partners into a new framework that aligns with this new paradigm we are experiencing.

### **Role of the One-Stop Career Center Operator**

In 2021 the MSW WB conducted a procurement process for a One-Stop Career Center Operator in accordance with WIOA guidelines (CITE?). The MSW WB opted to procure only for a Career Center Operator and to continue to have Metro South/West Training Administration (MSWETA) operate as the service provider. Representatives from three of our WIOA Partner agencies, DTA, MDCS and ABE/ESOL were part of the five-person team to review proposal from bidders.

Volunteers of America, Massachusetts (VOA MA) was selected as the Career Center Operator to begin on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The scope of work as the One-Stop Career Center Operator will include three components:

- Convene up to four meetings per year of mandated partners to support the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) implementation. The Operator will develop meeting agendas, (in conjunction with MassHire MSW WB staff), meeting activities, facilitate meetings, and provide meeting notes.
- The Operator, in conjunction with staff from the MSW WB will develop an appropriate mechanism to semi-annually report on the progress and performance of the WIOA Partners across the system to the Board.
- Support the MSW WB in developing benchmarks to measure a baseline of “system performance”, e.g., customer service, system flow, etc. In future years, the expectation is that the Operator will make recommendations for continuous improvement based on this data.

### **Career Center Objectives**

The MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board and the WIOA Partners listed in the previous section agree to:

- Create a one-stop system that supports the development of a workforce with the skills employers require by implementing a service delivery model that encompasses both virtual and in-person service section.
- Improve the economic standing of Metro South/West shared customers, both youth and adults as well as businesses.

Employment of individuals is the primary measure of success for career centers. However, that success depends on the engagement of the Partners to help individuals overcome any barriers they may have that prevent them from finding a meaningful career.

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:**

For the Partners, diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral parts of not only carrying out our shared mission but are components of our culture and identity as well. These values guide the way we treat and perceive all

differences. We strive to create an inclusive culture where all forms of diversity are seen as authentic value for our workforce system.

The Partners are committed to fostering a high-performing workforce drawn from all segments of American society. By developing a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness to enable individuals to contribute to their full potential, feel valued and supported, we can better deliver on the promise of economic opportunity and self-sufficiency.

This promise of a diverse and inclusive workforce enables the Partners to be more responsive to the public we serve and better equipped in fulfilling the full scope of our responsibilities under WIOA. Achieving diversity and inclusion is also a collaborative effort. Together, we support a workplace that offers every individual the opportunity to attain professional goals and contribute to accomplishing our collective mission.

## **Successful Career Centers**

The partners agree to build a system in which:

- Operates on a customer-centered model. In Metro South/West, employer and jobseekers' needs are addressed and there are strong and beneficial relationships between the career centers and employers.
- WIOA partners share resources, expertise and best practices through a collaborative process in an effort to mitigate barriers to reemployment or training that a shared customer may experience.
- Training is closely aligned with employer skill requirements. In Metro South/West job seekers will engage in a combination of work and learning simultaneously to gain market-relevant skills and credentials and achieve good paying jobs with career potential.
- Virtual services and relevant technology are employed to augment existing in person services and in expand the access to cities and towns that may be distant from a brick-and-mortar location. In Metro South/West, well-designed virtual service platforms support individual learning, placement, management and continuous improvement.

## **Work Plan**

In the first year of this new agreement, MSW WB and its Partners will begin the development of post pandemic, flexible, service delivery model that uses virtual tools to increase ease of access for shared customers, while at the same time providing in-person assistance for those who may experience challenges with technology:

- Elicit customer feedback regarding the effectiveness of virtual services during the pandemic and the preferred level of virtual services used post-pandemic.
- Ensure that facilities, services, and equipment are accessible to the customers or consumers of the Partners in accordance with State Covid-19 Reopening guidelines.
- Develop a system of referral to services between the career center and the Partners that can be tracked and reported on
- Establish a series of metrics to define quality customer service to our shared customers as service amongst Partners

- Establish a “case conference” process where staff from different agencies can meet at the same with a shared customer through a virtual services platform

## **Target Job Seeker: Priority Populations**

The workforce system in Metro South/West will address the needs of the following groups:

- The long-term unemployed;
- Unemployment insurance claimants;
- Low-income adults including TANF and SNAP recipients;
- The homeless;
- Adult education participants;
- Individuals with disabilities;
- Veterans;
- Older workers;
- Offenders who are released from prisons and jails;
- Young adults with barriers to employment.

In Metro South/West the career centers will give priority to referrals from WIOA partners.

## **Shared Customers**

*Definition, WIOA Joint Partner Communication 01.2018, March 20, 2018*

Shared customers are:

“Youth and job seekers that are eligible for and receive services from more than one WIOA Partner program. They benefit from services and resources delivered across multiple WIOA Partner programs and other stakeholders that are aligned to meet an individual’s needs. Shared customers also meet the definition in the Title II regulations of WIOA, CFR 34 Part 63.3 of concurrent enrollment or co-enrollment referring to enrollment by an eligible individual in two or more of the six core programs administered under the Act.

A business that receives services from more than one WIOA Partner program is also considered a shared customer. (However, the policy pertains only to youth and job seeker shared customers.)

Each state WIOA Partner has criteria that must be met before an individual is eligible for the respective Partner services. Communication among Partners is essential to ensure accurate identification of shared customers.”

## ***Continuum of Services***

Partners will work to provide their customers the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the career center environment and refer them to the career center for services. The customers most likely to benefit

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from career center career advising, training and placement services are those individuals who:

- Want to take the first step toward employment and/or education, are able and willing to work, and want a job
- Are able to complete digital and/or paper assessments with help if needed
- Have a desire for services and are committed to training or retooling skills as necessary
- Possess the literacy skills necessary to do the job they are applying for
- Are documented and able to work in the United States
- Are willing/able to sign a release of information form which will allow agencies to share applicable client information

### ***Career Center Services to Individuals***

One of the primary objectives the Partners is committed to is re-engineering a service delivery models that leverages the gains virtual services offers but ensuring shared customers who lack the means to take advantage of technology resource are equally well served. An in-person, and possibly a virtual, “Welcome Point” will be the triage mechanism a staff person with thorough knowledge of the career center and partners’ specialized services will connect customers to appropriate resources. This will entail determining the reason why the individual is at the career center, facilitating the completion of a profile for employment, an educational history, and guiding them to the first step in the service pathway.

The range of services may vary in intensity and duration based upon customer need and eligibility. The menu of services available at the career center includes:

- Skills, interest and aptitude assessment, including literacy, numeracy, language fluency, and English language proficiency, marketable knowledge and skills, and supportive services. Methods include interviewing and diagnostic testing.
- A service plan based on a conversation(s) with the individual that includes a discussion of his or her skills, skills valued in the labor market and the match or gap between what is required, and the individual’s knowledge, skills and abilities
- Comprehensive and extensive career counselling based on actual labor market needs so individuals can make informed career decisions
- Eligibility determination for adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs
- Staff assistance in writing a plan leading to employment
- Training programs provided through career and technical education school adult learning divisions, private and public colleges and universities, and other approved vendors that match their skills, interests, personality, and employment goals. Help navigating the financial aid system and applying for WIOA vouchers. A plan for financing education will be developed.
- Referral to Partner organizations and other community resources when individuals need services that are beyond the scope of the career navigation division and they agree to the referral
- Job search preparation and placement

The following services will be available to all individuals both through virtual platforms and in-person and the

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profile matching system, regardless of eligibility for services through WIOA and other special programs:

- Labor market data including information about industries and occupations where there are current and future opportunities for employment and advancement, the knowledge and skills requirements in those jobs, and relevant education and training programs
- Job search tutorials, including resume building and interviewing skills placement assistance
- On-line occupational training programs
- Notice of a job opening when their profile matches the requirements in the job order, assistance in completing the application, and preparation for selling themselves to the employer
- Information about filing for unemployment and/or addressing problems with their claims

### ***Pathways to Services***

There are multiple points of entry into the workforce development system in Metro South/West, that, collectively, will lead to self-sustaining wages. The pathways for each target group, developed by the Partners for their target groups, are in Attachment A.

### ***Supports and Services for Target Markets***

The table in Attachment B. (MSW WIOA Partner Services) lists the services provided by the Partners to prepare people for the career center or to respond to the needs of individuals referred by the career center.

### **Business Services:**

During the Pandemic, the Partners discovered and adapted to new ways to utilize technology platforms to provide services to its business customers as well. We commit to working with businesses who struggle with worker skills shortages, support career pathways for adult learners, host internships for students and externships for educators and are committed to hiring people with disabilities. We will work together to gauge and address employer needs in the evolving labor market.

The WIOA Partners will:

- Maintain a catalogue of business services among the Partners
- Collaborate on the development of common practices, processes and services for the Business Services Team to cultivate new and existing business partnerships
- Document and manage job orders into the matching system through MOSES/JobQuest
- Identify industries/businesses and occupations in our joint work that align with our regional planning process.
- Maintain a talent pool of job seeker profiles and to be documented in MOSES/JobQuest to match with

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job orders

- Stay apprised of the regional labor market with MSW WB disseminated analysis and reports as well as other data sources
- Participate in the development, outreach and evaluation of a shared employer customer base
- Commit to using virtual service platforms, like the Premier Job Fair tool to enhance services to Businesses

## Performance

MSW WB will focus on activities that evidence shows improves performance: data driven approaches, sector projects, education and occupational training and social support.

In Metro South/West performance will be measured using WIOA common performance measures for both the job seeker and employers, including:

Adults	Measures
Employment	Employed in the 2nd quarter after exit
Employment Retention	Employed in the 4th quarter after exit
Median Earnings	Median earnings in the 2nd quarter after exit
Credential Attainment Rate	Obtain recognized postsecondary credential by 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter after exit
Measurable Skill Gains	During program year achieve documented skill gain from education/training

Youth	Measures
Employment	Employed or in education or training in the 2nd quarter after exit
Employment Retention	Employed or in education or training in the 4th quarter after exit
Median Earnings	Median earnings in the 2nd quarter after exit
Credential Attainment Rate	Obtain recognized postsecondary credential by 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter after exit
Measurable Skill Gains	During program year achieve documented skill gain from education/training

Employers	Measures
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Retention with the same employer in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after exit
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Employer penetration rate
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Repeat business customer rate

Building on WIOA performance measures, the Partners are committed to the development of additional performance measures to gauge how well services are delivered to shared customers and business, and how effective these services are. The Partners agree to work with the One-Stop Career Center Operator to examine and quantify the outputs each organization produces, as well as identify shared employment related outcomes that may not be captured through other measures.

## Technology

Technology, specifically virtual communication platforms, will be available throughout the career center to support the Metro South/West service delivery model. Technology will facilitate the exchange of information and



a continuum of services to individuals, employers and Partners. New resources, including a revamped JobQuest interface and an online resume builder, will be integrated into our service delivery model as they become available.

To stay current with these new technology offerings and refinements to current resources, the Partners commit to the establishment of a Technology Working Group. This working group will serve point for learning about new technology and providing recommendations to the Partners regarding the methods to most effectively utilize them. This group will also coordinate training on new technologies as needed.

Over time, new technologies for delivering and managing services that have the following characteristics will be added to ensure the following:

- Systems (in-person, virtual) available on evenings and weekends
- Platforms for counseling, training, cases management and linking Partner services
- Support integrated “real-time” access between all areas of the career center, customers, and Partners, including tracking customers, accountability system, and quality access for individuals of various education levels, career pathways, and physical or job search needs
- Compliance with applicable statutes, regulations and data security requirements
- Sharing of information to the greatest extent appropriate among Partners
- Compliance with common reporting principles and requirements
- Meets confidentiality requirements.
- Innovative, flexible, expandable and cost effective

## **Labor Market Information (LMI)**

Within the past year, the labor market has changed drastically in terms of which industries were experiencing growth or declination. Occupations that were being shed by employers were suddenly in heavy demand six months later. To address the potential volatility in the Metro South/West area, the Partners are committed to developing and sharing LMI data in a more timely and actionable manner.

The MSW WB will be the focal point of this improved LMI effort. To this end, the MSW WB has redesigned its Labor Market information section on its website. Data here will now be updated at a minimum of once a quarter. Some data sources, including the region’s unemployment and labor force data, will be updated every month.

The Partners also commit to expanding its data sources used to develop more accurate LMI. Dunn and Bradstreet’s DataVision is one such source we will look to secure that fills in gaps that job posting data does not capture regarding employer information. MDCS will be making Burning Glass Technologies Resume Builder to workforce areas, and we will be using this tool in conjunction with existing UI claimant data and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) information to develop reports that provide better insight in terms of the available labor supply of the labor market

Leveraging partnerships with entities that possess LMI expertise will be another initiative the Partners commit to in order to improve access to local LMI. The MSW WB will build on its relationship with Framingham State University's MetroWest Economic Research Center (MERC) to access additional data sources that include building permits, average housing costs and tax rates which will provide indicators of the region's overall economic health to the Partners. UMass Donahue Institute will be another valuable LMI partner who specialize in population growth data and are proficient in the use of Public Use Micro Series (PUMS) data from the American Community Survey.

## **Staff Development and Training**

With the ability to conduct remote training and webinars established, staff training can be conducted more frequently since logistics are less complicated. The following modules make up the current Partner staff development curriculum and will remain in place and be delivered remotely:

- Partner agency missions
- Services offered by each agency
- Target populations served and their characteristics
- Requirements for participant entry
- Accessibility of services (accommodations)
- The referral process to and from the career center and the criteria used to determine when a referral would be made
- Diversity/Cultural Sensitivity. What it means to be multi-lingual, multi-cultural, disabled and other special populations and what their needs are

The Partners commit to develop additional training on areas that include:

- Best practices for virtual meetings and webinar
- Training on new technologies
- Grants and funding resources

## **Shared and Infrastructure Costs**

Shared costs include both cash payments and in-kind services, facilities and equipment. Agreements for sharing costs have been negotiated with each of the partners, including staffing, out-stationing, equipment, shared space and referral policies and procedures.

Funding: Each Partner's contribution is negotiated at the state level. The Partner and the career center director negotiate the use of the funds and that agreement is entered into the integrated budget.

Referrals. A common referral form is used by all Partners and career center staff. Partner referrals are sent to a single point of contact in the center. Young people ages 16 to 24 are referred to the WIOA youth program.

Individuals over the age of 18, who do not meet the WIOA youth eligibility requirements or who do not choose to participate in the WIOA youth program, are referred back to the career center for adult services. To be referred from a Partner to the career center, the individual must register in JobQuest, complete the referral form, and send it to the point of contact in each career center.

### **DUA Data**

A. “Confidential DUA Data” are any data not determined by DUA not to be confidential under 20 C.F.R. Pt. 603, or not secured by DUA pursuant to the provisions of G.I c. 151A. By way of example, but not by way of limitation, Confidential DUA Data include unemployment insurance claimant information, employer information, and Wage Data. (“Wage Data” are individually identifiable information, reported to DUA by employers as required by G.L. 151A § 14P, including, but not limited to, an employee’s name, Social Security account number and wages.) If Confidential DUA Data are commingled with other data, from any source whatsoever, that commingled data are deemed Confidential DUA Data.

B. In the discretion of the DUA Director, Confidential DUA data may be shared under this Agreement only when permitted by applicable state and federal law, including federal regulations and subject to the applicable confidentiality, security and cost reimbursement requirements. For the avoidance of doubt, no confidential DUA Data may be shared unless either (i) this Agreement is amended to contain language complying with DUA’s understanding of its confidentiality obligations or (ii) pursuant to some other, separate written agreement complying with that understanding.

### ***Staffing and Out-Stationing***

As the physical space needs versus virtual service capabilities are yet undetermined by our agencies, the Partners commit in year one to develop a new Staffing and Out-Stationing strategy, site locations and requisite schedule.

### ***Shared Space and Equipment***

Partner staff when utilizing in person space at the Career Centers will be assigned cubicles equipped with a phone and a partner extension, a computer with Internet, MOSES, Microsoft Office 365 and printer access, desk and chairs, general office supplies.

Partners are encouraged to display promotional materials and event flyers within the space and in the front desk area of the Center and to develop digital copies of these materials to be used as content in Career Center Seminars conducted as webinars as well as for electronic marketing purposes.

### **Evaluation**

The Partners will continue to meet on a schedule to be determined in early FY22. Steps will be taken to assess the effectiveness of shared practices and impact on customers will include:

- Strategies to elicit feedback from shared customers on what they feel will be optimal service delivery options post pandemic.
- Deterring the most effective ratio of in-person services to virtual services for our shared customers

- Measure performance using the metrics listed in the performance section in this MOU and discuss the results at Partner meetings. When the benchmarks/goals are not achieved, the Partners will develop a continuous improvement plan.
- Reserve a section of the Partners meeting for each organization to report on referrals, services and other actions taken to build and improve the public workforce system in the region.
- In conjunction with the Career Center Operator, develop additional evaluation to measure customer service and the impact on shared customers and explore the possibility of a comparison or control group.
- Prepare Partners for the roll out of additional technologies and data sources.

## Signatories


By signing this agreement, all parties agree to the provisions contained herein, 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 One-Stop Career Center customers. By signatures affixed below, the parties specify their agreement:

 <u>tony mazzuco (Jun 29, 2021 11:44 EDT)</u> _____ Tony Mazzuco, Chief Elected Official  General Manager, Town of Norwood	Jun 29, 2021 _____ Date
 <u>Lisa Kubiak (Jun 21, 2021 13:59 EDT)</u> _____ Lisa Kubiak, Chair  MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board	Jun 21, 2021 _____ Date
 _____ Greg Bunn, Executive Director  MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board	Jun 21, 2021 _____ Date
 <u>Zoie Jaklitsch (Jun 21, 2021 13:40 EDT)</u> _____ Zoie Jaklitsch, Director  MassHire Framingham and Norwood Career Centers	Jun 21, 2021 _____ Date
 <u>Angela M Grant (Jun 22, 2021 14:59 EDT)</u> _____ Angie Grant, Operations Manager  MassHire Framingham Career Center	Jun 22, 2021 _____ Date

May 28th, 2021

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[Antoine Jones \(Jun 21, 2021 14:02 EDT\)](#)  
Antoine Jones, Operations Manager

Jun 21, 2021

Date

MassHire Norwood Career Center

  
[Patricia Lucier \(Jun 21, 2021 15:34 CDT\)](#)

Jun 21, 2021

Date

Patricia Lucier, Director

MassHire Career Connections/WIOA Youth Program

  
[Meghan Burke \(Jun 21, 2021 12:45 EDT\)](#)

Jun 21, 2021

Date

Meghan Burke, Director

MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board Youth Careers

  
[Marie-Lise Sobande \(Jun 24, 2021 16:05 EDT\)](#)

Jun 24, 2021

Date

Marie-Lise Sobande, Director of Revenue

Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance

  
[Lincoln Lynch IV \(Jun 24, 2021 14:48 EDT\)](#)

Jun 24, 2021

Date

Lincoln Lynch, Chief Financial Officer

Framingham Public Schools

  
[Susan Haberstroh \(Jun 21, 2021 14:26 EDT\)](#)

Jun 21, 2021

Date

Susan Haberstroh, Program Director

Blue Hills Regional Adult Basic Education Center

  
[Katherine Innis \(Jun 23, 2021 12:40 EDT\)](#)

Jun 23, 2021

Date

Katherine Innis, Director Adult Basic Education

Middlesex Community College

May 28th, 2021

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Susan Medeiros

[Susan Medeiros \(Jun 21, 2021 14:15 EDT\)](#)

Susan Medeiros, Director

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Framingham Area Office

Jun 21, 2021

Date

Mark Gyurina

[Mark Gyurina \(Jun 21, 2021 17:35 EDT\)](#)

Mark Gyurina, Chief Program Officer

Senior Community Service Employment Program  
Operation ABLÉ and Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Jun 21, 2021

Date

Kun Chang

[Kun Chang \(Jun 21, 2021 16:12 EDT\)](#)

Kun Chang, Director

National Asian Pacific Center on Aging – SCSEP/Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center

Jun 21, 2021

Date

Anita Cardella

[Anita Cardella \(Jun 29, 2021 09:26 EDT\)](#)

Anita Cardella for John Pedersen, Senior VP, Education &  
Training Management and Training Corporation

Job Corps Shriver Center, Mattapan

Jun 29, 2021

Date

Carol Mici

[Carol Mici \(Jul 1, 2021 13:16 EDT\)](#)

Carol Mici, Commissioner

Massachusetts Department of Correction

Jul 1, 2021

Date

*John Oliveira*

John Oliveira (Jul 14, 2021 16:01 EDT)

John Oliveira, Deputy Commissioner

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Jul 14, 2021

Date

*Brian D. LaFleche*

Brian D. LaFleche (Jul 2, 2021 11:10 EDT)

Brian LaFleche on behalf of Lina Stolnik-Yoffee, Director

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, Transitional Assistance Office, Framingham

Jul 2, 2021

Date

*Marco Rodrigues*

Marco Rodrigues (Jul 6, 2021 12:52 EDT)

Marco C. Rodrigues, Superintendent

Hudson Public Schools

Jul 6, 2021

Date

*Ernest F. Houle*

Ernest F. Houle (Jun 21, 2021 15:08 EDT)

Ernest Houle, Superintendent - Director

Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School

Jun 21, 2021

Date



*Agreement Between*

*Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce (the Local Workforce Development Board)  
and  
The General Manager of the Town of Norwood*

*For The*

*Oversight and Administration of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*

*April 6, 2018 – June 30, 2019*

*Revised April 6, 2018*

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## **Preamble**

This agreement delineates the responsibilities for the joint oversight and administration of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), between the Chief Elected Official (CEO) and the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) in the Metro Southwest Region. The scope of this agreement is limited to the WIOA.

In the spirit of partnership, the General Manager of the Town of Norwood, in his capacity as the CEO, and Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce, Inc. (PSW) in its capacity as the LWDB agree to build an effective and efficient system that meets the needs of residents for jobs and companies for workers.

This agreement will be reviewed and revised as necessary. To foster cooperation between the General Manager and the LWDB, the terms of the “partnership” will be defined. That definition will include, but not be limited to method and frequency of communication between the board and the CEO, and the process for joint review and approval of products, e.g., local annual plan, budget. The agreement will be presented at the annual meeting of the Metro Southwest Workforce Development Board.

## **Joint Functions**

The LWDB, in partnership with the General Manager of the Town of Norwood, will carry out the following functions:

- Develop and approve a budget for the purpose of carrying out duties as the LWDB in Metro Southwest
- Develop the vision, goals, objectives and policies for the Metro Southwest region that align with the economic development strategies in the region
- Create and submit to the Governor a local plan that meets the requirements in Section 108 of the WIOA
- Select and certify one-stop career center operator(s) and if needed terminate for cause the contract with the operator.
- Negotiate one-stop infrastructure costs with the required WIOA partners or notify the Governor if agreement is not reached
- Oversee youth, adult, dislocated worker and one-stop programs
- Ensure the appropriate use and management of funds to maximize performance impact.
- Negotiate and reach agreement with the Commonwealth on local performance indicators.
- Jointly conduct WIOA orientation of new LWDB members
- Ensure compliance with all applicable federal laws and all applicable state laws, including but not limited to the Open Meeting Law, Procurement Law, Conflict of Interest Law, and Public Records Law.

## **Functions of the General Manager of the Town of Norwood**

The General Manager of the Town of Norwood:

- Receives the nominations for LWDB members through a process determined by the CEO and appoints the nominees who meet the Governor’s WIOA criteria
- May convey voting privileges to non-required LWDB members
- Agrees to the terms of Article VI of the PSW By-Laws that addresses the election and operations of the board and inclusion of all members in workforce development activities of PSW—specifically workforce development activities authorized under the WIOA. (See Attachment 1)

- The Town of Norwood shall assume liability for disallowed WIOA funds. (Note: Disallowed costs arising from the Career Center Operator will be borne by the Operator, Career Team, LLC per contractual agreement.)
- The General Manager has designated the Metro South/West Employment & Training Administration, Inc. as the Fiscal Agent for WIOA funds. (See Budget and Administration.)
- Shall determine and have final say over the proper procedure and practice for holding all meetings and communication in accordance with the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law as well as compliance with the Commonwealth's Conflict of Interest Law.
- Ensure compliance with all state and federal procurement laws and shall serve as chief procurement officer under MGL.

### **Local Workforce Development Board Functions**

#### *Planning, Convening, Brokering and Leveraging*

- The LWDB shall submit two plans to the Massachusetts Department of Career Services—one a local plan for Metro Southwest as specified in the WIOA and a second with a unifying strategy for Greater Boston.
- The plans shall be based on an analysis of the economic conditions in Metro South/West and Greater Boston, skill requirements of employers in Greater Boston, education and training programs designed to meet labor market need, and any other data deemed necessary to carry out its functions
- The LWDB shall convene stakeholders in the development of the plan, broker expertise and resources to carry out the plan, and leverage support for workforce development activities

#### *Employer Engagement*

The LWDB shall lead employer engagement activities to:

- Promote business representation on the Board of Directors, committees and work groups
- Encourage employer utilization of the workforce development system and support workforce development activities
- Enhance communication, coordination and collaboration among employers, economic development entities and service providers
- Develop and implement proven or promising strategies for filling jobs with the skills required by companies in the region

#### *Career Pathways*

- With secondary and postsecondary educators, develop career pathways by aligning education, training, and supportive services needed by youth and adults—particularly those with barriers to employment

#### *Proven and Promising Practices*

- Identify and disseminate workforce models that have proven effectiveness

#### *Technology*

- The LWDB will use technology to maximize the effectiveness of the system by:
  - Facilitating connections among the intake and case management information systems of the one-stop partners
  - Facilitating access to one-stop delivery system services

- Identifying strategies and leveraging resources to meet the needs of individuals with barriers to employment

#### *Program Oversight*

- To ensure the appropriate use of funds and maximize performance, the LWDB will oversee workforce development activities

#### *Selection and Oversight of Operators and Providers*

- With the agreement of the CEO/General Manager of the Town of Norwood, the LWDB will certify and/or may terminate for cause the one-stop operator, youth providers, and eligible providers of training and career services in order to meet consumer choice requirements
- The LWDB will contract with the service providers listed above, provide technical assistance and monitor program performance

#### *Coordination with Education Providers*

- The LWDB will coordinate activities with education and training providers in the region

### **Budget and Administration**

As noted in the "Joint Functions" section above, the LWDB, in partnership with the Fiscal Agent working on behalf of the General Manager of the Town of Norwood, shall develop a budget for the activities in the region, consistent with the local plan, which supports the delivery of services to businesses and individuals.

The Town of Norwood shall be the WIOA grant recipient, designate a fiscal agent, and oversee the disbursement of current grant funds for workforce development activities. Designation of a fiscal agent does not relieve the CEO of liability for the misuse of grant funds, except as stated in the earlier section "Functions of the General Manager of the Town of Norwood".

PSW, a 501(c)(3) corporation, may solicit and accept grants and donations from sources other than Federal funds made available under WIOA

All activities undertaken by PSW, a 501(c)(3) corporation, shall be in full compliance with federal and state procurement and conflict of interest laws. PSW shall ensure all records, funds, expenditures, etc. shall be in compliance with same. All records held by PSW shall be treated as public records in accordance with MGL.

### **Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities**

The PSW will conduct an annual assessment of the physical and programmatic accessibility of one-stop service to people with disabilities

### **Consumer Choice for Career and Training Services**

Consumers who need training may make an informed choice of program from a directory of training programs that includes a description and the performance of the program. The LWDB will actively encourage community colleges, career and technical schools and other occupational training providers to list and update information and data on their programs.

The LWDB will collaborate with the WIOA partners to make career services available, including but not limited to people with disabilities and people who need adult education and English language instruction.

### **Open Meeting Law**

The LWDB will comply with all applicable federal and state open meeting laws. The LWDB will post the WIOA plan before submission of the plan to the state; the membership list and the organizational affiliation of the members; the award of grants or contracts to the one-stop operator and other eligible training providers of workforce investment activities, including youth; minutes of formal LWDB meetings; and the PSW By-Laws.

### **Functions of the Fiscal Agent**

The General Manager has designated the Metro South/West Employment and Training Administration, Inc. (MSWETA, Inc.) as the fiscal agent. MSWETA, Inc. will:

- Receive funds and disburse funds
- Work with the Workforce Development Board and others to prepare the regional annual integrated budget and subsequent modifications
- Ensure sustained fiscal integrity and accountability for expenditure of funds in accordance with OMB circulars, WIOA and Federal and State regulations and policy
- Respond to audit financial findings
- Maintain proper accounting records and adequate documentation
- Prepare financial reports
- Provide technical assistance to sub-recipients regarding fiscal issues, e.g., indirect cost rates and proposals, allowable costs and procurement
- Conduct fiscal monitoring of service providers
- Ensure that there is an independent audit of all employment and training programs

### **Local Governance Design and Structure**

To fulfill its responsibility for local governance, PSW will

- Establish and apply a set of qualifications for the position of director that ensures that the director has the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities to meet identified benchmarks and to assist in carrying out its functions
- Hire a director and other staff to carry out WIOA functions
- Establish a salary and bonus schedules that meets the limitations on salaries and bonuses described in WIOA Section 194(15)
- As applicable in partnership with the CEO, execute a multiple services agreement with adequate firewalls to ensure the effective administration of the function and objective oversight of the WIOA career and/or training program if PSW assumes responsibility for the delivery of other services

### **Conflict of Interest**

No CEO or member of the LWDB and standing committees shall cause a vote on any matter which has a direct bearing on services to be provided by that member (or any organization which such member directly represents) or on any matter which would provide direct financial benefit to such member or the immediate family of such member, nor shall any person engage in any activity determined by the Governor to constitute conflict of interest as specified in the state plan. The member or staff


shall reveal a potential conflict of interest prior to discussion and consideration of the matter. The CEO shall make the determination if a conflict of interest exists in accordance with applicable state law. If there is a conflict, the member must recuse him or herself.


**Term of Agreement**

This agreement shall be effective April 6, 2018 and reviewed and agreed upon annually. It will also be reviewed and agreed upon sooner if any of the principal signatories change during the term of the agreement. It shall expire upon the termination of the WIOA, dissolution of the local workforce development area, or future action taken by PSW and/or the CEO to establish a new agreement.

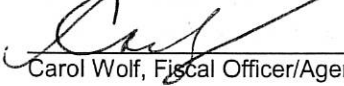
By signing this agreement, the parties listed below understand that this document supersedes all prior written or oral agreements relating to the WIOA responsibilities of the CEO in the Metro Southwest WIOA Region.

**Signatures**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Tony Mazzucco, General Manager, Town of Norwood  
Date 4/12/18

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Kubiak, Chair, PSW, Inc.  
Date 4-12-18

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sylva Beville, Executive Director, PSW, Inc.  
Date 4/12/18

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Carol Wolf, Fiscal Officer/Agent, Metro South/West Employment & Training Inc.  
Date 4/12/18

## **ATTACHMENT 1. DEFINITIONS AND TERMS**

### **WIOA**

On July 22, 2014, President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law (Public Law 113-128). This comprehensive reform legislation superseded the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and amended the Wagner-Peyser Act. Its purpose is to:

- Provide workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce development systems, that increase employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials by participants,
- Improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet the skill requirements of employers, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation.

### **GOVERNANCE AND OPERATION**

The local workforce development system is contingent on a successful partnership between the Chief Elected Official (CEO) and the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB). Their respective roles are outlined in the Agreement between the CEO and the LWDB, which:

- Describes the local workforce organizational design and the functions that each entity will assume
- Is not intended to serve as a detailed planning document

The local plan is the document in which the LWDB and CEO will describe work plans, timelines and performance goals related to the direct delivery of workforce development services and activities within the region.

### **LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

The local workforce development board is comprised of representatives from a variety of businesses and organizations in the local area. All members must meet the WIOA criteria established by the Governor, have demonstrated experience and expertise, and possess optimum policy-making authority. The majority (51%) must be from the private sector, while others represent labor, adult education, and other required partners. All WIOA board members are appointed by the CEO. The LWDB oversees the workforce issues and activities in the region, sets policy, convenes stakeholders, conducts analysis of regional economic conditions, engages employers, and develops the local plan with the CEO. In this region, Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce, Inc. (PSW) is the LWDB.

### **PARTNERSHIPS FOR A SKILLED WORKFORCE**

Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce Inc. (PSW) is a private non-profit agency. It serves as the LWDB in this region and is responsible for overseeing WIOA programs and services. It works with the CEO in this region to develop the workforce vision, goals and policies and to develop and approve the WIOA budget and local strategic plan. It functions as an intermediary—bringing together businesses and public institutions to find and implement solutions to labor market problems and advocate for policy change. Sylvia Beville is the Executive Director, and Lisa Kubiak is the Chair.

### **CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL**

The term Chief Elected Official (CEO) means—(A) the chief elected executive officer of a unit of general local government in a local area; and (B) in a case in which a local area includes more than one unit of general local government, the individuals designated under the agreement described in section 107(c) (1) (B) (WIOA Section 3 (9)). The CEO is the WIOA grant recipient, but may designate another entity to serve as the fiscal agent (see below). The CEO appoints the WIOA members to the LWDB. Tony Mazucco, General Manager of the Town of Norwood, is the CEO in this region.



## **FISCAL AGENT**

In order to assist in administration of the WIOA grant funds, the CEO may designate an entity to serve as a local fiscal agent. Designation of a fiscal agent does not relieve the CEO of liability for the misuse of grant funds. If the CEO designates a fiscal agent, the CEO must ensure this agent has clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The Metro South/West Employment and Training Administration, Inc. has been designated as the fiscal agent with Carol Wolf as the Fiscal Officer. The fiscal agent is responsible for the following functions:

- Receive funds
- Ensure sustained fiscal integrity and accountability for expenditures of funds in accordance with Office of Management and Budget circulars, WIOA and the corresponding Federal Regulations and State Policies
- Respond to audit financial findings
- Maintain proper accounting records and adequate documentation
- Prepare financial reports to meet state, federal and PSW requirements
- Provide technical assistance to sub-recipients regarding fiscal issues
- Conduct financial monitoring of service providers
- Ensure that there is an independent audit of all employment and training programs

## **ONE STOP CAREER CENTERS**

Each region must have at least one physical location where job seekers and businesses can access services. The Metro South/West Employment and Training Administration had been the career center operator, serving more than 12,000 job seekers and 900 employers each year. The operator selected through the open procurement process is Career Team, a private for profit business which provides workforce development services through various programs across the country. Career Team began operations on October 2, 2017.

The CEO appoints members to the workforce board and it is those members who are charged with the selection of the operator. The CEO has full confidence in the judgement of the members he has appointed to select an operator to meet the needs of individuals and employers in Metro Southwest. He has authorized the MSW board to carry out the procurements and recognizes that neither PSW nor the CEO can veto their selection.

## **METRO SOUTH/WEST EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION Inc**

Metro South/West Employment & Training Administration Inc. (MSWETA Inc) is the entity which is the designated fiscal agent and provider of WIOA Youth Services. It is the successor agency to the entity which performed the fiscal, youth and career center services in this region for 40 years. (MSWETA, Inc.) began to perform the functions of fiscal agent and youth services, effective July 1 2017.

## **REGION**

There are sixteen workforce regions in the Commonwealth. The Metro South/West region is one and consists of 43 cities and towns.