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# **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**

## **Massachusetts Combined State Plan**

### **State Plan Modification**

for the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2024  
Effective: July 1, 2020

**Posted for Public Review and Comment**

***Date: February 11, 2022***









## **STATE PLAN FORMAT**

The Massachusetts WIOA State Plan is organized based upon the Planning Guidance from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). The questions from the Planning Guidance are retained in the State Plan to provide readers with context.

The federal government will review and approve the State Plan through the relevant federal agencies including: the US Department of Labor (USDOL); US Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE); Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

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## I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

**Unified or Combined State Plan.** Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

**Unified State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

a) **Combined State Plan.** This plan includes the Adult Program, Dislocated Worker Program, Youth Program, Wagner-Peyser Act Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, and Vocational Rehabilitation Program as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs identified below. Indicate which Combined State Plan partner program(s) the State is electing to include in the plan.

1. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
2. Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
3. Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
4. Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
5. Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et seq.)
  - a. Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
  - b. Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

## Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery

As with the rest of the nation, COVID-19 has profoundly challenged the Commonwealth's economic and workforce landscape. April 2020 saw Massachusetts' unemployment rate peak at 16.4% with half of all small businesses closing and 560,000 residents unemployed. The pandemic led to drastic changes to the economy and workforce that had a disproportionately negative impact on certain populations such as women, people of color, and low-income families. This drastic change necessitated a recalibration of workforce development operations, focus and initiatives. Significant training and upskilling were needed to move job seekers from declining industries to in-demand occupations, while the workforce system infrastructure expanded to include new, virtual services and innovative delivery models. Throughout, MassHire and workforce system partners worked together to address systemic inequities and enable workforce participation and economic growth.

As an early step toward recovery, in October 2020 The Baker-Polito administration launched [Partnerships for Recovery](#), a \$774 million comprehensive plan to stabilize and grow the Massachusetts economy. The Administration aligned multiple funding sources, including federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and state funding, to appropriately respond to the COVID-19 crisis. Partnerships for Recovery addresses key efforts such as supports for small businesses, revitalizing downtowns, supporting housing and equity, and robust investments in the Massachusetts workforce system to get Massachusetts back to work.

Under the charge to get Massachusetts back to work, the Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC) established a common agenda for making public investments that includes supporting education and training partnerships that:

- address the negative economic impacts of COVID-19 by providing assistance to unemployed workers and households, invest in high-demand occupations;
- engage business and leadership to develop talent pipelines;
- align to regional economic trends identified in regional blueprints;
- expand skills and credentials for workers;
- support chronically under and unemployed individuals;
- integrate public and private investments;
- expand proven programs and sustainability.

The WSC turned to the Massachusetts Workforce Development System, comprised of WIOA required and non-required partners, to deploy these new investments that (1) build workforce skills, (2) upgrade system operations, and (3) enable work through additional supports. What follows is a deeper look at these COVID-19 response efforts aimed at getting Massachusetts back to work.

## **(1) Building Workforce Skills**

While upskilling the workforce to engender economic growth and mobility predates COVID-19, Massachusetts recognized the how critical these efforts were for the state's COVID-19 recovery as well as to achieving workforce equity and inclusion. Thus, Massachusetts generated new training programs and pathways that focused on forging new partnerships between employers and workers to lead to mutual prosperity for workers, businesses, and the Commonwealth.

**Career Technical Initiative (CTI)** A signature initiative of the Baker-Polito administration and the **Workforce Skills Cabinet**, the Career Technical Initiative seeks to address the persistent need for skilled labor by training 20,000 workers in construction, trades, and manufacturing to help close skills gaps and meet the needs of businesses across the Commonwealth. CTI works with school administrators, employers and leaders in cities and towns to provide additional career training opportunities for both young people and adults by operating three teaching shifts a day (traditional school day, after school, and evening), at vocational-technical schools to create opportunities for youth and adults seeking skills and certification in high-demand industries. CTI utilizes new state funding to help adults pay for classes, boosts business involvement in program development and credentials, and reduces licensure barriers to incentivize mid-career professionals to become vocational teachers. The program is administered by Commonwealth Corporation. As of 2021, 35 new career pathway programs and 22 expansions of career pathway programs at 10 vocational-technical schools are providing training and job placement for more than 800 adults.

**Rapid Re-employment Program** Rapid Re-employment program supports training for residents who have experienced an employment interruption due to COVID-19 and help place them in high-demand job categories such as Information Technology and Health Care by scaling up existing training opportunities provided by organizations to employers. Funded by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), the Rapid Re-employment program engages Massachusetts employers by expanding workforce partnerships with large employers in target sectors to create aligned statewide training-employment pathways. The program is designed to help businesses develop a pipeline of workers to meet their skills needs as well as provide better lifetime earnings potential for those whose job prospects have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. This program utilizes state funding and is administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the Workforce Skills Cabinet.

**Replenishing Employer Investment in Education and Workforce Training (RENEW)** pilots a new funding model that provides a sustainable pathway for individuals to access high-quality training and placement programs to fill in-demand occupations. The concept of the fund is to invest public resources in programmatic activities in ways that encourage employers to pay back into the fund and replenish the resources to lengthen the life of the RENEW Fund. The Fund supports education and training models that retrain unemployed individuals who are then hired by employers. This Fund will gain sustainability as the funded models support education and training organizations that partner with employers who commit to repaying a portion of training costs upon successfully filling vacant positions. This structure is an opportunity to bring

together and benefit government, employer, training provider partners, and workers, in order to support worker upskilling sustainably and at scale. This program utilizes state funding and is administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the Workforce Skills Cabinet.

#### **Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grants for Training and Placement Programs**

This program funds training and placement programs in occupational priorities identified through the [Regional Workforce Skills Planning Initiative](#) regional blueprint process except for Advanced Manufacturing, which the Workforce Skills Cabinet has allocated separate resources to address. The program funds qualified partnerships that propose to deliver cohort-based, occupationally focused training and placement programs to unemployed and/or underemployed individuals, with a goal to place them in unsubsidized employment in the target occupation upon completion of training. Commonwealth Corporation administers this program.

#### **Expansion of MassHire's Capacity for Training and Employment**

The Workforce Skills Cabinet recognizes that regional planning teams and MassHire staff play a critical role in strategizing for and deploying new and existing investments in upskilling pathways. These teams in the field are engaging key stakeholders such as employers, training entities, and community-based organizations to define their investment plans, identify gaps, and take advantage of new resources. To support this work, the Workforce Skills Cabinet have created two new regionally-based roles:

- **Market Makers** are staff that engage employers and match them with training providers and training grants; there will be one Market Maker for each of the seven planning regions;
- **Upskilling Navigators** are new full-time employees in each Career Center to assist job seekers coming from UI claimant pools with understanding the landscape of training available to them and will help these customers find the right fit. These navigators will help to recruit, screen, and enroll participants in training programs.

In addition to the above new initiatives to expand upskilling opportunities, there is also continued support of pre-existing workforce recovery efforts such as the [Skills Capital Grants program](#), the [Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund](#), and the [Workforce Training Fund](#).

#### **(2) Upgrading Workforce System and Operations**

The 2020 WIOA State Plan included a goal to ensure Massachusetts has world-class tools to support a modern, efficient, and accessible workforce development system. The move to remote work and virtually delivered services brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this demand that the workforce system modernize its technological infrastructure. MassHire and its partners responded to the challenge by rethinking workforce system systems operations, tools, and service delivery to meet the immediate and long-term needs of job seekers and businesses.

**Road to Re-employment (R2R)**: As the unemployment rate rapidly escalated in spring of 2020 the Executive Office of Labor Workforce Development (EOLWD), Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA), and MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) stood up the **Road-to-**

**Re-Employment (R2R)** to assist the over 1.8 million Commonwealth residents who were facing unemployment and to meet the urgent talent needs of businesses who were struggling to sustain operation throughout the pandemic. The R2R was implemented to identify the process, resources and tools needed to align with the changing conditions and needs of job seeker and business customers.

The R2R comprised four workstreams to focus on all pieces related to Reemployment of COVID-19 impacted workers and business:

- **Workstream #1: Unemployment Insurance (UI)**

Focus: Increase capacity to assist UI claimants by expanding UI call center capacity, developing an online resource guide for UI claimants, as well as staff guides for MassHire to assist with UI needs.

- **Workstream #2: Online Remote Resources**

Focus: Organize MassHire tools and services to ensure consistency and availability statewide. Work included developing training and technical assistance for staff, deploying online remote resources for customers such as online workshops, job referrals, online Resource Guide for COVID-19 Job Seekers, and a focused COVID-19 Jobs Page.

- **Workstream #3: Reemployment Services**

Focus: Increase the ability of MassHire to handle services virtually when RESEA is “turned” back on. Key works includes developing a Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) virtual model and an online RESEA Career Center Seminar/tracking of attendance.

- **Workstream #4: Business Recruitment**

Focus: Support and streamline business services, including job matching and hiring, as well as track metrics on job openings and placements.

The R2R initiative converged workstreams toward common goals of meeting the evolving needs of job seeker and business customers as well as developing new business models to address current and future workforce development challenges. Workstream efforts resulted in the following deliverables and outcomes:

- **Targeted Outreach** – Claimants/Jobseekers and Businesses were provided with information on the multi-faceted array of services and programs available to them across DUA, the MassHire Workforce System, and through MassHire Partner State Agencies. Businesses were also connected and engaged with MassHire BizWorks services, and the talent pool needed to fill their open positions.
- **Boston Re-Employment Center (REC)** To improve the UI Claimant experience and immediately connect claimants to career services the Department of Unemployment Assistance partnered with the MassHire Department of Career Services to build the Boston Re-Employment Center. The REC Center provides in-person UI services (filing UI claims, work search certifications, UI Online access, etc.) as well as career services



(Career Center seminar, virtual career counseling, etc.) The REC Center is a model designed to improve customer service levels and expand system capacity in a way that is scalable across the MassHire system.

- **Access to Virtual Job Fairs.** Workstream teams researched, identified, and implemented state-of-the-art virtual opportunities for Businesses to conduct online job fairs in order to directly connect with thousands of applicants to fill open positions.

**Virtual Re-Employment Pathway and MassHire JobQuest Modernization:** as in-person services ceased during the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic it became critical to enhance the virtual experience for MassHire customers. **The Virtual Re-Employment Pathway** was created to streamline online service delivery and provide MassHire customers with new tools to guide and assist their journey from job loss to job gain. Among the system enhancements was updating **MassHire JobQuest**, the online portal to the Virtual Re-employment Pathway. The new MassHire JobQuest launched Fall 2021 was a culmination of the development of a fully virtual career pathway experience for jobseekers. The new JobQuest featured a fresh new look and enhanced features such as:

- tailored and guided re-employment pathway based on responses to prompts;
- pre-populated registration data from UI Online;
- ability to upload and build a resume;
- enhanced job searching capabilities;
- ability to create a Career Action Plan;
- on-demand videos, workshops and other events integrated into a video hosting platform that tracks participation/use;
- in-person Career Center assistance activated at the click of a button;
- inclusion of labor market information into the customer dashboard.

To further expand on the progress in enabling virtual services and to connect employers to a talent pipeline, Massachusetts received a \$3M National Dislocated Worker (Comprehensive and Accessible Reemployment through Equitable Employment Recovery grant (CAREER DWG) to focus on technology expansion for business services with the goal of substantially increasing employment connections for dislocated workers, statewide, especially those from historically marginalized groups, long-term unemployed and UI exhaustees. The activities in the CAREER DWG will enhance the ability of jobseekers to connect with all aspects of reemployment services virtually, thus increasing the likelihood of follow-through and ensuring that service delivery is not interrupted due to emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Activities related to the CAREER DWG began in September 2021 and will culminate September 2023.

### **(3) Supports to enable the Workforce**

Success in upskilling the workforce and modernizing the workforce system are cornerstones in an effective, modern workforce system, yet, to ensure equity in access to the system, additional

supports are needed to enable all workers to fully participate in a growing economy. Further, embedding principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the workforce system will support equal access to engage in the workforce system and equal opportunity to thrive in the Commonwealth.

**Partnership with Unemployment Insurance.** As the pandemic unfolded, the first goal was to focus on the UI system to help stabilize individuals who lost their jobs. Massachusetts focused on enhancing the customer access and navigation of the system by implementing a number of new changes, including daily Virtual UI Town Halls. In these town halls, conducted in multiple languages, Massachusetts residents could learn step-by-step instructions on achieving a successful unemployment claim, receive up-to-date and accurate information about unemployment insurance and pandemic-related unemployment compensation and have their questions answered. Partners of the MassHire workforce system conducted outreach to their constituents to ensure awareness and access across impacted workers.

Meanwhile, state government agency staff, including many from MassHire and the broader Massachusetts Workforce system, volunteered to assist the Department of Unemployment Assistance in managing the unprecedented surge in UI claims.

[Mass Internet Connect \(MIC\)](#) Launched January 2021, Mass Internet Connect is a partnership of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute and MassHire/Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) to support unserved and underserved communities with internet connectivity across the Commonwealth. The program subsidizes internet for low-income populations and expands hot spots for unemployed job seekers who have a technology barrier. Participants are given access to the internet and/or a computing device and/or resources to support digital literacy.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)**

The COVID-19 pandemic and racial reckoning in 2020 highlighted the need for greater focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion across all the Commonwealth. The Baker-Polito administration has been taking measures to further promote diversity and inclusion within state government, while each state agency embarks on specific steps to embed DEI principles in their strategy and operations.

Across the broader workforce system, the State Partner Advisory Committee (formerly the State Plan Advisory Committee) formed a **SPAC DEI Sub-Committee** to build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive broader workforce system by aligning diversity and inclusion efforts across partner agencies. The SPAC DEI Sub-Committee seeks to share information about DEI efforts and opportunities that take place across agencies, and to engage in joint system-building and growth.

MassHire has also formed a **MassHire DEI Committee** seeks to instill principles and actions of racial equity and equity in order to build an inclusive MassHire workforce system. Comprised of representatives from staff of MassHire workforce board and Career Centers, MassHire Department of Career Services, and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the MassHire DEI Committee serves as coordinating committee for statewide MassHire

diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Key areas of work include working with consultants to deliver a MassHire DEI climate assessment, develop a DEI strategic plan, and deploy DEI-focused trainings. Through this DEI work MassHire seeks to embed principles of DEI in the broader work culture, hiring/promotion practices, customer service delivery, and program and policy development.

It is the hope that through this panoply of new resources, innovations, and system changes that Massachusetts will come out of the COVID-19 crisis a stronger more resilient system that will enable residents and businesses to thrive under any circumstance.

## II. STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS

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### Economic Analysis

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The Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis which Massachusetts's workforce system and programs will operate

- (1) Economic and Workforce Analysis
  - (A) **Economic Analysis** includes an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in Massachusetts, including sub-state regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This includes:
    - (i) Existing demand in sectors and occupations, an analysis of the industries and occupation in which there is existing demand.
    - (ii) Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. An analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging
    - (iii) Employers' Employment Needs. With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A) (i) and (ii), an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.
  - (B) **Workforce Analysis** includes an analysis of the current workforce including individuals with barriers-to employment, as defined in section 3 of the WIOA. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes
    - (i) Employment and Unemployment. An analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the state
    - (ii) Labor Market Trend. An analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations
    - (iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce. Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.
    - (iv) Skill Gaps. Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

### ECONOMIC ANALYSIS/UPDATE FOR WIOA STATE PLAN MODIFICATION

#### Current Labor Market Conditions in Massachusetts

The following report contains a summary of labor market conditions in Massachusetts, including data on labor participation, unemployment rates and claims, and labor demand. Due to COVID-19's profound impact on the economy, these data and insights are largely considered within the context of the pandemic and pandemic recovery.

#### Highlights

- After reaching a peak of 16.4% in April 2020, the unemployment rate in Massachusetts is at 5.2% as of September 2021. Approximately 69% of Total Nonfarm Jobs (seasonally adjusted) in Massachusetts have been recovered. The most significant losses occurred in the Leisure and Hospitality, Education and Health Services, and Trade, Transportation

and Utilities Supersectors. The Leisure and Hospitality Supersector saw a net loss of 225,300 jobs, Education and Health Services 119,000, and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities a 114,000 net loss through April 2020. Education and Health Services Supersector jobs experienced the greatest losses in the Boston-Cambridge-Newton, Worcester, and Springfield NECTA areas. The Accommodation and Food services industry has been the most impacted industry both during and in the recovery period of the pandemic.

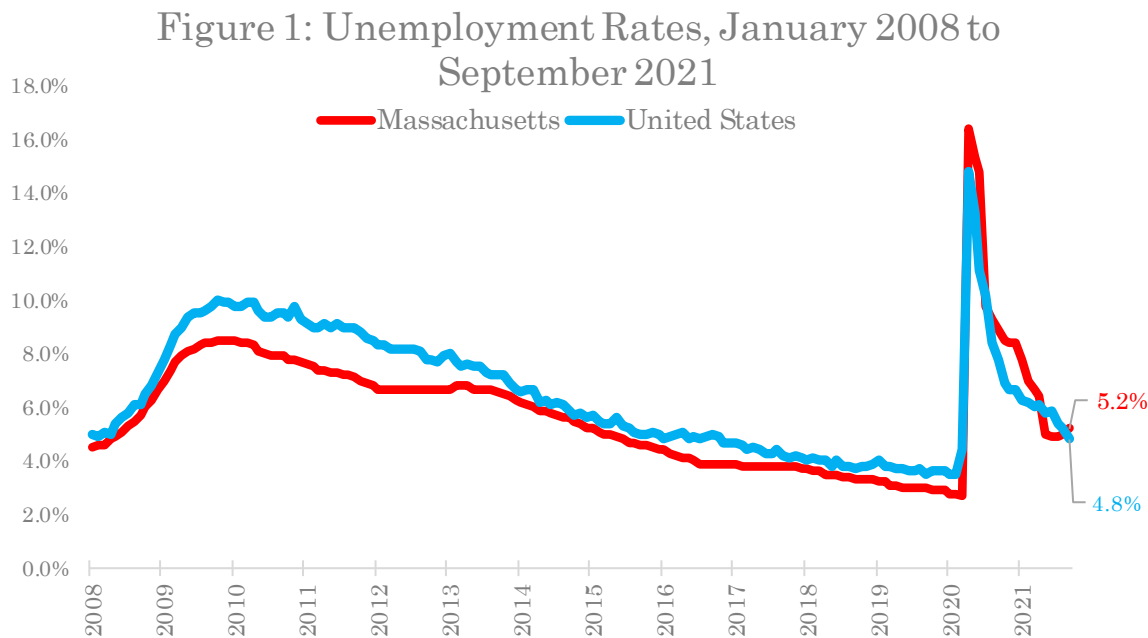
- Demographic analysis of unemployment claims data presented in the report finds that Asians had a greater number of unemployment claims in proportion to their share of the population than would be expected based on past data. Asians saw the highest spike in unemployment claims between February and May 2020, almost three times more than the increase in claims for Whites. Blacks/African Americans, Hispanics, and Latinos seem to be recovering more slowly from the effects of the pandemic. Workers between the ages of 25 and 34 received the greatest number of unemployment claims. Women were more affected by the pandemic than men, particularly at the beginning of the pandemic recovery period, though number of claims between genders are slowly converging. At the peak of the pandemic, claims from women were approximately thirteen times greater than those from men.
- At the height of the pandemic, across all Workforce Development Areas (WDAs), Food Preparation and Service-Related occupations had the highest number of unemployment insurance claims. Followed by Office and Administrative Support and Transportation and Moving. At the beginning of the recovery period, June 2021, most claims in 8 WDAs are from Office and Administrative Support services, in 4 WDAs from Management, in 2 WDAs from Construction and Extraction, and only in Boston and Franklin-Hampshire WDA most claims are still from Food Preparation and Serving Related occupations. It is important to note that a decline in claims does not show a recovery in that industry. Part of the trend might be because of workers exhausting their benefits or moving to/being employed in different industries. As of September 2021, approximately 65,000 jobs are yet to be recovered in Food and Accommodation industry.
- Though uneven in terms of demographics, industries and geography, Massachusetts economy is in recovery from the pandemic. From the time the pandemic began around mid-March 2020 to mid-September 2021, there have been 1.15 million new (and distinct) job postings in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. From January 2021 to May 2021, job posting levels nearly doubled in number. A rise in Retail Trade and Educational Service jobs had a lot to do with this rise in job posting levels.
- From mid-March of 2020 when the pandemic began to September 2021, both Middlesex and Suffolk County accounted for 52% of the total job postings. Management Occupations and Office and Administrative Support Occupations are seeing especially strong job postings as companies are looking to re-staff after introducing major cuts during the pandemic. Registered Nurses remains the most in-demand occupation in the state. Software developers and software quality assurance analysts and testers are the second most in demand jobs. Since January 2021, there has been a rise in job postings in

Transportation and Material Moving Occupations as supply chains look to expand services matching increasing demand.

- Leisure and Hospitality Sector, which includes the Food Services and Accommodation industry is yet to recover 78,000 jobs compared to February 2020 level. Currently, the industries with higher job postings differ from the industries facing most job deficits compared to pre-pandemic levels.

### Unemployment and Labor Participation Rates

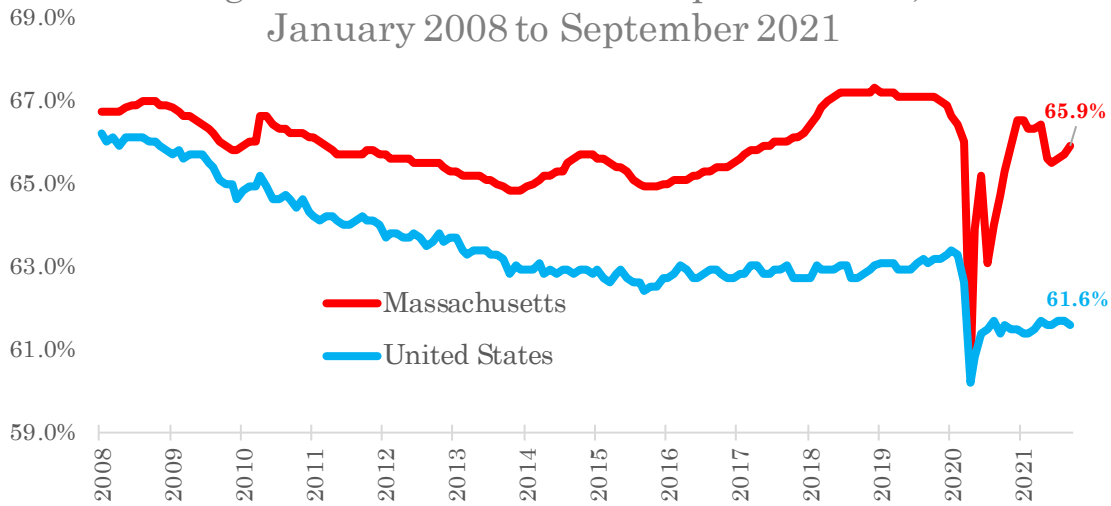
As of September 2021, the preliminary unemployment rate in Massachusetts is 5.2%, an increase of 0.2% from August 2021. As 11,300 workers rejoined the labor force, the number of unemployed increased by 7,500, from 185,400 in August 2021 to 192,900 in September 2021. September 2021 estimates shows that overall, 3,527,900 Massachusetts residents were employed. Figure 1 below shows the Massachusetts unemployment rate compared to the US unemployment rate from January of 2008 to September of 2021.



Source: BLS-LAUS

As of September 2021, Massachusetts's Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) is 65.9%, a little more than the 10-year median labor force participation rate of 65.6%. Figure 2 below compares the Massachusetts labor participation rate to the US labor participation rate from January of 2008 to September of 2021. Dec 2019, Jan 2020, and Feb 2020 are historical outliers in terms of LFPR. Given that context, Massachusetts's labor force participation in September 2021 is 26,500 fewer workers than in February 2020. Since the May 2021 reopening, 18,600 workers have rejoined the workforce. Recovery is still underway, so it would be speculative to say that workers dropped out of the labor force, particularly while Hispanics and Black workers remain disproportionately impacted.

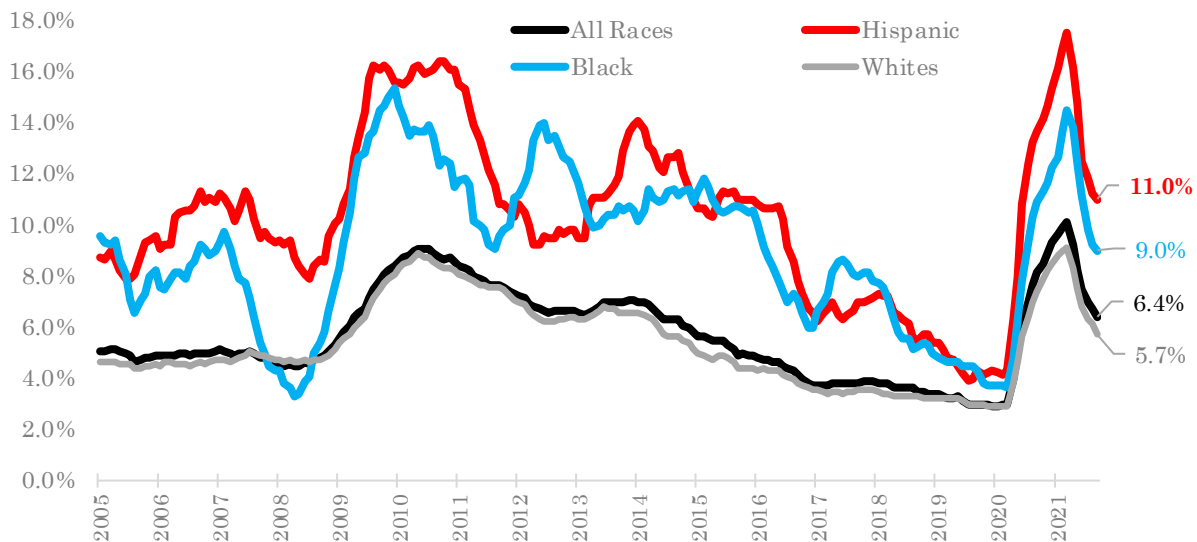
Figure 2: Labor Force Participation Rates,  
January 2008 to September 2021



Source: BLS-LAUS

### Unemployment and Labor Participation Rates by Race and Ethnicity

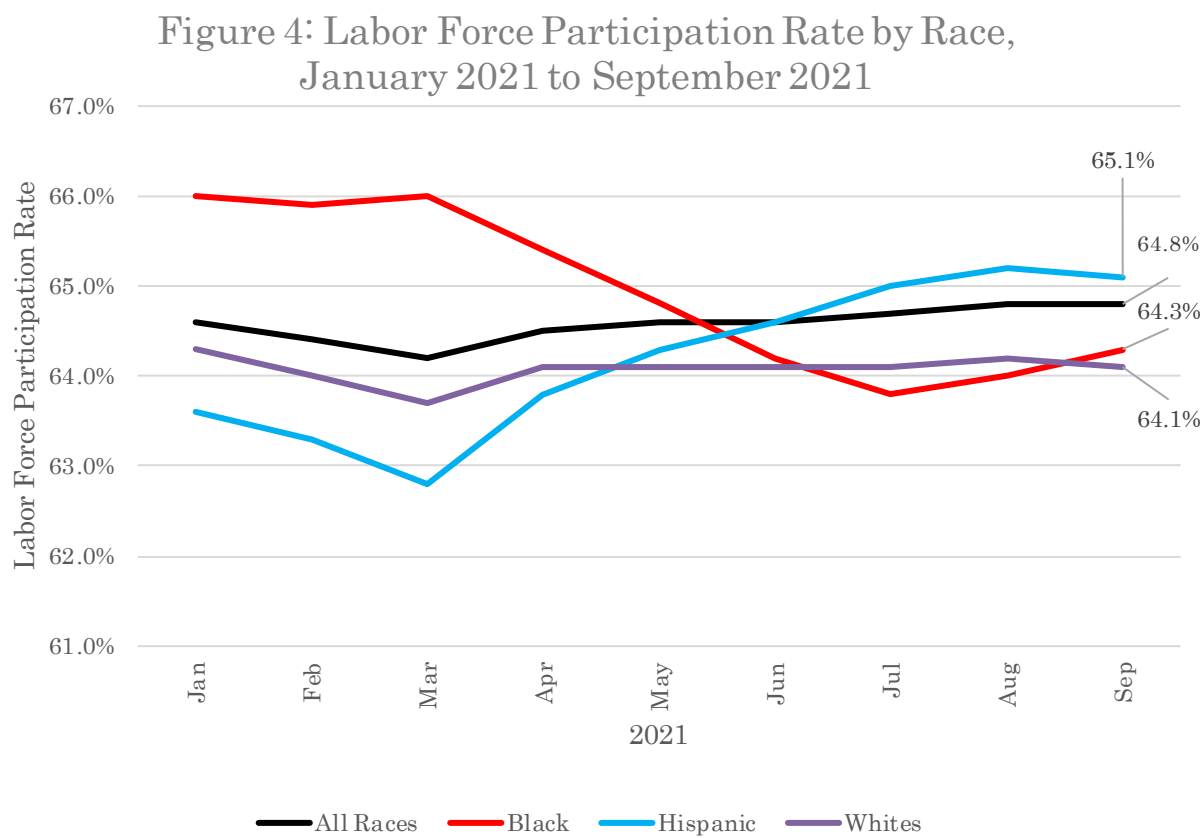
Figure 3: Unemployment Rate by Race and Ethnicity, January 2005 to September 2021



Source: Unpublished US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Current Population Survey (CPS), 12 Month Moving Averages compiled by Massachusetts DUA

Figure 3 shows the Massachusetts unemployment rate from 2005 to 2021, broken down by race and ethnicity. In the pandemic recovery period, unemployment rates among all races have generally been declining. Hispanics consistently had the highest unemployment rate, followed by Blacks. The unemployment rate among Whites was the least, even lower than the state's average for all races. In September, 6.4% was the recorded average for the state, while Hispanics realized a rate of 11.0%, Blacks had a rate of 9.0%, and Whites had a rate of 5.7%.

Figure 4 below shows the Massachusetts labor force participation rate from January of 2021 to September of 2021, broken down by race. From January to May 2021, Hispanics had the lowest labor force participation rate while Blacks had the highest rate. From May onwards, labor force participation among Hispanics quickly increased and became the race with the highest labor force participation rate. However, in this same time period, labor force participation rate among Blacks dropped, such that, as of September 2021, it became nearly the same as the rate among Whites, with Blacks at a rate of 64.3% and Whites at 64.1%.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics CPS Survey

## Unemployment Claims

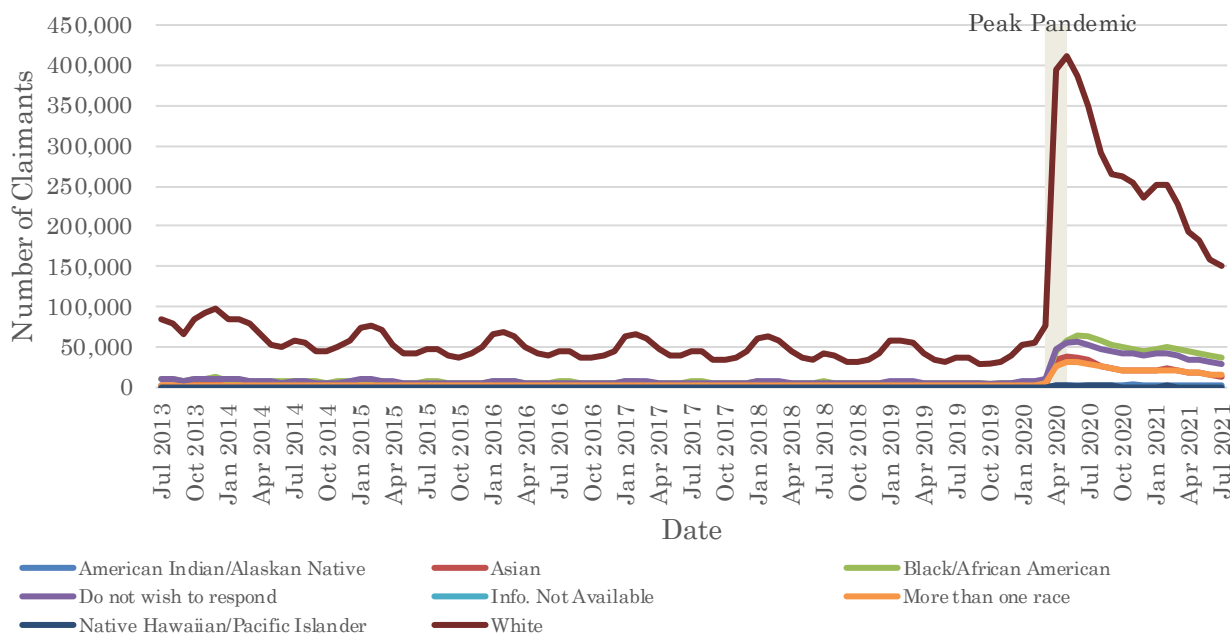
The emergence and persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted the number of unemployment claims, particularly in Massachusetts. Pre-pandemic, unemployment in Massachusetts remained consistently cyclical, as indicated by historical data. This behavior is characterized by a significant spike in unemployment claims in the winter months (November through February), as well as a sharp decline in claims starting from March through June. However, from the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, unemployment claims skyrocketed, peaking in May 2020. Presently, there is a persistent decline in overall claims as unemployment continues to adjust back to pre-pandemic levels.



The data for total claims exhibited in this report shows continued claims information across all unemployment programs, which includes regular unemployment, WorkShare, Extended Benefits (EB), and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), and spans from September 2019 to August 2021. The months from September 2019 to February 2020 mark the “pre-pandemic” period, while March 2020 through May of 2021 indicates the “pandemic” period. The “peak of the pandemic” is noted to be from March through May of 2020. June 2020 to August 2021 is referred to as the “pandemic recovery” period. In addition, individual program data by continued claims for regular unemployment from January 2020 to August 2021, as well as for PEUC from its inception in April 2020 to August 2021, is provided.

## Unemployment Claims by Race and Ethnicity

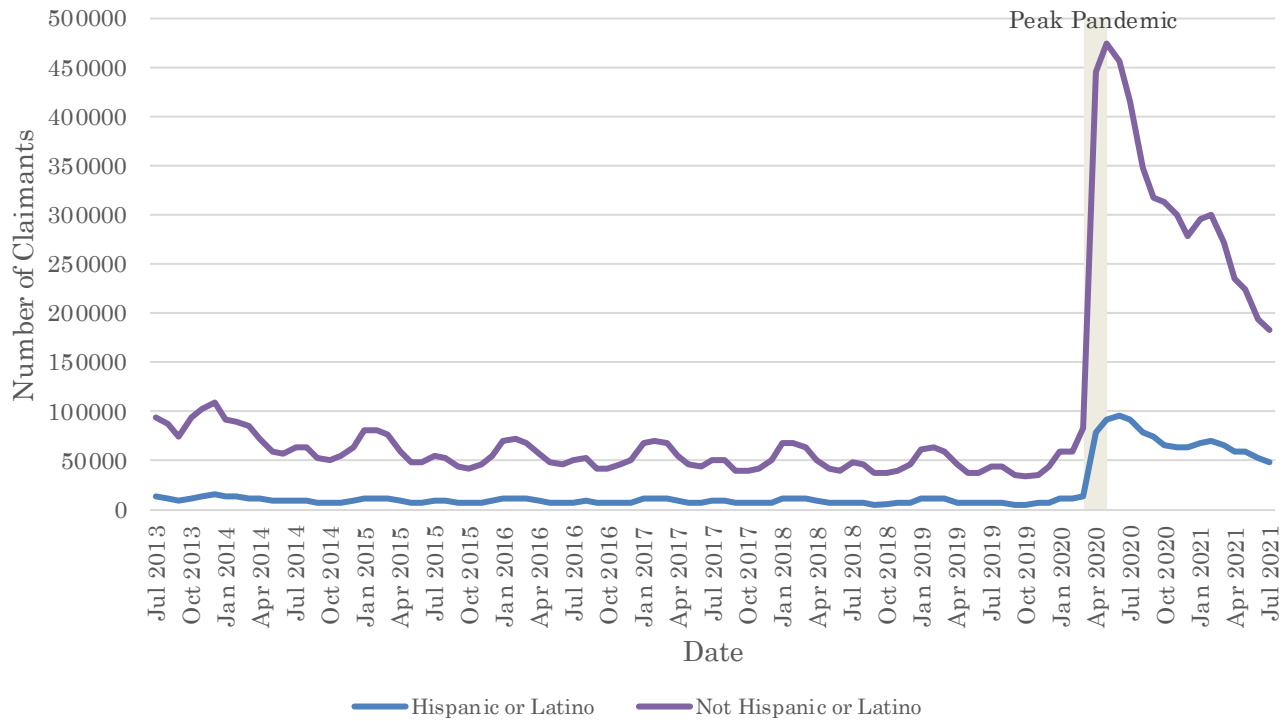
Figure 5: Massachusetts Unemployment Claimants by Race, July 2013 to July 2021



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance

Figure 5 above shows Massachusetts unemployment claims broken down by race, from July 2013 to July 2021. At the peak of the pandemic, there were about nine times more White than Asian claimants, compared to over nine times the previous year. In addition, there were over three times more White than Black/African American claimants, compared to six times in May 2020. The pandemic’s effect on Asians has persisted, as the ratio of White to Asian claimants has only decreased minimally. However, the % of White to Black/African American claimants has drastically decreased. In the pandemic recovery period, Blacks/African Americans were much more impacted, in proportion to White claimants, than in previous years. Blacks/African Americans experienced more of a delayed effect from the pandemic than Asians.

Figure 6: Massachusetts Total Unemployment Claims by Ethnicity, July 2013 to July 2021

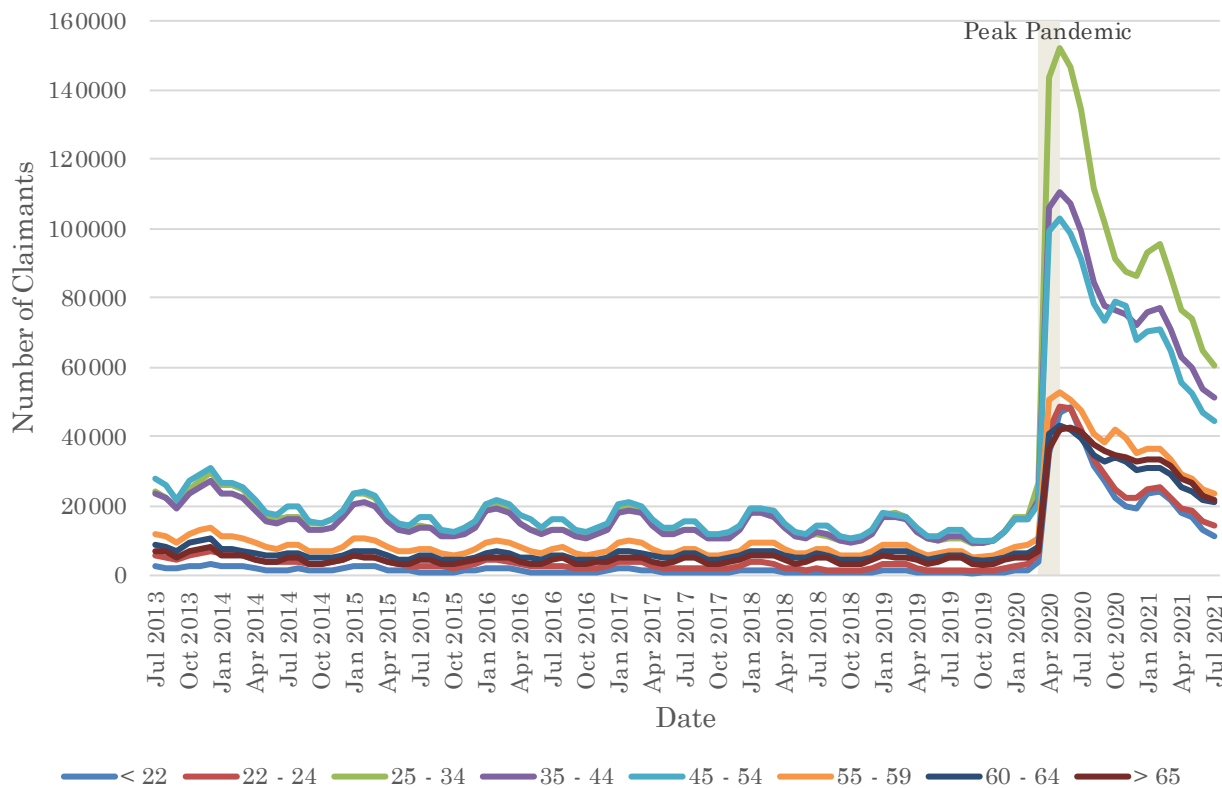


Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance

Figure 6 above shows Massachusetts total unemployment claims by ethnicity from July 2013 to July 2021. There is evidence that the pandemic showed an immediate differentiation between ethnicities. However, further data in May of 2021 shows that there were now about three times fewer claimants that are Hispanic than those that are not, indicating that the ratio between the two has significantly decreased. As such, it can be concluded that the aftermath from the pandemic affected those that are Hispanic more than those that are not. Non-Hispanics seem to be recovering from the pandemic, in terms of returning back to work at a greater rate than Hispanics.

## Unemployment Claimants by Age

Figure 7: Massachusetts Total Unemployment Claimants by Age, July 2013 to July 2021



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance

Figure 7 above shows Massachusetts total unemployment claimants divided by age from July 2013 to July 2021. From 2013 to early 2020, there was a greater number of claimants who were 65 and older than claimants who were between the ages of 22 and 24 by an average of about 59%. However, from April 2020 to June 2020, the number of claimants for the age group 22-24 was greater than the age group 65+ by about 12%. As shown by claims at the peak of the pandemic, it can be observed that those between the ages of 22-24 were more immediately affected by the pandemic than those that are 65 years and older.

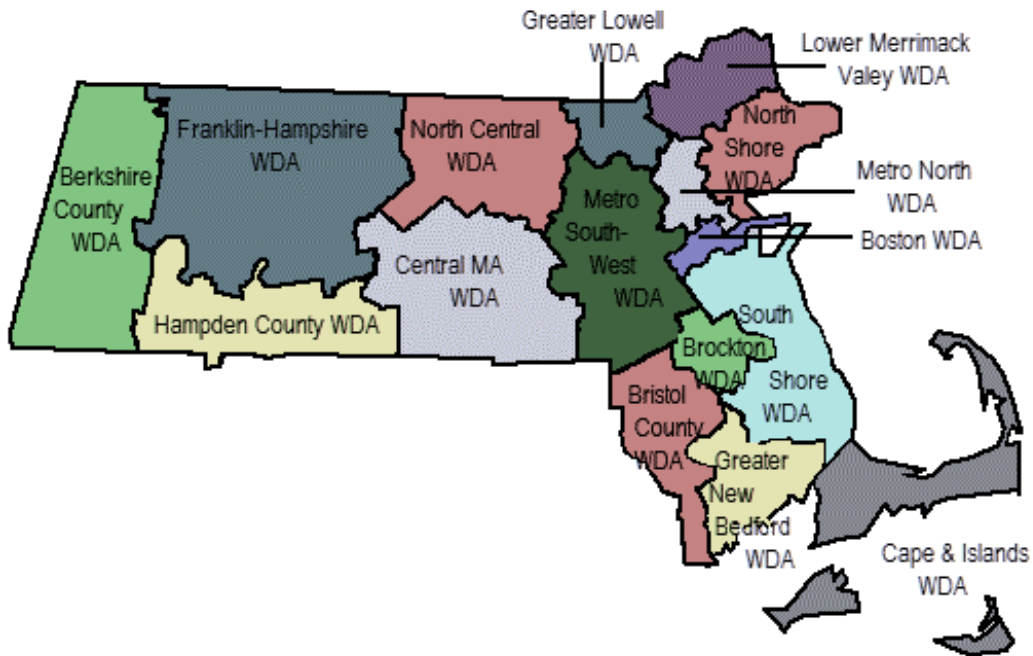
## Unemployment Claims by Workforce Development Area (WDA)

The MassHire Workforce System is comprised of 16 Workforce Development Areas (WDA) with accompanying boards. These WDAs are charged with supporting local and regional economic development, developing the workforce to meet the needs of industries, and collaborating with stakeholders to create strategic plans and workforce initiatives. Figure 8 below is a map of the 16 WDAs.

### Highlights:

- At the height of the pandemic, across all WDAs, Food Preparation and Service-Related occupations had the highest number of unemployment insurance claims. Followed by Office and Administrative Support and Transportation and Moving.
- At the beginning of the recovery period, June 2021, the most claims in 8 WDAs are from Office and Administrative Support services, in 4 WDAs from Management, in 2 WDAs from Construction and Extraction, and only in Boston and Franklin-Hampshire WDA most claims are still from Food Preparation and Serving Related occupations.
- As mentioned in an earlier, it is important to note that a decline in claims does not show a recovery in that industry. Part of the trend might be because of workers exhausting their benefits or moving to/being employed in different industries. As of September 2021, approximately 65,000 jobs are yet to be recovered in Food and Accommodation industry.

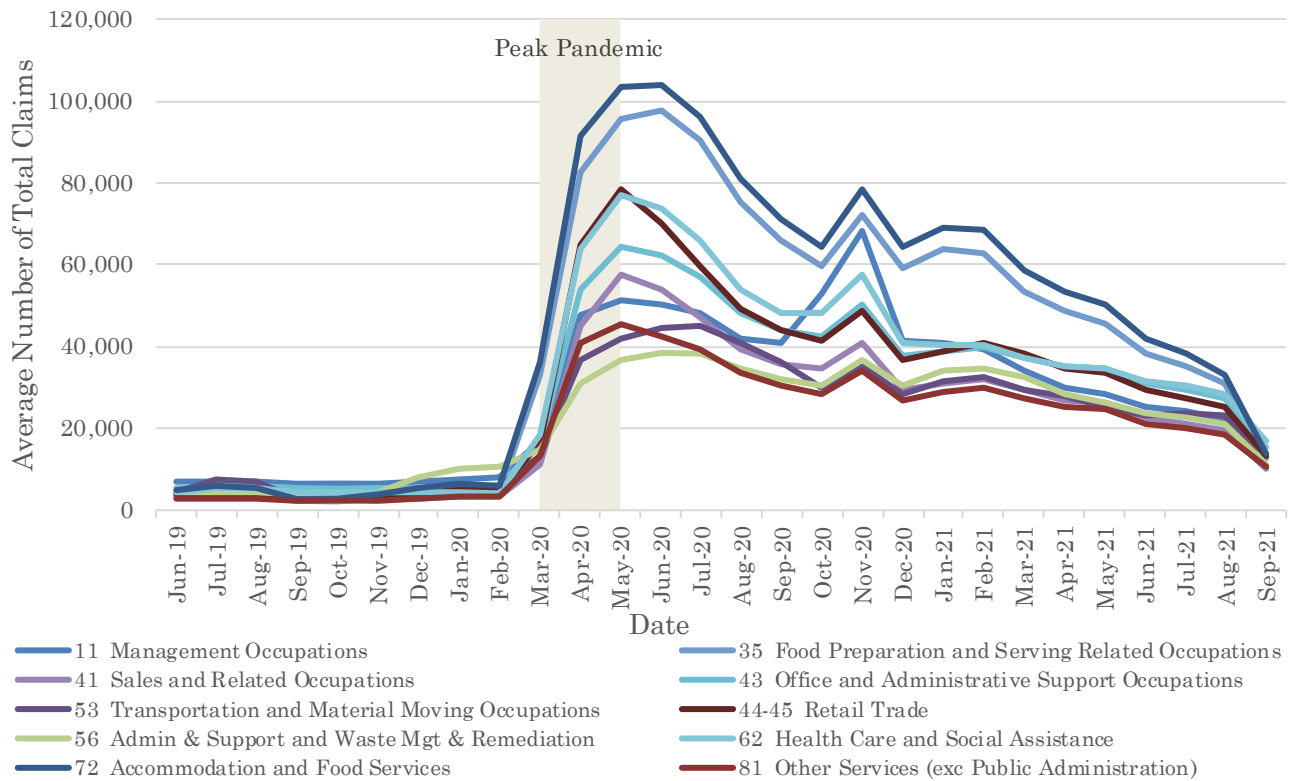
**Figure 8: Workforce Development Agencies in Massachusetts:**



### Unemployment Claims by Industry

Consistent to what we have seen in the CES Jobs profiles, the Trade, Transportation, Utilities and Leisure and Hospitality industries were most affected by the pandemic. The Trade, Transportation, and Utilities Supersector had the highest number of continued claims in May 2020, and while claims have reduced significantly, the number of claims from this Supersector remains highest in comparison to other sectors. Figure 9 below shows Massachusetts unemployment claims broken down by industry from June 2019 to September 2021.

Figure 9: Unemployment Claims in Massachusetts by Industry, June 2019 to September 2021



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance

The Accommodation and Food services industry has been the most impacted industry both during and in the recovery period of the pandemic. Accommodation and Food services industry, food preparation and serving related occupations, and health care and social assistance industry were the industries/occupations that had the most claims. Retail Trade is recovering faster than the other most affected industries and occupations.

### Establishment and Job Losses

Restaurants and Other Eating Places saw the most establishment losses and, as many of those establishments could not survive, the restrictions. Between 2019 and 2020, Restaurants and Other Eating Places lost 320 establishments. Overall, this industry lost approximately 27% or 65,000 of its jobs because of the pandemic. Drinking Places (i.e., bars) also experienced 10% loss of its establishments. Travel Arrangement and Reservations Services lost 11% of its establishments and over 15,000 jobs as travel stalled and fears reduced demand for taking trips. Related to the impact of the pandemic on women in workforce, it is noteworthy that Child Day Care Services lost over 25% of its jobs in 2020. Table 1 below shows the private sector establishment losses in Massachusetts from 2019 to 2020. Table 2 shows the private sector job losses in Massachusetts from 2019 to 2020.

**Table 1: Private Sector Establishment Losses in Massachusetts from 2019 to 2020**

Industry	2019	2020	change	change %
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	13,710	13,390	-320	-2.3%
Electronic Markets and Agents/Brokers	4,030	3,761	-269	-6.7%
Clothing Stores	1,961	1,836	-125	-6.4%
Sporting Goods/Musical Instrument Stores	962	876	-86	-8.9%
Automotive Repair and Maintenance	3,960	3,880	-80	-2.0%
Health and Personal Care Stores	2,530	2,453	-77	-3.0%
Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)	671	603	-68	-10.1%
Child Day Care Services	2,026	1,962	-64	-3.2%
Travel Arrangement and Reservation Service	592	528	-64	-10.8%
Special Food Services	1,286	1,224	-62	-4.8%

Source: Massachusetts LMI ES-202 Data

**Table 2: Private Sector Employment Losses in Massachusetts from 2019 to 2020**

Industry	2019	2020	change	change %
Restaurants and Other Eating Places	246,182	181,049	-65,133	-26.5%
Traveler Accommodation	39,695	24,242	-15,453	-38.9%
Other Amusement and Recreation Industries	41,753	27,738	-14,015	-33.6%
Special Food Services	22,902	13,360	-9,542	-41.7%
Employment Services	65,305	56,557	-8,748	-13.4%
Clothing Stores	23,240	15,581	-7,659	-33.0%
Child Day Care Services	28,804	21,541	-7,263	-25.2%
Civic and Social Organizations	19,906	12,674	-7,232	-36.3%
Personal Care Services	24,198	17,964	-6,234	-25.8%
Nursing Care Facilities	48,559	43,022	-5,537	-11.4%

Source: Massachusetts LMI ES-202 Data

### Labor Demand and Pandemic Recovery

From the time pandemic began around mid-March 2020 to mid-September 2021, there have been 1.15 million new (and distinct) job postings in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This section includes detailed information about those job postings and provides context regarding the overall labor market since the pandemic began.

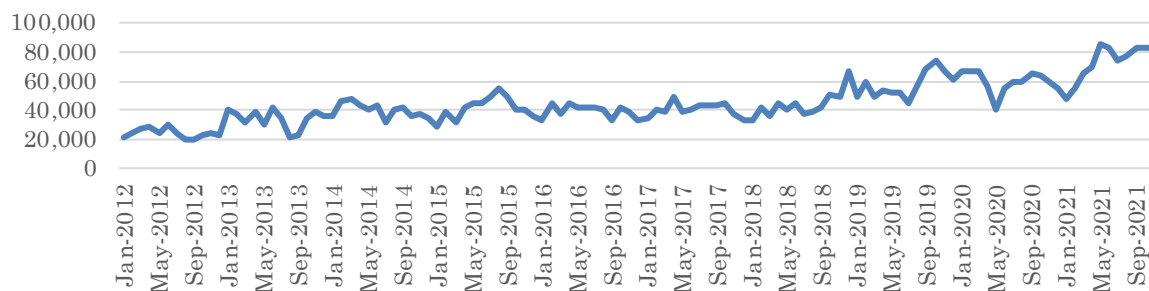
#### Highlights:

- From January 2021 to May 2021, job posting levels nearly doubled in number. A rise in Retail Trade and Educational Service jobs had a lot to do with this rise in job posting levels.
- A majority of this labor demand is concentrated in two counties, Middlesex County and Suffolk County. These are counties that have a more diverse industry profile and therefore did not suffer heavy establishment loss.

- Many businesses permanently closed during the pandemic, especially in the Food Services and Accommodation industry. This will contribute to a slower recovery in this industry since there are fewer businesses looking for labor. Sectors with fewer lost establishments (such as Healthcare) are seeing a faster recovery of jobs as those establishments look to re-staff.

New monthly job postings in Massachusetts are currently at all-time-high levels indicating a high overall level of labor demand. Even at the lowest point of job creation in May 2020, new job postings levels never went below pre-pandemic levels. Between May 2020 and September 2021, the rate of job postings has risen from 40,000 a month to 82,000. This doubling of labor demand could be correlated with increased vaccinations, lessened restrictions, and the need to re-staff since there were heavy layoffs from March 2020 to May 2020. A second wave of hiring occurred around January 2021 coinciding with the roll-out of vaccination programs across the state. Figure 10 below shows monthly new job postings in Massachusetts from January 2012 to September 2021.

Figure 10: Monthly New Job Postings in Massachusetts, January 2012 to September 2021



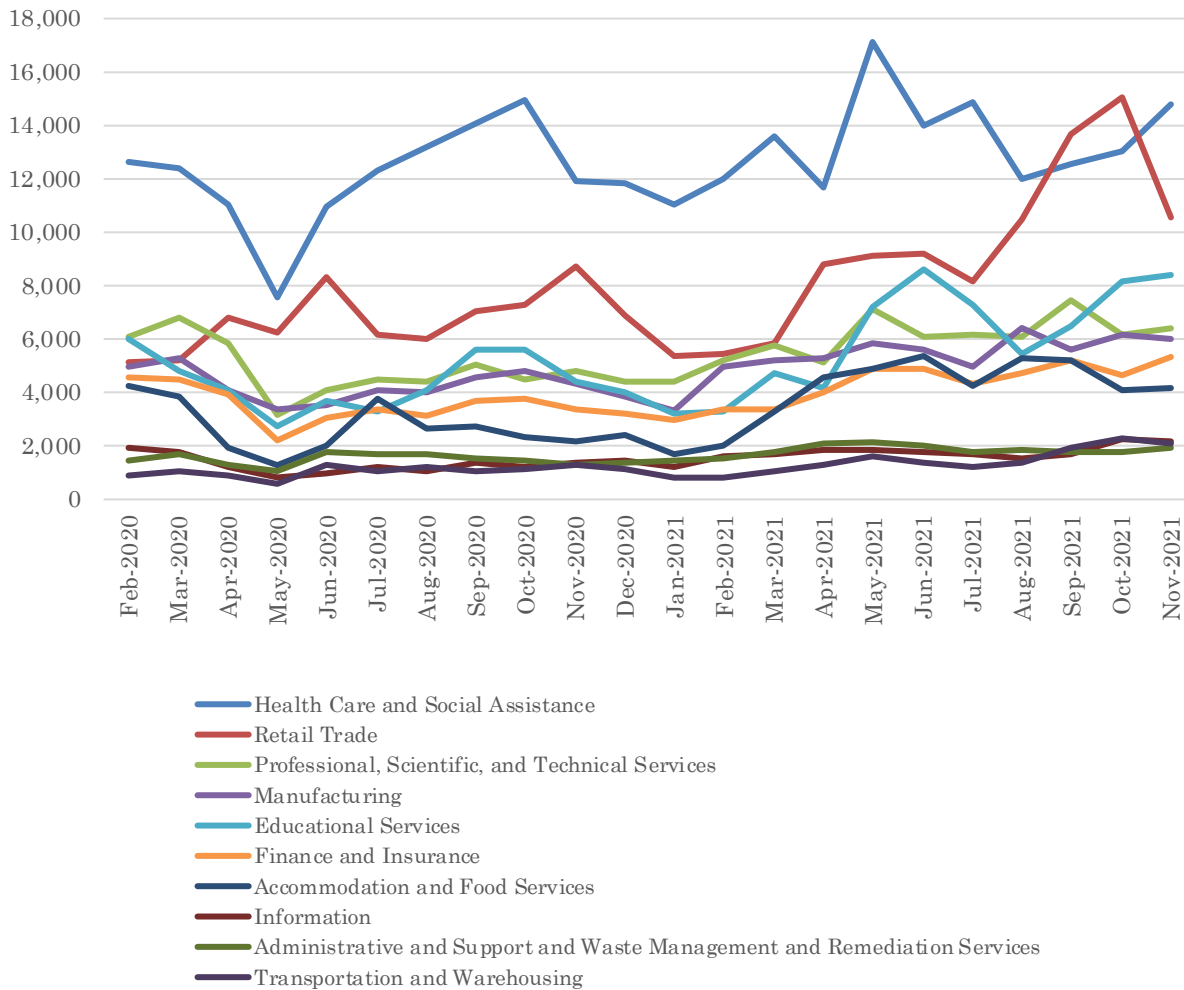
Source: The Conference Board®-Burning Glass® Help Wanted OnLine® (HWOL) Data Series

### Labor by Demand Industry

The top 10 industries in terms of job postings have been experiencing an upward trend in hiring since May 2020. Retail Trade has been experiencing strong labor demand since January 2021, however showing a recent drop-off in demand. The Health Care and Social Assistance industry is continuing its long-term trend of expansion and this industry is expected to grow at an annual rate of 0.53% over the long-term. However, as result of significant layoffs at beginning of the pandemic, a large share of the current jobs postings in Healthcare are for replacement of workers. Educational Services has also been seeing a rise in labor demand since January 2021.

In terms of job postings that can be tied to a specific 3-digit NAICs industry, Hospitals (622) has the led the way in terms of labor demand with around 7.9% of the total share, followed by Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services with 7.3%, and Education Services with 6.9%. Non-store Retailers also has a strong demand for labor as these companies are seeing an uptick in business since the pandemic began. Figure 11 below shows the monthly new job postings in Massachusetts from February 2020 to November 2021, broken down by the ten top industries. Table 3 shows the top industries in Massachusetts by share of new job postings from mid-March 2020 to mid-September 2021.

Figure 11: Monthly New Job Postings - Top 10 Industries, February 2020 to November 2021



Source: The Conference Board®-Burning Glass® Help Wanted OnLine® (HWOL) Data Series

Table 3: Top Industries by Share of New Job Postings from mid-March 2020 to Mid-September 2021

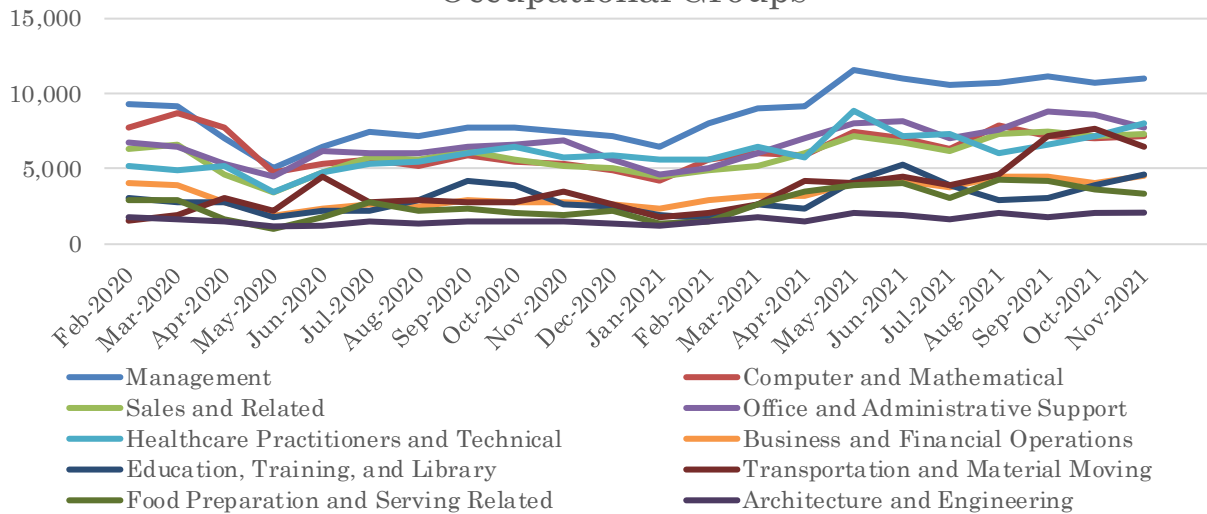
NAICS Code	Industry	Share (%)
622	Hospitals	7.9%
541	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	7.3%
611	Educational Services	6.9%
454	Non-store Retailers	4.3%
621	Ambulatory Health Care Services	3.7%
722	Food Services and Drinking Places	3.7%
524	Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	2.6%
561	Administrative and Support Services	2.4%
624	Social Assistance	2.1%
325	Chemical Manufacturing	2.0%

Source: The Conference Board®-Burning Glass® Help Wanted OnLine® (HWOL) Data Series



## Labor Demand by Occupation

Figure 12: Monthly New Job Postings - Top 10 Major Occupational Groups



Source: The Conference Board®-Burning Glass® Help Wanted OnLine® (HWOL) Data Series

Figure 12 above shows monthly new job posting in Massachusetts, broken down by the top ten major occupational groups. Nine out of the top 10 major occupational groups are seeing upward trend in job postings. Management Occupations and Office and Administrative Support Occupations are especially seeing strong job postings as companies are looking to re-staff after introducing major cuts during the pandemic. Since January 2021, there has been a rise in job postings in Transportation and Material Moving Occupations as supply chains look to expand services with increasing demand.

Registered Nurses remains the most in-demand occupation in the state. Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers is the second most in-demand job and has the highest market salary of this list at \$103,000 a year. A vast majority of these Software Developer jobs require a Bachelor's Degree and demand for this occupation is projected to grow by 3.4% annually until the second quarter of 2022. Table 4 below shows the top in-demand occupations by 6-digit SOC in Massachusetts from March 2020 to September 2021.

Some higher paid occupations which only require a High School Diploma are First-Line Supervisors of Retail Workers \$41,000, Home Health and Personal Care Aides \$41,000, Maintenance and Repair Workers \$39,000.

**Table 4: Top 20 In-Demand Occupations by 6-digit SOC in Massachusetts  
from March 2020 to September 2021**

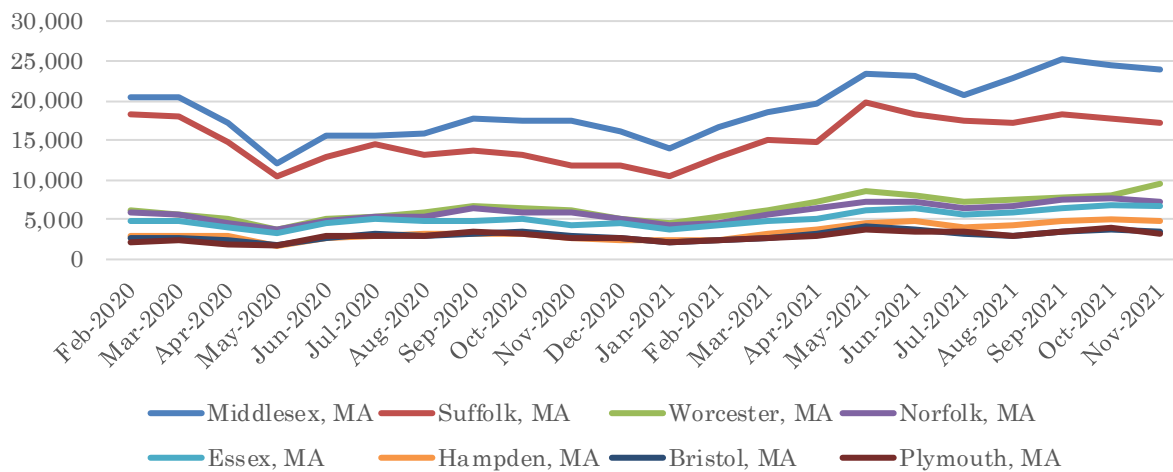
<b>OES SOC (2019)</b>	<b>Occupation Title</b>	<b>Number of Job Postings</b>	<b>Number Employed 2020 (BLS/OES)</b>	<b>Mean Market Salary</b>	<b>Top Required Education Levels identified in job postings</b>
29-1141	Registered Nurses	40,451	84,030	\$66,496	65% - Bachelor's Degree
15-1256	Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	30,369	59,010	\$103,740	95% - Bachelor's Degree
11-9198	Personal Service Managers, All Other; Entertainment and Recreation Managers, Except Gambling; and Managers, All Other	30,184	7,530	\$80,410	82% - Bachelor's Degree
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	30,153	38,100	\$27,562	99% - High School Diploma
15-1299	Computer Occupations, All Other	29,333	8,730	\$96,091	88% - Bachelor's Degree, 34% - Master's Degree
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	29,066	73,830	\$31,696	84% - High School Diploma
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	24,833	40,700	\$28,011	99% - High School Diploma
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	23,520	22,580	\$57,967	79% - Bachelor's Degree
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	22,589	64,190	\$33,081	78% - High School Diploma
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	22,099	109,350	\$41,451	96% - High School Diploma
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	21,305	22,650	\$41,276	70% - High school Diploma, 40% - Bachelor's Degree
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	19,723	16,310	\$78,620	66% require a Bachelor's Degree, 42% require a Master's Degree
11-2021	Marketing Managers	14,199	17,310	\$97,324	92% - Bachelor's Degree, 45% - Master's Degree

35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	13,743	73,400	\$24,397	99% - High School Diploma
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	13,573	84,170	\$87,946	20% - High School Diploma, 77% - Bachelor's Degree, 33% - Master's Degree
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	13,536	40,550	\$30,212	100% - High School Diploma
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	12,486	39,740	\$34,961	64% - High School Diploma, 40% - Bachelor's Degree
33-9032	Security Guards	10,929	19,220	\$31,926	95% - High School Diploma
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	10,422	24,620	\$39,361	95% - High School Diploma
11-2022	Sales Managers	10,410	17,100	\$87,709	89% - Bachelor's Degree, 30% - Master's Degree

Source: The Conference Board®-Burning Glass® Help Wanted OnLine® (HWOL) Data Series

### Labor Demand by Location

Figure 13: Monthly New Job Postings by County, February 2020 to November 2021



Source: Burning Glass

Figure 13 above shows monthly new job postings by county from February 2020 to November 2021. The highest number of job postings are found in two counties Middlesex County and Suffolk County. These two counties are also experiencing faster rates of recovery in labor demand than other counties. From March 2020 when the pandemic began to September 2021, both Middlesex and Suffolk Counties accounted for 52% of the total job postings. While this is

expected given the high number of jobs already present in those counties, a higher rate of labor demand recovery can also be seen in these counties.

### Labor Demand by Education/Certification

Most of the labor demand in the state is concentrated in jobs that require (at a minimum) either a high school or vocational training level of education, or a Bachelor's degree. Table 5 below shows the minimum educational level by share of new job postings from mid-March of 2020 to mid-September of 2021. Table 6 below shows the median market wages (according to Burning Glass) by education level from mid-March to mid-September 2021.

**Table 5: Minimum advertised educational level by Share of New Job Postings from mid-March 2020 to mid-September 2021**

Education level (minimum advertised)	Job Postings	Share (%)
High school or vocational training	285,342	25%
Associate's degree	45,687	4%
Bachelor's degree	316,643	28%
Master's degree	47,311	4%
Doctoral degree	19,405	2%
Unspecified	436,551	38%
Total	1,150,939	100%

**Table 6: Median Market Wages (according to Burning Glass) by education level from mid-March 2020 to mid-September 2021**

EDUCATION	25TH QUARTILE	MEDIAN	75TH QUARTILE
High school or vocational training	\$27,000	\$30,000	\$37,000
Associate's degree	\$37,000	\$51,000	\$68,000
Bachelor's degree	\$51,000	\$71,000	\$95,000
Master's degree	\$52,000	\$69,000	\$93,000

Despite the high number of job opportunities for those with a high school diploma, the market salary for these jobs remains well below the state median wage of \$53,550 (as of May 2020). Additionally, these lower paid jobs often carry higher levels of COVID-19 exposure risk. These disincentives make it harder for companies to hire these lower wage workers, especially if they lost their job and have the opportunity to find a better, safer, and higher paying job. The jobs which require a bachelor's degree pay a median annual wage of \$41,000, these jobs should be easier to fill unless they are in Healthcare where COVID-19 exposure risk is high.

**Table 7: Most In-Demand Certifications from March 2020 to mid-September 2021**

Certification	Job Postings	% of job postings that skill is found to be in demand
Driver's License	139,649	12%
Registered Nurse	33,624	3%
First Aid CPR Aide	31,329	3%
Home Health Aide	17,286	2%
Basic Life Saving (BLS)	13,088	1%

Security Clearance	12,756	1%
Certified Nursing Assistant	12,053	1%
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	11,270	1%
Basic Cardiac Life Support Certification	9,191	1%
Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW)	8,786	1%

Table 7 above shows the most in-demand certifications in Massachusetts from March 2020 to mid-September 2021. By far and not unsurprisingly, the most in-demand certification is a Driver's License, being found as a requirement in 12% of all job postings. The next certifications in high demand are mostly healthcare related. In fact, 8 out of the top 10 requested certifications are predominantly found in the HealthCare and Social Assistance (62) sector. These certifications require some level of training and possibly post-secondary schooling, followed by testing and any fees that might be required for licensing/certification.

*[ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SUBMITTED FOR WIOA STATE PLAN, MARCH 2020]*

Massachusetts has recovered from the worst recession—a steep downturn spanning 2007 to 2009—since the Great Depression of the 1930s. At the peak, the Massachusetts unemployment rate reached 8.8 percent. Since then, unemployment has fallen below 3 percent, following five years of consistent decline. Employment continues to expand and exhibit strong earnings gains.

Today, the fields of education and health services employ the most people in Massachusetts. Another top industry is manufacturing, especially computer and electronic products. Massachusetts' technology sector has flourished in recent years and is among the most concentrated in the nation. With a balance of historical destinations and picturesque beaches at Cape Cod, Nantucket, and Martha's Vineyard, the tourism industry also is a major economic powerhouse.

Due to record low unemployment and growing labor force participation, the Commonwealth's workforce continues to expand. Yet, within the tight labor market and robust economy are employment, education and income gaps for youth, communities of color and people with disabilities.

Massachusetts is also a high cost of living state. According to the Council for Community and Economic Research, Massachusetts ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> in the nation for affordability in 2018. In measuring the affordability of housing in 2018, Massachusetts ranked 41<sup>st</sup> in the nation. Further, the American Community Survey calculates the median household income in Massachusetts to be \$74,167, while the MIT Living Wage Calculator for 2019 suggests that an individual or a family must earn \$11.88 - \$41.86 per hour to sustain a living wage, depending on region, family size and composition. The state minimum wage increased to \$12.75 in 2020. Thus, Massachusetts faces the challenge of matching economic opportunity with economic prosperity for the Commonwealth's diverse individuals and families. (*See Attachment A for detailed information on affordability calculation methodology.*)

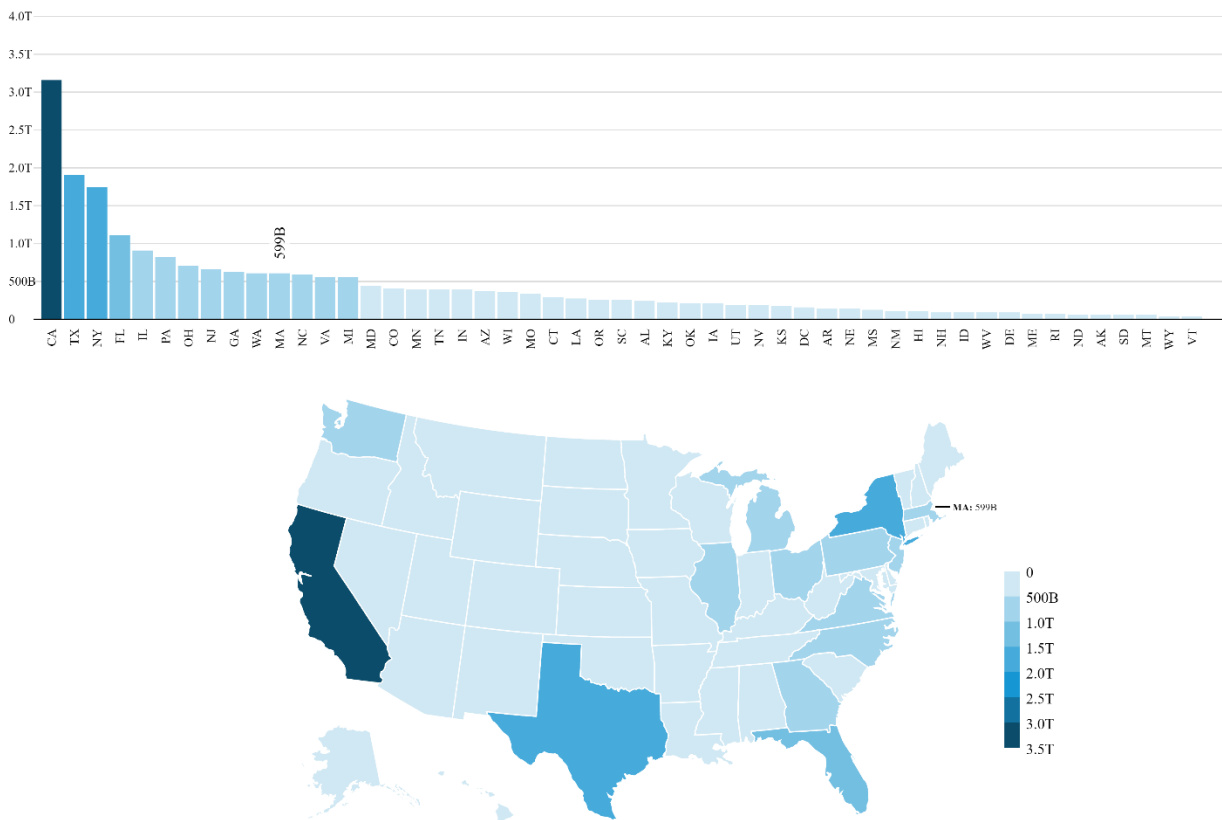
## Productivity, Industries, and Occupations

### Productivity

The growth of Massachusetts' gross domestic product, 3.2 percent on an annualized basis in the first quarter of 2019, was above that of the previous period.

At the end of 2018, Massachusetts' GDP was \$567.25 billion, up 4.9 percent over 2017. From 2014 through 2018, the Massachusetts economy, as measured by nominal GDP, grew by 19.8 percent. During this period, Massachusetts GDP had consecutive year-over-year growth, with the 6.2 percent (\$29.2 billion) annual gain from 2014 to 2015 as the high point. As of 2019, Massachusetts ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in total GDP, nationally (Figures 1).

### State GDP, Q3 2019 *(real dollars)*



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis via the State Economic Monitor

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In 2018, the Massachusetts GDP growth of 4.9 percent exceeded growth in both 2016 and 2017 which were 3.4 and 4.1 percent, respectively. Figure 2 illustrates that for the second year in a row, this growth was primarily driven by Professional, Scientific, and Business Services, which had the largest year-over-year growth rate of 8.6 percent, and Construction, which saw 8.1 percent growth. Figure 3 demonstrates that combined, these two sectors account for just over 20 percent of total GDP. Five of the nine sectors account for approximately eighty-three percent of private sector GDP, with each of the five sectors represented by a varying shade of blue. As a share of total private GDP, the Financial Activities sector maintains its position as the

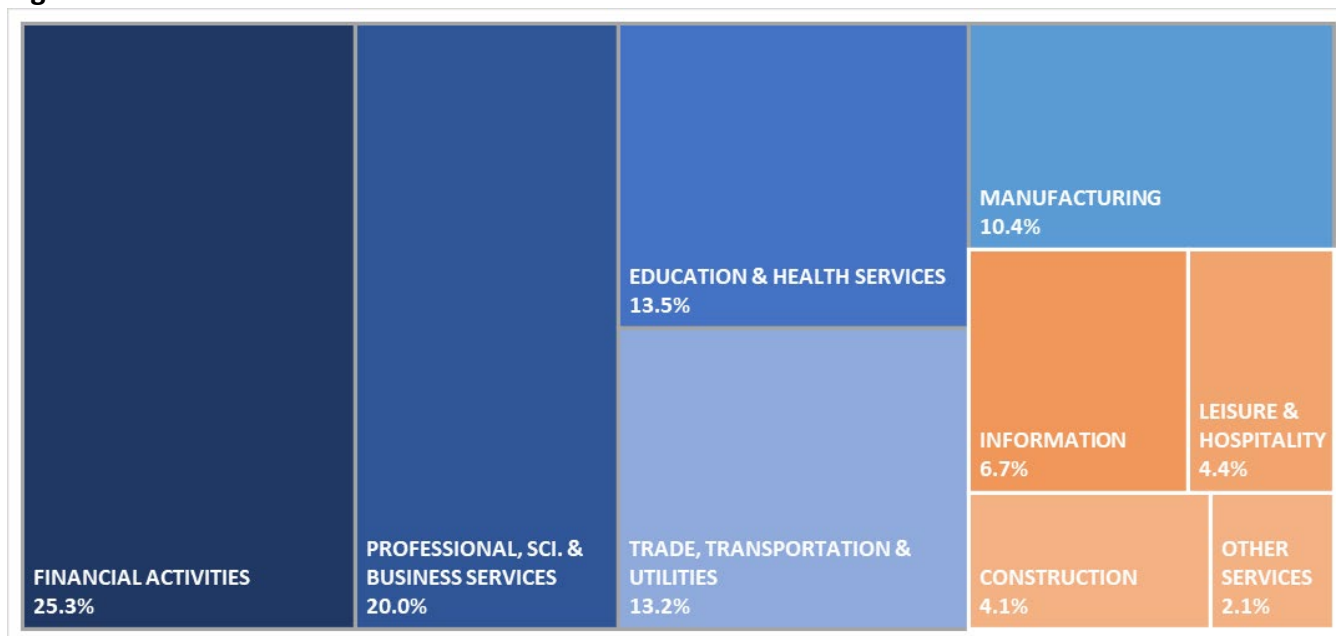
largest, accounting for 25.3 percent. This was followed by Professional, Scientific, and Business Services, which has been the second largest sector for several years. Education and Health Services and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities account for more than 13 percent each. Rounding out the top five is Manufacturing with 10.4% of GDP. See Attachment D for a profile of all major industries in Massachusetts.

**Figure 2: Massachusetts Gross Domestic Product: 2014-2018 (in Millions of Current Dollars)**

Industry	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total, All Industries	473,279.0	502,858.0	519,407.6	540,786.0	569,488.0
Private Industries	423,232.1	451,127.3	467,208.4	487,353.4	514,122.6
Financial Activities	108,782.6	116,103.7	121,618.1	125,994.3	133,471.1
Professional and Business Services	78,159.3	84,466.4	87,699.4	94,270.2	102,444.2
Education and Health Services	60,085.6	63,058.0	65,800.1	68,000.2	69,668.9
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	57,657.1	60,751.4	62,025.6	64,925.4	68,017.5
Manufacturing	48,745.0	51,328.1	50,653.7	51,339.8	52,613.6
Information	25,802.5	27,513.9	28,587.9	29,892.2	31,732.2
Leisure and Hospitality	18,508.5	20,238.6	21,519.2	22,136.4	23,388.3
Construction	15,493.4	17,193.3	18,443.1	19,715.3	21,065.4
Other Services	9,075.2	9,463.9	9,810.2	10,047.6	10,692.6

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics, December 2019

**Figure 3: 2018 Sector Share of Total Private GDP**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics, December 2019

### Employment

Employment in Massachusetts has reached new all-time highs, totaling 4,872,851 total jobs and 4,397,975 total nonfarm jobs in 2018, adding 425,225 jobs in the Commonwealth since 2014.

The two largest sectors, Financial Activities and Education and Health Services, account for more than 46 percent of all jobs and nearly 50 percent of annual job growth from 2014 to 2018. Figure 4 demonstrates this trend.

**Figure 4: Massachusetts Annual Employment: 2014-2018**

Industry	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total, All Industries	4,447,626	4,631,324	4,709,778	4,788,192	4,872,851
Private Nonfarm Employment	3,974,652	4,159,267	4,234,980	4,314,588	4,397,975
Financial Activities	1,177,189	1,237,976	1,264,836	1,281,094	1,314,634
Education and Health Services	879,426	917,999	933,999	945,288	950,386
Professional and Business Services	726,147	768,564	781,525	792,296	816,785
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	670,914	707,941	719,643	759,669	778,436
Leisure and Hospitality	420,486	435,310	447,796	458,020	468,403
Manufacturing	263,383	263,615	260,850	259,648	260,513
Construction	220,623	236,422	248,872	250,222	259,699
Other Services	229,319	243,189	240,311	240,066	244,565
Information	100,020	103,057	104,597	107,129	107,889

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS,  
Current Employment Statistics, December 2019

#### *Existing-Demand Industry Sectors*

Figure 5 illustrates total employment by industry from 2014 to 2019, noting expansion or contraction. As of October 2019, the industries with the highest demand were service-providing industries. Education and health services generated the most demand (825,400 jobs), followed by professional, scientific and business services (596,500 jobs) and trade, transportation and utilities (579,900 jobs). Educational services (+6.8 percent) and arts, entertainment, and recreation (+6.1 percent) were the fastest growing industry sectors over the year.

As of November 2019, the national annual growth rates (seasonally adjusted) in mining and logging (-0.7 percent), information (+0.2 percent), financial activities (+1.3 percent) and other services (+1.5 percent) were less than the expansion rates for Massachusetts.

In November 2019, Massachusetts (+1.3 percent) had the second strongest over-the-year growth rate in total nonagricultural employment among the states in New England, behind Rhode Island (+2.2 percent).



**Figure 5: Nonagricultural Employment in Massachusetts, Seasonally Adjusted**

Industry	Employment			Over the Year Change		Five-Year Change	
	Oct-19	Oct-18	Oct-14	Numeric	Percent	Numeric	Percent
Total Nonagricultural Employment	3,694,600	3,642,900	3,455,800	51,700	1.42	238,800	6.91
Total Private	3,235,300	3,185,800	3,003,700	49,500	1.55	231,600	7.71
Goods Producing	401,300	402,000	380,700	-700	-0.17	20,600	5.41
Construction	156,700	157,100	131,600	-400	-0.25	25,100	19.07
Manufacturing	243,500	243,800	248,100	-300	-0.12	-4,600	-1.85
Service Providing	3,293,300	3,240,900	3,075,100	52,400	1.62	218,200	7.10
Private Service Providing	2,834,000	2,783,800	2,623,000	50,200	1.80	211,000	8.04
Trade, Transportation	579,900	575,900	564,900	4,000	0.69	15,000	2.66
Wholesale Trade	124,600	122,700	122,600	1,900	1.55	2,000	1.63
Retail Trade	348,400	352,000	351,600	-3,600	-1.02	-3,200	-0.91
Transportation, Warehousing	106,900	101,200	90,700	5,700	5.63	16,200	17.86
Information	94,100	92,200	87,400	1,900	2.06	6,700	7.67
Financial Activities	223,200	220,600	215,400	2,600	1.18	7,800	3.62
Finance and Insurance	175,500	174,100	172,300	1,400	0.80	3,200	1.86
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	47,700	46,500	43,100	1,200	2.58	4,600	10.67
Professional, Scientific	596,500	584,600	531,100	11,900	2.04	65,400	12.31
Professional and Technical Services	338,500	328,600	287,400	9,900	3.01	51,100	17.78
Management of Companies, Enterprises	77,300	74,200	69,900	3,100	4.18	7,400	10.59
Administrative and Waste Services	180,700	181,800	173,800	-1,100	-0.61	6,900	3.97
Education and Health Services	825,400	801,200	742,400	24,200	3.02	83,000	11.18
Educational Services	185,000	173,200	161,600	11,800	6.81	23,400	14.48
Health Care and Social Assistance	640,400	628,000	580,800	12,400	1.97	59,600	10.26
Leisure and Hospitality	373,200	371,100	347,400	2,100	0.57	25,800	7.43
Arts, Entertainment	67,800	63,900	54,800	3,900	6.10	13,000	23.72
Accommodation and Food Services	305,400	307,200	292,600	-1,800	-0.59	12,800	4.37

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS,  
Current Employment Statistics, December 2019

### *Occupational Groups*

Figure 6 displays the distribution of occupations statewide. The largest occupational group in Massachusetts is office and administrative support occupations, with 496,690 jobs (13.9 percent of total jobs), followed by sales and related (317,270 jobs, 8.9 percent), and food preparation and serving (307,710 jobs, 8.6 percent).

**Figure 6: Distribution of Massachusetts Employment by Major Occupational Group**

Code	Occupational Group	Employment	Percent
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	496,690	13.9%
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	317,270	8.9%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	307,710	8.6%
11-0000	Management Occupations	294,490	8.2%
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	244,590	6.8%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	242,690	6.8%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	205,570	5.8%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	190,150	5.3%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	161,500	4.5%
51-0000	Production Occupations	152,320	4.3%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	141,450	4.0%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	128,570	3.6%
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	106,220	3.0%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	105,470	3.0%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	103,230	2.9%
21-0000	Community and Social Service Occupations	84,380	2.4%
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	77,220	2.2%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	74,860	2.1%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	53,530	1.5%
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	51,750	1.4%
23-0000	Legal Occupations	29,810	0.8%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	1,890	0.1%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS,  
Occupational Employment Statistics, December 2019

The following tables (Figures 7 and 8) show the absolute and percent distribution of employment by occupational group for the seven major regions in Massachusetts, as defined by the Commonwealth's Regional Planning Initiative (see the *Regional Workforce Skills Planning* section of this Economic Analysis). Regional variation results from the diversity of economic focus and industry mix across Massachusetts' geographic areas. For example, the Cape and Islands region has a higher share of employment in food preparation and serving occupations than the state due to the importance of tourism to the local economy.

**Figure 7: Region Employment by Major Occupational Group**

Code	Occupation Group	Berkshire	Greater Boston	Southeast	Cape & Islands	Central	Pioneer Valley	Northeast
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	7,990	227,230	87,270	15,610	52,450	42,070	62,360
41-0000	Sales and Related	5,270	134,790	63,770	13,380	31,120	25,110	43,010
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	6,400	133,870	54,400	14,950	29,790	26,380	41,810
11-0000	Management	3,930	171,430	34,830	6,750	22,610	19,400	34,090
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library	4,850	107,220	37,590	6,650	27,330	27,050	33,780
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	4,150	113,840	39,300	7,640	26,430	20,910	29,900
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	2,090	130,210	24,500	2,760	14,370	11,130	19,350
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	2,310	79,130	35,450	5,260	22,060	19,800	24,010
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	3,450	58,170	28,330	4,460	18,580	24,360	23,990
51-0000	Production	2,780	47,950	30,720	2,060	23,060	18,600	26,550
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	920	101,090	9,030	860	7,770	5,250	15,630
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	3,040	46,990	28,220	6,330	13,130	10,200	19,610
31-0000	Healthcare Support	2,260	38,720	20,180	3,570	12,010	11,930	17,440
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	2,410	51,580	14,480	6,900	9,010	8,290	12,530
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	2,300	40,660	18,980	4,010	11,840	11,020	13,800
21-0000	Community and Social Service	1,670	35,010	13,510	1,560	10,520	12,340	9,750
33-0000	Protective Service	980	37,590	12,640	2,600	8,310	6,250	8,670
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	910	42,190	7,630	1,130	6,350	2,910	13,490
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	320	38,810	3,130	1,250	3,540	2,080	4,310
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	800	31,610	5,260	1,130	4,020	3,570	4,740
23-0000	Legal	260	21,920	2,000	470	1,240	1,610	2,200
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	90	460	170	0	110	200	270

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics, December 2019

**Figure 8: Distribution of Region Employment by Major Occupational Group**

Code	Occupation Group	Berkshire	Greater Boston	Southeast	Cape & Islands	Central	Pioneer Valley	Northeast
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	13.5%	13.4%	15.3%	14.3%	14.7%	13.6%	13.5%
41-0000	Sales and Related	8.9%	8.0%	11.2%	12.2%	8.8%	8.1%	9.3%
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	10.8%	7.9%	9.5%	13.7%	8.4%	8.5%	9.1%
11-0000	Management	6.6%	10.1%	6.1%	6.2%	6.4%	6.2%	7.4%
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library	8.2%	6.3%	6.6%	6.1%	7.7%	8.7%	7.3%
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	7.0%	6.7%	6.9%	7.0%	7.4%	6.7%	6.5%
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	3.5%	7.7%	4.3%	2.5%	4.0%	3.6%	4.2%
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	3.9%	4.7%	6.2%	4.8%	6.2%	6.4%	5.2%
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	5.8%	3.4%	5.0%	4.1%	5.2%	7.8%	5.2%
51-0000	Production	4.7%	2.8%	5.4%	1.9%	6.5%	6.0%	5.8%
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	1.6%	6.0%	1.6%	0.8%	2.2%	1.7%	3.4%
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	5.1%	2.8%	4.9%	5.8%	3.7%	3.3%	4.3%
31-0000	Healthcare Support	3.8%	2.3%	3.5%	3.3%	3.4%	3.8%	3.8%
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	4.1%	3.1%	2.5%	6.3%	2.5%	2.7%	2.7%
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	3.9%	2.4%	3.3%	3.7%	3.3%	3.5%	3.0%
21-0000	Community and Social Service	2.8%	2.1%	2.4%	1.4%	3.0%	4.0%	2.1%
33-0000	Protective Service	1.7%	2.2%	2.2%	2.4%	2.3%	2.0%	1.9%
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	1.5%	2.5%	1.3%	1.0%	1.8%	0.9%	2.9%
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	0.5%	2.3%	0.5%	1.1%	1.0%	0.7%	0.9%
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	1.4%	1.9%	0.9%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.0%
23-0000	Legal	0.4%	1.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.5%	0.5%
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Occupational Employment Statistics, December 2019.

### *Existing-Demand Occupations*

Existing-demand occupations are occupations that have the highest number of projected total job openings. Total job openings reflect: (1) job openings resulting from employment growth; (2) job openings resulting from workers permanently exiting an occupation; and (3) job openings resulting from workers transferring to other occupations. In most occupations, replacement needs provide many more job openings than employment growth does. Existing demand occupations tend to be occupations that serve the most basic societal needs. The most common existing demand occupations in the U.S. labor market are low-skill, hourly wage occupations with high turnover. Many of the top existing demand occupations in Massachusetts reflect this national pattern, including retail salespersons, personal care aides, food preparation and servers, and cashiers. However, other occupations with significant existing demand, such as general and operations managers and registered nurses, are relatively highly skilled and are associated with strong wages and established career ladders.

Out of the five top existing demand occupations in Massachusetts, four are related to customer service and hospitality. Retail salespersons is the top existing demand occupation, with 19,100 projected annual job openings between 2016 and 2026. Personal care aides follow, with 14,236 projected annual job openings. Three other occupations in the top 20 are linked to healthcare and social assistance: registered nurses, nursing assistants and home health aides. These occupations, like the healthcare and social assistance sectors as a whole, continue to expand rapidly in Massachusetts.

The following table displays the top 20 existing demand occupations (based on 2016-2026 projected annual job openings) for Massachusetts statewide (Figure 9).

An educational attainment measure is also presented to show the level of education achieved by workers who are employed in the occupations. Each occupation is assigned to one of three education categories-BA+ (four-year degree or higher), Sub-BA (some college or credential), or HS or Below (high school education or less), based on the typical education level most workers need to enter an occupation, as identified by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). (Detailed definitions for the categories are available as Attachment B.)

**Figure 9: Top 20 Existing Demand Occupations**

Code	Occupation	Employment		Change		Annual Openings	2018 Mean Wage	Typical Education
		2016	2026	Level	Percent			
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	129,913	133,216	3,303	2.5%	19,100	\$30,290	HS or Below
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	76,801	97,330	20,529	26.7%	14,236	\$29,080	HS or Below
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, including Fast Food	62,509	73,668	11,159	17.9%	13,451	\$26,840	HS or Below
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	64,032	69,024	4,992	7.8%	12,968	\$31,920	HS or Below
41-2011	Cashiers	67,690	66,624	-1,066	-1.6%	12,352	\$26,310	HS or Below
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping	55,371	60,721	5,350	9.7%	7,966	\$35,560	HS or Below
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	60,906	61,926	1,020	1.7%	7,849	\$43,620	HS or Below
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	80,012	86,359	6,347	7.9%	7,321	\$135,820	BA+
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	60,283	58,743	-1,540	-2.6%	6,741	\$40,190	HS or Below
29-1141	Registered Nurses	82,951	93,586	10,635	12.8%	5,510	\$92,140	BA+
43-5081	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	41,197	43,145	1,948	4.7%	5,501	\$31,560	HS or Below
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	36,326	38,063	1,737	4.8%	5,197	\$34,020	HS or Below
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	46,343	48,275	1,932	4.2%	5,122	\$47,710	HS or Below
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	39,254	43,196	3,942	10.0%	4,982	\$33,630	HS or Below
35-3022	Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession	21,777	22,870	1,093	5.0%	4,899	\$26,780	HS or Below
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	46,074	44,879	-1,195	-2.6%	4,881	\$47,020	HS or Below
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	28,322	31,804	3,482	12.3%	4,514	\$32,430	HS or Below
31-1011	Home Health Aides	26,041	35,851	9,810	37.7%	4,425	\$30,830	HS or Below
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal and Medical	43,356	40,215	-3,141	-7.2%	4,127	\$46,940	HS or Below
25-9041	Teacher Assistants	34,764	38,300	3,536	10.2%	4,026	\$35,680	HS or Below

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019.

Another useful indicator of existing occupational demand is job-posting volume. During the last year, four major occupational groups accounted for nearly half of all job postings: management occupations (143,996 job postings), computer and mathematical occupations (125,597 job postings), office and administrative support occupations (105,808 job postings) and healthcare practitioners and technical (102,857 job postings). The occupation with the largest share of online job postings was application software developers (39,343 job postings), followed by registered nurses (35,583 job postings). Figure 10 shows the top 20 employer demand occupations in Massachusetts, based on 12-month online job postings.

**Figure 10: Massachusetts' Top 20 Highest Demand Occupations by Job Postings**



Source: Burning Glass Labor Insight Job Postings, December 2018 - November 2019.

### *Projected Changes in Job Demand*

The top occupations in the state's labor market, as measured by projected growth in demand, can be represented in different ways. Below are two tables (Figures 11 and 12), the first showing percent change over the timeframe of the latest occupational projections (2016-2026) and the second showing the level of change.

Five of the top 20 occupations ranked by percent change are in the healthcare or personal care major occupational groups. The fastest growing occupation is home health aides (26,041 jobs in 2016, +37.7 percent growth), followed by personal care aides (76,801 jobs in 2016, +26.7 percent growth). Application software developers (29,064 jobs in 2016, +26.0 percent growth) is the fastest-growing occupation in the computer and mathematical occupation group and the third fastest-growing occupation overall. The largest occupation in the top 20 is registered nurses, with 82,951 jobs in 2016.

The occupations gaining the most new jobs represent a mix of healthcare and business and professional occupations, and occupations found in tourism-related industries. The occupation adding the most new jobs is personal care aides (20,529 new jobs). Other healthcare-related occupations in the top 20 include registered nurses (10,635 new jobs), home health aides (9,810 new jobs) and nursing assistants (3,942). Tourism-related occupations include combined food workers (11,159 new jobs), waiters and waitresses (4,992 new jobs) and restaurant cooks (3,482 new jobs).

**Figure 11: Top 20 Fastest Growing Occupations in Massachusetts**

Code	Occupation	Employment		Change		Annual Openings	2018 Mean Wage	Typical Education
		2016	2026	Level	Percent			
31-1011	Home Health Aides	26,041	35,851	9,810	37.7%	4,425	\$30,830	HS or Below
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	76,801	97,330	20,529	26.7%	14,236	\$29,080	HS or Below
15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	29,064	36,629	7,565	26.0%	2,818	\$109,130	BA+
39-2021	Nonfarm Animal Caretakers	6,477	8,071	1,594	24.6%	1,242	\$30,930	HS or Below
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	21,764	26,142	4,378	20.1%	2,718	\$74,510	BA+
25-3021	Self-Enrichment Education Teachers	11,417	13,678	2,261	19.8%	1,578	\$56,330	HS or Below
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers	62,509	73,668	11,159	17.9%	13,451	\$26,840	HS or Below
11-3031	Financial Managers	27,121	31,798	4,677	17.2%	2,603	\$148,300	BA+
31-9092	Medical Assistants	12,991	15,221	2,230	17.2%	1,708	\$40,270	HS or Below
53-3022	Bus Drivers, School or Special Client	13,210	15,392	2,182	16.5%	1,924	\$40,130	HS or Below
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	13,625	15,805	2,180	16.0%	1,736	\$70,320	HS or Below
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	14,041	16,250	2,209	15.7%	1,371	\$133,900	BA+
13-1111	Management Analysts	27,927	32,208	4,281	15.3%	2,948	\$110,150	BA+
27-2022	Coaches and Scouts	8,304	9,544	1,240	14.9%	1,295	\$50,200	BA+
51-9198	Helpers--Production Workers	7,029	7,984	955	13.6%	1,213	\$31,800	HS or Below
25-3098	Substitute Teachers	8,271	9,390	1,119	13.5%	1,063	\$38,310	HS or Below
19-1042	Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	11,444	12,971	1,527	13.3%	1,155	\$92,980	BA+
25-3097	Teachers and Instructors, All Other, Except Substitute	8,787	9,936	1,149	13.1%	1,124	\$54,700	HS or Below
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	24,623	27,813	3,190	13.0%	3,105	\$43,450	HS or Below
29-1141	Registered Nurses	82,951	93,586	10,635	12.8%	5,510	\$92,140	BA+

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

**Figure 12: Top 20 Occupations Adding the Most Jobs in Massachusetts**

Code	Occupation	Employment		Change		Annual Openings	2018 Mean Wage	Typical Education
		2016	2026	Level	Percent			
39-9021	Personal Care Aides	76,801	97,330	20,529	26.7%	14,236	\$29,080	HS or Below
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers	62,509	73,668	11,159	17.9%	13,451	\$26,840	HS or Below
29-1141	Registered Nurses	82,951	93,586	10,635	12.8%	5,510	\$92,140	BA+
31-1011	Home Health Aides	26,041	35,851	9,810	37.7%	4,425	\$30,830	HS or Below
15-1132	Software Developers, Applications	29,064	36,629	7,565	26.0%	2,818	\$109,130	BA+
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	80,012	86,359	6,347	7.9%	7,321	\$135,820	BA+
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping	55,371	60,721	5,350	9.7%	7,966	\$35,560	HS or Below
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	64,032	69,024	4,992	7.8%	12,968	\$31,920	HS or Below
11-3031	Financial Managers	27,121	31,798	4,677	17.2%	2,603	\$148,300	BA+
13-1161	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	21,764	26,142	4,378	20.1%	2,718	\$74,510	BA+
13-1111	Management Analysts	27,927	32,208	4,281	15.3%	2,948	\$110,150	BA+
31-1014	Nursing Assistants	39,254	43,196	3,942	10.0%	4,982	\$33,630	HS or Below
25-9041	Teacher Assistants	34,764	38,300	3,536	10.2%	4,026	\$35,680	HS or Below
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	28,322	31,804	3,482	12.3%	4,514	\$32,430	HS or Below
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	129,913	133,216	3,303	2.5%	19,100	\$30,290	HS or Below
43-6013	Medical Secretaries	24,623	27,813	3,190	13.0%	3,105	\$43,450	HS or Below
13-2011	Accountants and Auditors	37,166	40,334	3,168	8.5%	3,691	\$81,460	BA+
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	27,326	30,348	3,022	11.1%	2,322	\$82,600	BA+
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career	25,058	27,871	2,813	11.2%	2,079	\$80,020	BA+
37-3011	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	27,066	29,773	2,707	10.0%	3,628	\$38,090	HS or Below

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

While employment is expected to grow over the next years, it is noted that many of these occupations pay a median wage that is below living wage affordability and median wage in Massachusetts.

### *Skill Demand*

The needs of employers with respect to knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) are provided for each occupation in the labor market by the O\*Net system (see <https://www.onetonline.org/>). (See Attachment C for further explanation of the knowledge, skills, and abilities taxonomy found in the O\*Net system.)

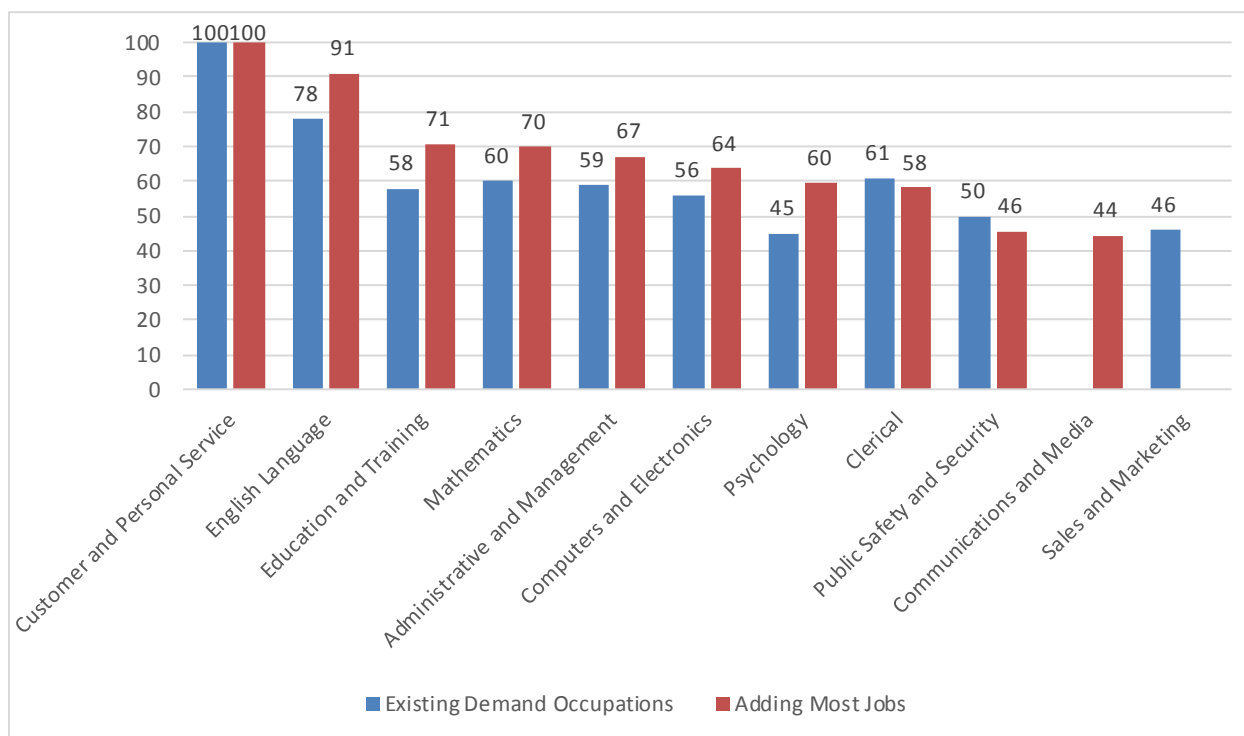
To assess the knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with the top existing and emerging-demand occupations, O\*Net level, and importance scores for the various KSAs were determined for each occupation of interest. The level and importance score were then added together and standardized to a 100-point scale. The following graphs show the knowledge, skills, and abilities that were scored highest for (1) the top 20 existing-demand occupations and (2) the top 20 occupations adding the most jobs.



### Highest-Scored Knowledge Elements

Figure 13 demonstrates that the highest-scored knowledge elements for the top Existing Demand Occupations and Occupations Adding the Most Jobs are Customer and Personal Service and English Language (listed in ranked order of the top Existing Demand Occupations.) Both occupational lists had eight knowledge areas in common: Customer and Personal Service, English Language, Education and Training, Mathematics, Administration and Management, Computers and Electronics, Psychology, Clerical, Public Safety and Security. Only two knowledge areas differed: the top Existing-Demand Occupations scored Sales in Marketing in their top ten, while Occupations Adding the Most Jobs ranked Communications and Media in the top ten list.

**Figure 13: Highest-Scored Knowledge Elements for Top Existing-Demand Occupations and Occupations Adding the Most Jobs**

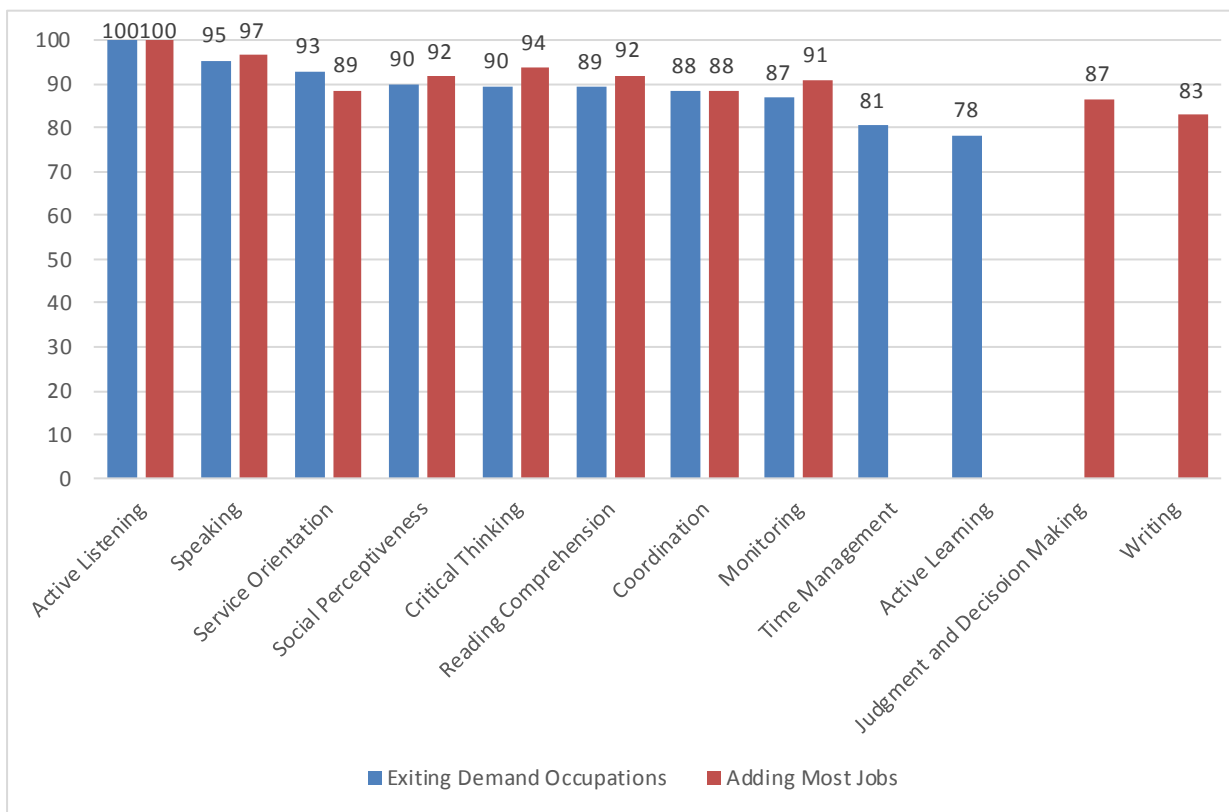


Source: O\*Net and Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

### Highest-Scored Skill Elements

Figure 14 displays the skill elements that were identified as most important for Existing Occupations and Occupations Adding the Most Jobs. Both occupational demand lists scored seven skill elements in their top ten skill: Skills in Active Listening were ranked as the most important for in both lists with a score of 100, the rest of the common top skill elements include Speaking, Service Orientation, Social Perceptiveness, Critical Thinking, Reading Comprehension, Coordination, and Monitoring. Existing-Demand Occupations ranked Time Management and Active Learning in the top ten, whereas Occupations Adding the Most Jobs listed Judgement and Decision Making and Writing in their top ten.

**Figure 14: Highest-Scored Skill Elements for Top Existing-Demand Occupations and Occupations Adding the Most Jobs**

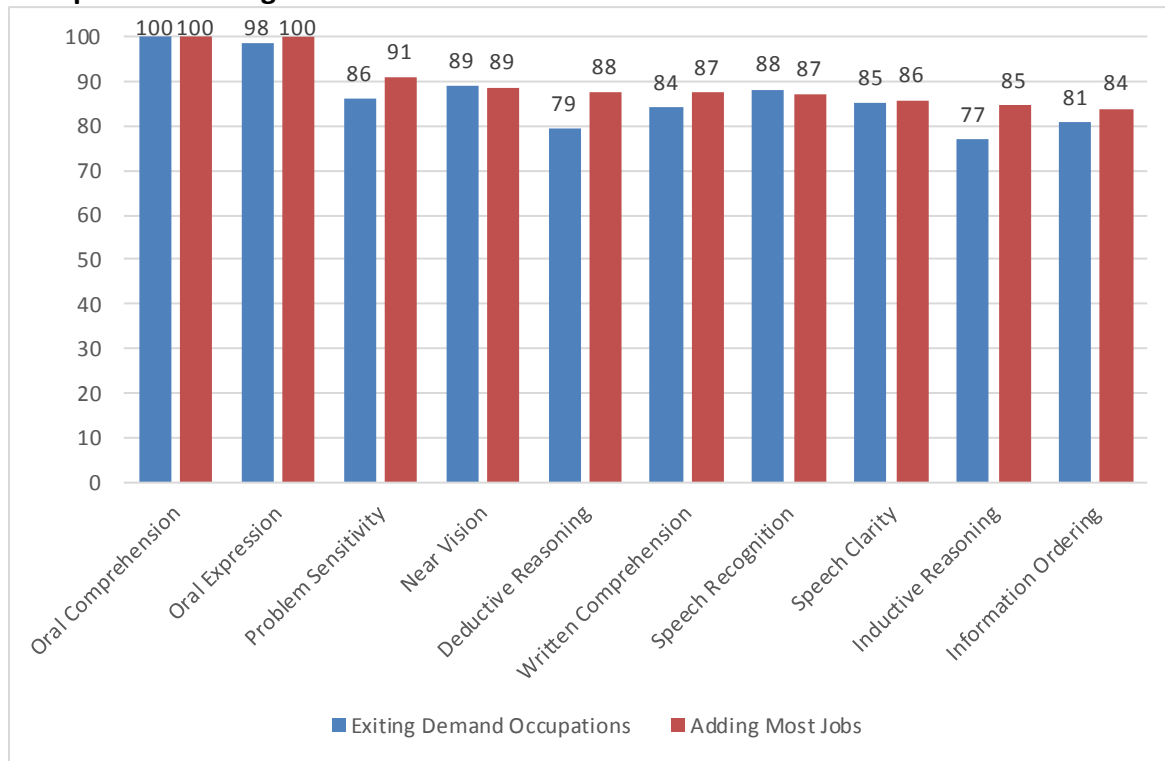


Source: O\*Net and Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

#### *Highest-Scored Ability Elements*

Figure 15 displays the ability elements that were identified as most important for Existing Occupations and Occupations Adding the Most Jobs. Both occupational demand lists scored the same top ten skill elements, with some variation on the demand number and rank among top ten. For both lists, the top two ability elements were Oral Comprehension and Oral Expression. The rest of the common ability elements include Near Vision Speech Recognition, Problem Sensitivity, Speech Clarity, Written Comprehension, Information Ordering, Deductive Reasoning, and Inductive Reasoning.

**Figure 15: Highest-Scored Skill Elements for Top Existing-Demand Occupations and Occupations Adding the Most Jobs**



Source: O\*Net and Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

Together, these graphs demonstrate the need to ensure the Commonwealth's workforce possess both the technical and employability skills to fulfill current and future job demand.

### ***Emerging-Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations***

#### ***Emerging industries***

The list of emerging industries is made up of the (3-digit NAICS) industries which had less than the average employment level in 2016 and are characterized by rapid projected growth. Notably, two of the three top emerging industries are part of the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting sector. In total, 8 out of the top 15 emerging industries are goods-producing industries (Figure 16).

**Figure 16: Top Emerging Industries**

Code	Industry	Employment		Change	
		2016	2026	Numeric	Percent
11-2000	Animal Production	1,930	2,268	338	17.5%
56-2000	Waste Management and Remediation Service	11,529	13,250	1,721	14.9%
11-1000	Crop Production	4,005	4,515	510	12.7%
51-8000	Data Processing, Hosting and Related Services	8,738	9,789	1,051	12.0%
31-2000	Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing	3,974	4,446	472	11.9%
23-6000	Construction of Buildings	31,284	34,906	3,622	11.6%
48-7000	Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation	1,501	1,663	162	10.8%
49-3000	Warehousing and Storage	11,199	12,330	1,131	10.1%
71-1000	Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries	12,384	13,604	1,220	9.9%
23-7000	Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	14,785	16,233	1,448	9.8%
45-4000	Nonstore Retailers	15,017	16,385	1,368	9.1%
48-5000	Transit and Ground Passenger Transportation	23,520	25,451	1,931	8.2%
31-1000	Food Manufacturing	24,519	26,366	1,847	7.5%
51-9000	Other Information Services	9,760	10,485	725	7.4%
71-2000	Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institution	5,918	6,326	408	6.9%

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

### *Emerging Occupations*

Emerging occupations include both new occupations and existing occupations that are evolving in response to shifting market conditions, the development of new technologies, or other similar factors. In Massachusetts, the fastest growing emerging occupations are statisticians, solar photovoltaic installers, health specialties teachers, physician assistants and nursing instructors and teachers.

As depicted in Figure 17, among the top 20 emerging occupations, the most strongly represented industry sectors are healthcare (linked to 8 of the top 20 occupations), education services (five of the top 20 occupations) and professional services (four of the top 20 occupations). The number of rapidly emerging healthcare occupations reflects the increasing demand for medical services due to population aging, expanding medical insurance coverage and technological innovation. Rankings are determined by 2016-2026 projected growth rates for occupations with less than the average employment level.

**Figure 17: Top 20 Emerging-Demand Occupations**

Code	Occupation	Employment		Change		Annual Openings	2018 Mean Wage	Typical Education
		2016	2026	Level	Percent			
15-2041	Statisticians	3,092	4,213	1,121	36.3%	378	\$108,670	BA+
47-2231	Solar Photovoltaic Installers	295	389	94	31.9%	45	\$53,310	HS or Below
25-1071	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	3,753	4,872	1,119	29.8%	434	\$111,230	BA+
29-1071	Physician Assistants	3,031	3,862	831	27.4%	265	\$108,700	BA+
25-1072	Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary	1,586	2,018	432	27.2%	178	\$87,970	BA+
15-1122	Information Security Analysts	3,325	4,172	847	25.5%	334	\$108,400	BA+
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	4,034	5,006	972	24.1%	360	\$88,190	BA+
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	2,427	3,013	586	24.1%	185	\$73,660	Sub-BA
15-1111	Computer and Information Research Scientists	1,010	1,236	226	22.4%	97	\$116,920	BA+
29-9091	Athletic Trainers	654	800	146	22.3%	51	\$56,850	BA+
25-1011	Business Teachers, Postsecondary	3,862	4,719	857	22.2%	407	\$126,040	BA+
29-9092	Genetic Counselors	185	226	41	22.2%	15	\$83,540	BA+
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	2,719	3,313	594	21.8%	413	\$64,180	Sub-BA
39-2011	Animal Trainers	854	1,040	186	21.8%	124	\$38,280	HS or Below
25-1042	Biological Science Teachers, Postsecondary	2,298	2,736	438	19.1%	232	\$112,390	BA+
25-1066	Psychology Teachers, Postsecondary	1,446	1,721	275	19.0%	146	\$97,690	BA+
31-2022	Physical Therapist Aides	1,029	1,222	193	18.8%	151	\$33,740	HS or Below
47-3015	Helpers--Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters	400	475	75	18.8%	68	\$35,510	HS or Below
29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	3,133	3,716	583	18.6%	321	\$40,990	Sub-BA
31-9011	Massage Therapists	3,650	4,328	678	18.6%	472	\$53,750	HS or Below

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

## Population, Employment, and Unemployment

### Population

Population trends can have significant implications for both state government finances and economic growth. In general, states with fast-growing populations have strong labor force growth, which fuels economic activity and helps generate tax revenue to fund spending on infrastructure, education, and other government services. State populations grow or shrink depending on the net effect of births, deaths, and migration to and from other states and abroad, including documented and undocumented people.

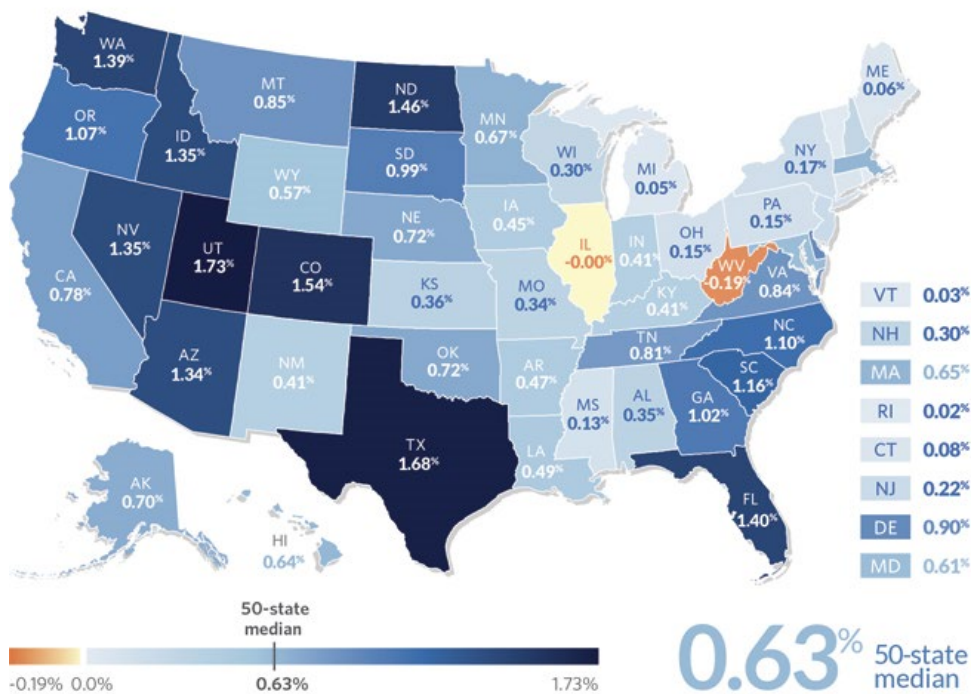
Following the long-term trend, the United States in 2018 grew at its weakest pace in more than 80 years, with nine states losing residents. Over the past decade, the median rate of growth among states was 0.63 percent a year.

The fastest-growing states in the 10 years ending July 2018 were predominantly in the West and South. The Northeast and Midwest were home to all but two of the 15 states with the slowest population growth. For at least half a century, people have gravitated away from these regions and toward Sun Belt states, motivated by employment opportunities, lower costs of living and warmer climates. Despite this trend, Massachusetts' population grew by the equivalent of 0.65 percent between 2008 and 2018, with growth occurring gradually each year.

**Figure 18: State Population Growth Rate, 2008-2018**

### State Population Growth Varied Widely Over Past Decade

Population growth rate, 2008-18

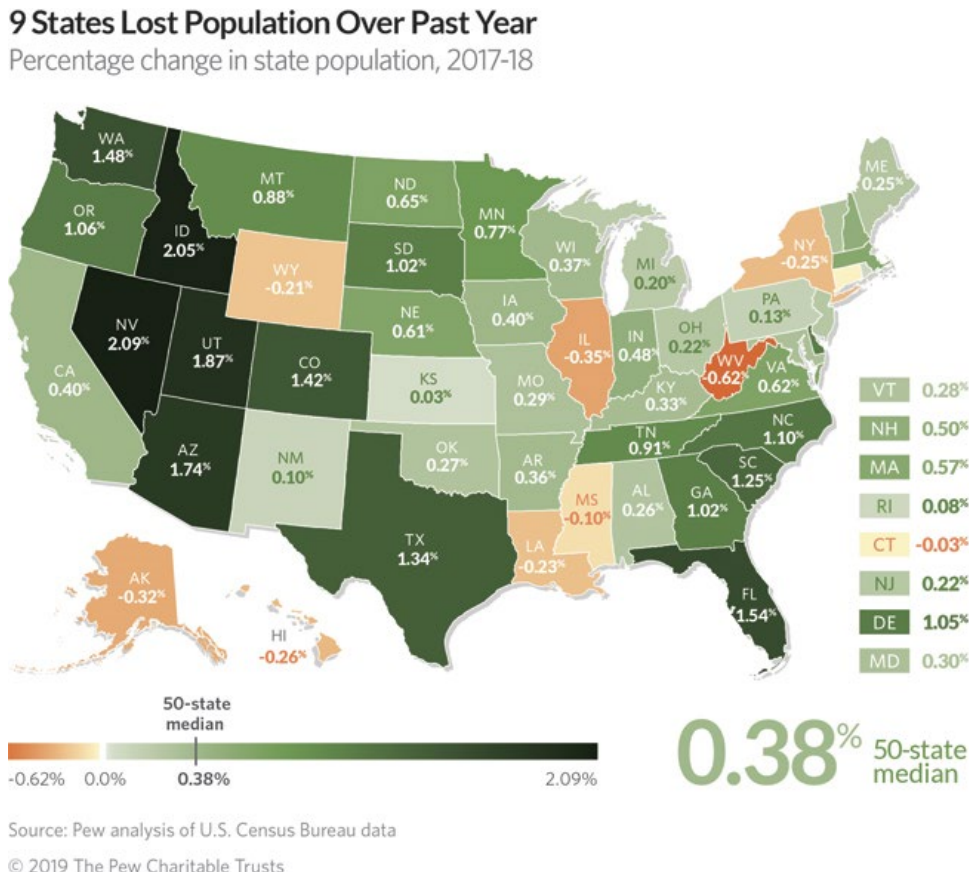


Source: Pew analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data

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Between July 2017 and July 2018, the median growth rate among the 50 states was just 0.38 percent (Figure 18). Nationally, the rate of population changes each year has been trending downward, with annual growth in 2018 the slowest since 1937, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Populations in 27 states, including Massachusetts, grew more slowly over the period from 2017 to 2018 than over the preceding decade. Massachusetts (+0.57 percent) nevertheless remains an exception in the slow-growing Northeast (Figure 19).

**Figure 19: Percent Population Change in State Population, 2017-2018**



Future demographic changes increasingly are on state policymakers' radar, as the U.S. Census Bureau forecasts that population growth overall and in many states will remain tepid. In general, growth is expected to slow because of declines in fertility rates alongside higher death rates, the aging of the Baby Boomer generation and falling rates of international migration.

### *Growth of Young Population*

Young people drive the economy forward, creating a symbiotic relationship between a state's economic growth and innovativeness and its ability to attract and retain members of younger generations. This metric assesses the three-year compound annual growth rate of the total population age 25 to 29 between 2014 and 2017, using estimates from the United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The rate of growth for Massachusetts' young population (+1.0 percent, 32<sup>nd</sup> among all states) is consistent with rates across the Northeast; the fastest rates of expansion were predominantly observed in the West and South.

### *Net Migration*

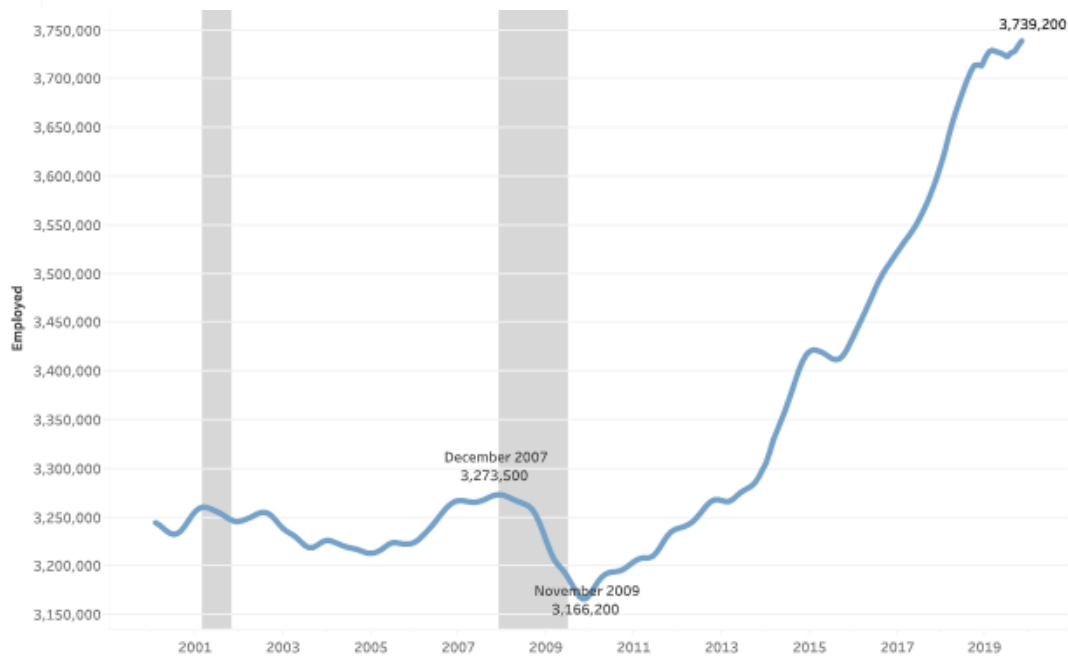
This measure evaluates the 3-year average of net migration to and from a state—both international and domestic—as a percentage of the state population, using data from the U.S. Census Bureau. A positive figure indicates that more people were born and entered the state than died or migrated out of state, while a negative figure signals that the net population of the

state declined. Thirteen states, including Massachusetts, experienced more emigration than immigration between 2014 and 2017. Yet, Massachusetts experienced a net growth in population (+0.3 percent), largely due to births in the state.

### Jobs

Massachusetts has steadily added more jobs since the Great Recession, and estimates suggest this trend will continue. Eleven months of preliminary job estimates indicate that 2019 will be another strong year for the Massachusetts economy, as illustrated in Figure 20. From November 2018 to November 2019, BLS estimates Massachusetts added 48,600 jobs. The largest private sector percentage job gains over the year were in education and health services, other services, information, and financial activities. Education and health services maintains the distinction of having added the most jobs and the largest growth rate in the Commonwealth, accounting for nearly half of all the private-sector jobs added since December 2018.

**Figure 20: Massachusetts Employed, Seasonally Adjusted**



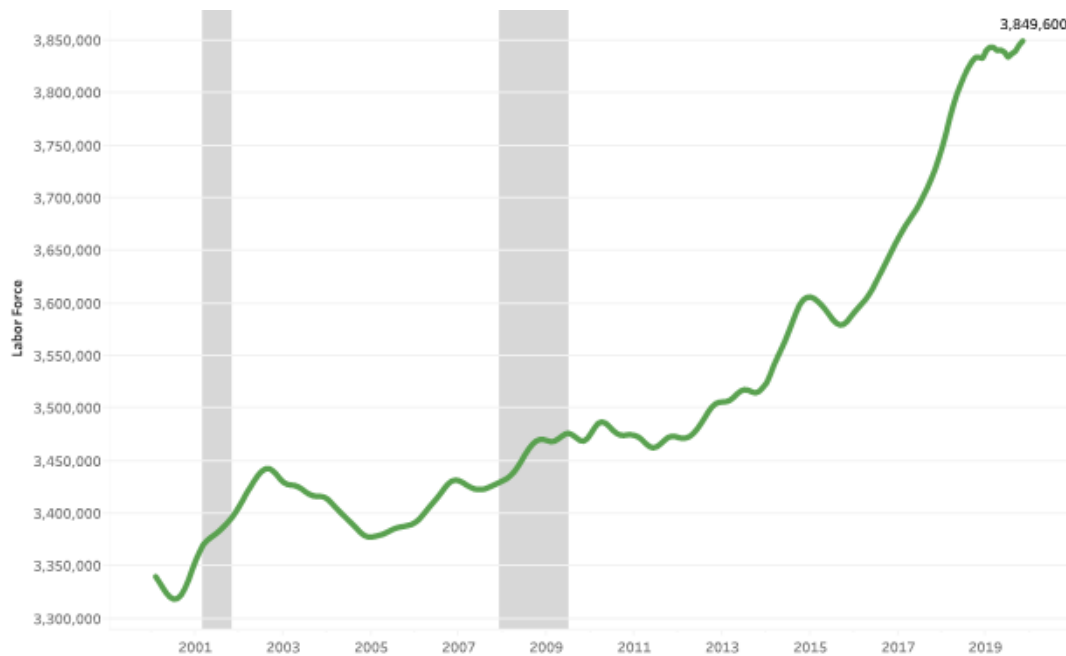
Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Seasonally-Adjusted Monthly Labor Force and Unemployment Rate Estimates, December 2019



### Labor Force

According to BLS estimates, the Massachusetts labor force reached 3,849,600 in November 2019 (Figure 21). The labor force increased by 15,700 from the 3,833,900 November 2018 estimate, with 24,700 more residents employed and 8,900 fewer residents unemployed. The state's labor force participation rate remained at 67.7 percent, down two-tenths of a percentage point compared to November 2018. Over the last five years, the labor force participation rate increased by 2 percentage points, from 65.7 percent in November 2014 (Figure 22).

**Figure 21: Massachusetts Labor Force, Seasonally Adjusted**



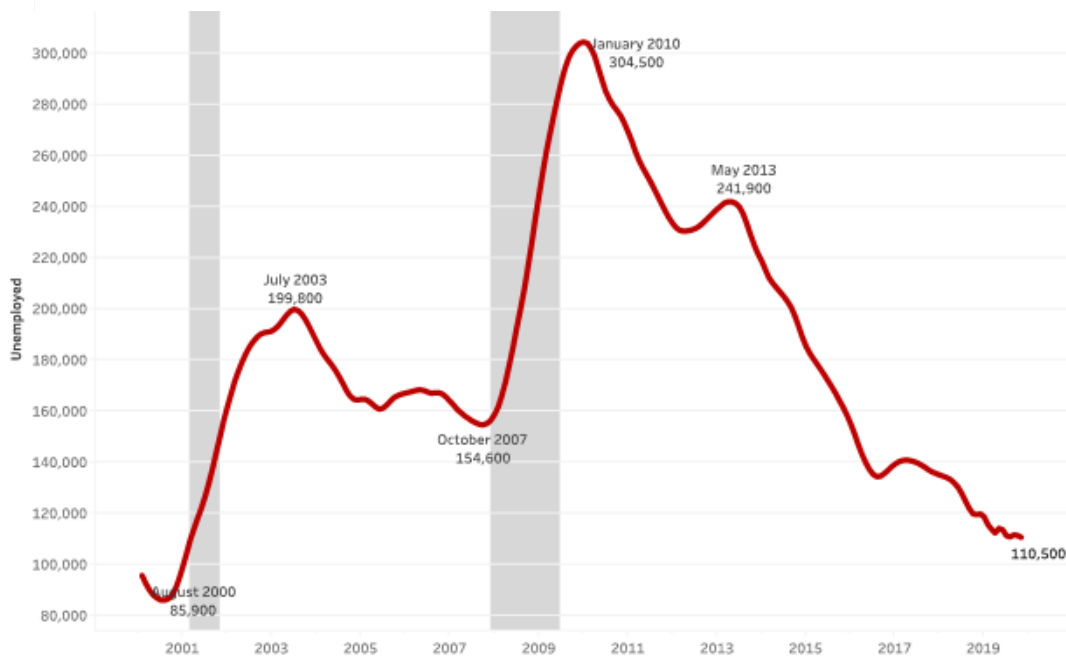
Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Seasonally-Adjusted Monthly Labor Force and Unemployment Rate Estimates, December 2019

**Figure 22: Massachusetts Labor Force Participation Rate, Seasonally Adjusted**



*Source:* Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS,  
Seasonally-Adjusted Monthly Labor Force and Unemployment Rate Estimates, December 2019

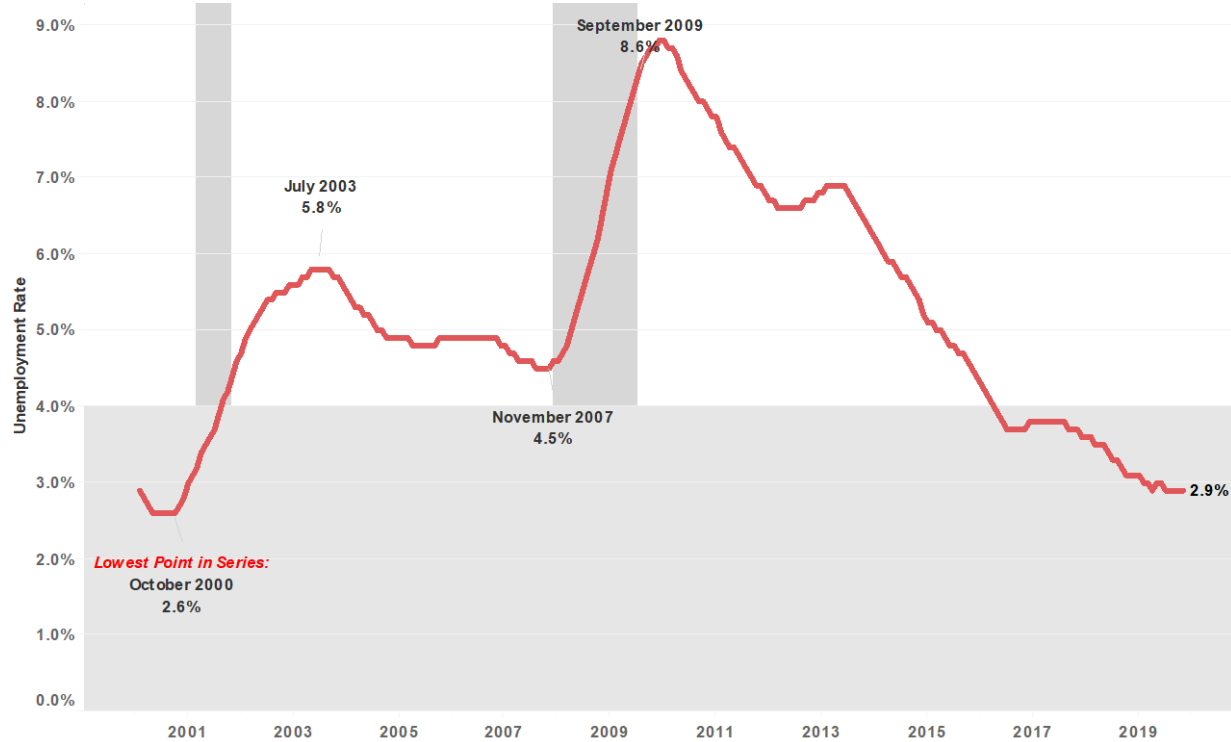
**Figure 23: Massachusetts Unemployed, Seasonally Adjusted**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Seasonally-Adjusted Monthly Labor Force and Unemployment Rate Estimates, December 2019

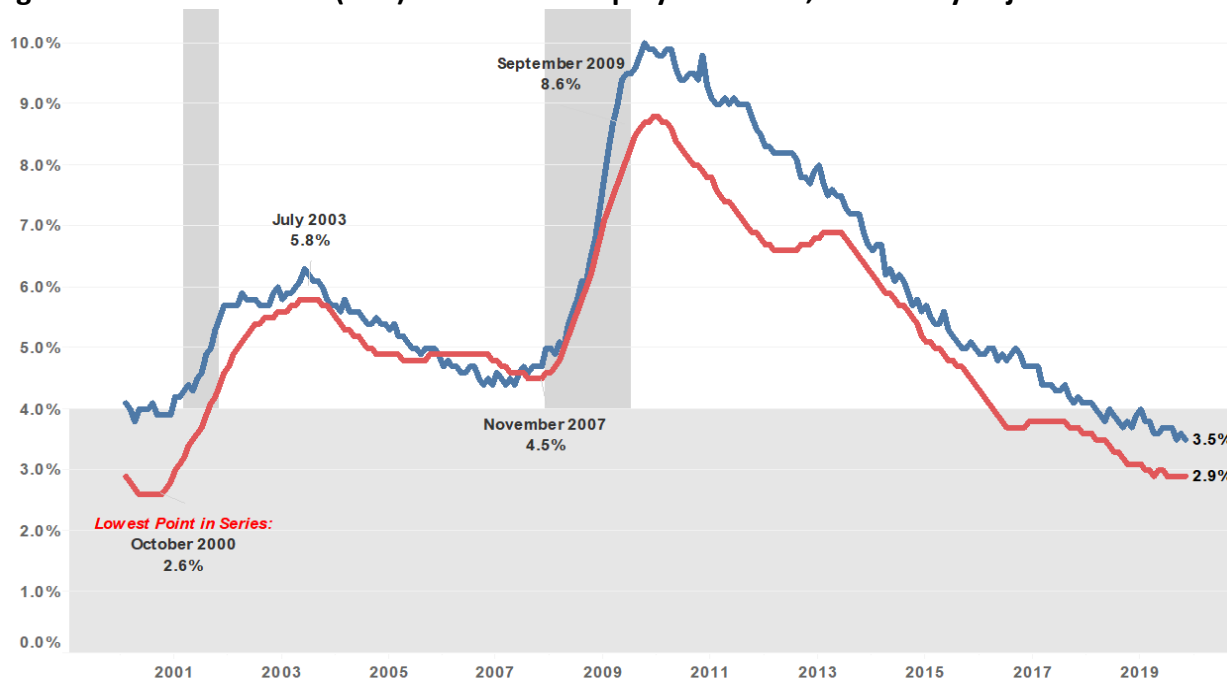
Massachusetts' unemployment rate has steadily declined since the December 2009—January 2010 peak of 8.8 percent reached during the Great Recession (Figure 23). In November 2019, for the fifth consecutive month, Massachusetts' unemployment rate remained at 2.9 percent—six-tenths of a percentage point lower than the national rate of 3.5 percent (Figure 24). Over the year, the state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped two-tenths of a percentage point. Over the last five years, the unemployment rate declined by 2.4 percentage points, from 5.3 percent in November 2014 (Figure 25).

**Figure 24: Massachusetts Unemployment Rate, Seasonally Adjusted**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS,  
Seasonally-Adjusted Monthly Labor Force and Unemployment Rate Estimates, December 2019

**Figure 25: Massachusetts (Red) and U.S. Unemployment Rate, Seasonally Adjusted**



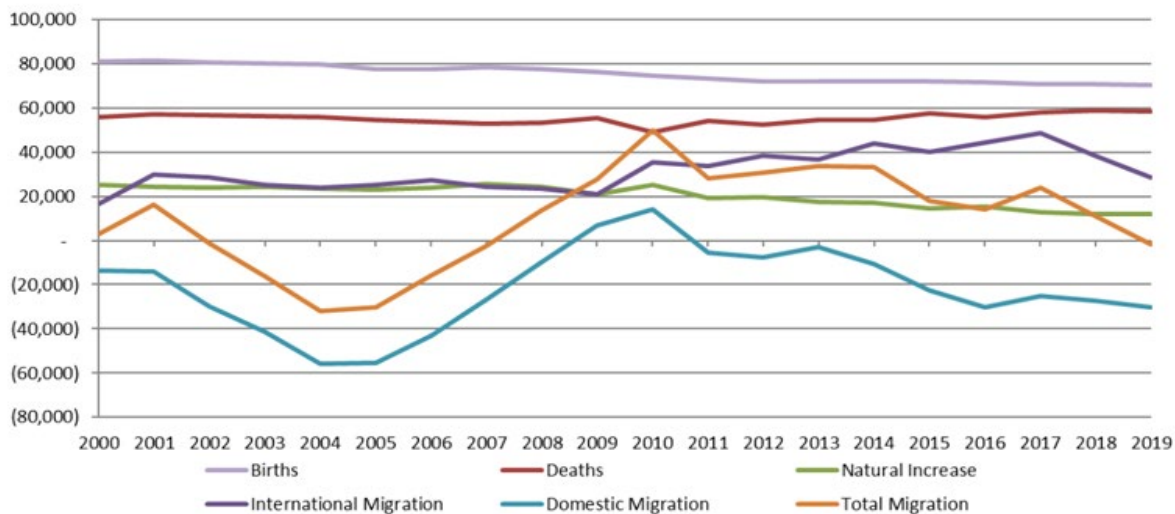
Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS,  
Seasonally-Adjusted Monthly Labor Force and Unemployment Rate Estimates, December 2019

### *Nativity and the Labor Force*

Foreign born labor is critical to the Massachusetts workforce and economy. According to the American Community Survey (ACS), the number of foreign-born residents in the Commonwealth has risen year over year, from an estimated 772,983 immigrants in Massachusetts in 2000, to 1,198,148 in 2018, a growth of 55%. The share of immigrants of the Commonwealth's population has also increased, from 12.2% of the population born outside the U.S. in 2000 to 17.4% in 2018. Further, in 2017 nearly 20% of the Massachusetts workforce was comprised of foreign-born workers (716,501 persons, 19.9% of the Massachusetts civilian workforce.)

The UMass Donahue Institute analyzed that in the past year (July 2018 to July 2019), Massachusetts welcomed 28,426 new foreign-born residents to the Commonwealth. This addition to the population was critical to offsetting factors that reduce the population, such as deaths (58,564 people) and domestic out-migration (30,274 people). Indeed, the Massachusetts population has grown at an average rate of 5.3% annually, and much of this growth can be attributed to international migration; Figure 26 demonstrates trends in the components of population change from 2000 to 2019, including natural increases (births and deaths), and migration (international migration to the state and domestic migration out of the state.) Figure 26 demonstrates that the rate of immigration to the Commonwealth has slowed down recently. Based on ACS data, UMass Donahue Institute estimates that after steady increase since the Great Recession, international migration fell sharply between 2018 (38,352 persons) and 2019 (28,426 persons). 2019 was the first year the Commonwealth experienced a net decline in population (1,848 persons) largely due to the reduction in international migrants to the state, which in the past had offset deaths and domestic out-migration.

**Figure 26: Massachusetts Estimated Components of Change 2000-2019**



Source: UMass Donahue Institute. ST-2000-7; CO-EST2010-ALLDATA and NST-EST2019-ALLDATA. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division.

Using ACS data, the Migration Policy Institute estimates that a greater share of the immigrant population is prime working age, when compared to the native-born population; 78.1% of immigrants in Massachusetts were ages 18-64, compared to 61% of those born in the United

States. Further, in 2017 68.4% of the foreign born in Massachusetts are in the labor force, compared to 66.2% of the U.S. born. Meanwhile unemployment rates for the foreign born are declining approaching that of the native-born population: in 2017 4.5% of the foreign born were unemployed (compared to a 5.2% unemployment rate in 2000), while 4.6% of the native-born U.S. residents were unemployed in 2017 (compared to 4.5% in 2000.)

When looking at labor force participation by language spoken at home, some differences among the foreign-born population emerge. Of the total 68.0% labor force participation rate among all immigrants, those who spoke only English, Indo-European languages, or Asian and Pacific Island languages were relatively similar (67.7%, 67.6%, and 67.0%, respectively), while those who spoke only Spanish or other languages had a higher labor force participation rate (70.1% and 74.9%, respectively.) Yet, compared to the native U.S. born population in Massachusetts, foreign born tend to have lower education and are considered to have Limited English Proficiency. In 2017, an estimated 14% of the Massachusetts immigrant workers (92,000) were those without a high school diploma, compared to 3.2% (77,900) of the U.S. population in the Commonwealth. An estimated 42.5% (279,000) of the foreign-born workers here considered to be highly educated (a bachelor's degree or higher); 52.2% (1,293,100) of the U.S. born Massachusetts population were in this category. In addition, 41.2% (270,000) of foreign-born workers are estimated to be Limited English Proficient based on their response to the American Community Survey as speaking English "not at all", "not well" or "well". That many of current and future high-demand occupations rank language-based knowledge, skill, and ability areas as among their top ten in importance underscore the importance of English language proficiency as a key determinant for a person's success in the labor market.

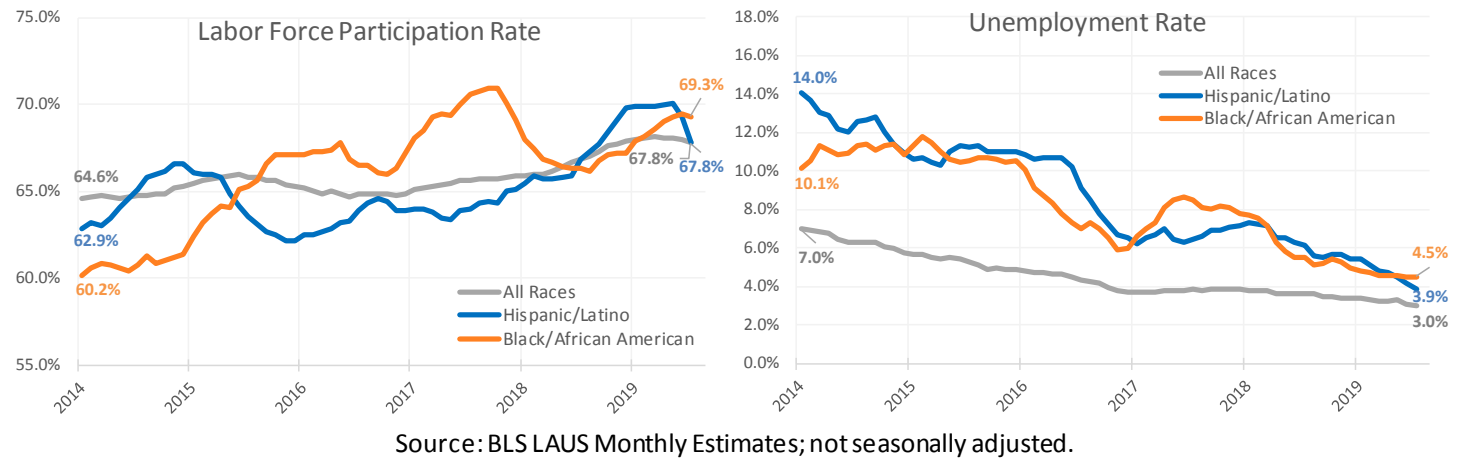
While many of the foreign born are working, the distribution of their occupations differs from that of the native U.S. born population in the Commonwealth. Compared to native U.S. born workers, a higher share of immigrant workers is in service occupations, production, transportation and material-moving occupations, and natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations (25.3%, 12.5% and 7.8% of foreign born respectively, compared to 15.8%, 7.7%, and 6.7% of U.S. born.) While foreign born appear to be under-represented in management, business, science, and arts occupations (39.8% immigrants/47.6% native born), and sales and office occupations (14.6% immigrants/22.2% native born.)

In looking at the race and ethnicity of immigrants, the foreign-born population is very diverse, particularly in comparison to their U.S. native born counterparts. In 2017 43.3% of immigrants identified as White, 27.1% Asian, 16.4% Black 0.3% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 21.% as Latinx. Among the native-born population living in Massachusetts, 85.7% identify as White, 2.4% Asian, 6.0% Black. 0.2% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 9.9% as Latinx. Moreover, in looking at the country of origin, foreign born residents are geographically diverse: 20.5% originate from Europe, 30.9% from Asia (including Middle Eastern countries), 10.1% from Africa, 0.4% from Oceania, and 35.7% from Latin America (including the Caribbean), 2.4% from Northern America (including Canada, Greenland, and Bermuda.)

### *Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Labor Force*

In addition to the overall population numbers and foreign-born labor, monthly labor force series estimates are published for working age Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino residents of Massachusetts. Trends in this series show the strong contribution of these two groups to the current statewide economic health. As shown in Figure 27, labor force participation and unemployment have both shown overall positive trends for these groups, with labor force participation increasing and the unemployment rate decreasing.

**Figure 27: Massachusetts Labor Force Participation Rate by Race and Massachusetts Unemployment Rate by Race: January 2014-July 2019**



In July 2019, Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino residents accounted for 18.9 percent of Massachusetts' working age population, up from 16.2 percent in January 2014. From January 2014 through July 2019, the working age population in Massachusetts increased by 263,300 residents. During this time, the Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino populations added 189,500 of these residents, accounting for 72 percent of growth.

The 473,800 Black/African American residents accounted for 8.4 percent of the Massachusetts population in July 2019. This is an increase of 75,900, or 19.1 percent, since January 2014. Most Black or African American persons who reside in Massachusetts are part of the labor force (368,362 in labor force; 200,529 not in labor force). Most persons of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity who reside in Massachusetts are part of the labor force (3,335,067 in labor force; 1,653,398 not in labor force). The July 2019 labor force participation rate of 69.3 percent was 1.5 percentage points higher than the statewide rate for all races of 67.8 percent. The Black/African American employment-population ratio of 66.2 percent also exceeded the statewide total of 65.7 percent. The July 2019 unemployment rate for this group was 4.5 percent, down from 10.1 percent in January 2014.

At 591,100 residents, the Hispanic/Latino working age population accounted for 10.5 percent of the Massachusetts total in July 2019. This is an increase of 113,600 residents since January 2014. The size of the Hispanic/Latino labor force has also increased, adding 100,400 residents to a new total of 400,800 labor force participants in July 2019. The labor force participation rate for this group is equal to the rate for all races at 67.8 percent in July 2019. While the

employment-population ratio is lower than the statewide total, it has increased 11 percentage points since January 2014, from 54.1 percent to 65.1 percent. During this time period, the unemployment rate for Hispanic/Latino residents has also decreased by more than 10 percentage points, from 14.0 percent in January 2014 to 3.9 percent in July 2019.

#### *Education, Employment, and Income Gaps by Race*

In measuring the ratio of non-Hispanic whites who have bachelor's degrees or higher compared to the rates for all other racial groups, Census Bureau data reveal larger racial gaps in some states than in others. According to estimates from the 2017 American Community Survey, Massachusetts (71.2 percent) ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> in the nation based on the education gap by race. The Census Bureau's reports on employment equality by race reveal disparities between non-Hispanic white and other racial and ethnic groups. While the unemployment rate overall is fairly low in the U.S., the country has large racial disparities. According to estimates from the 2017 American Community Survey, groups other than non-Hispanic white were 1.6 times more likely to be unemployed. Massachusetts, where groups other than non-Hispanic white were 1.66 times more likely to be unemployed, ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> in the nation based on the employment gap by race.

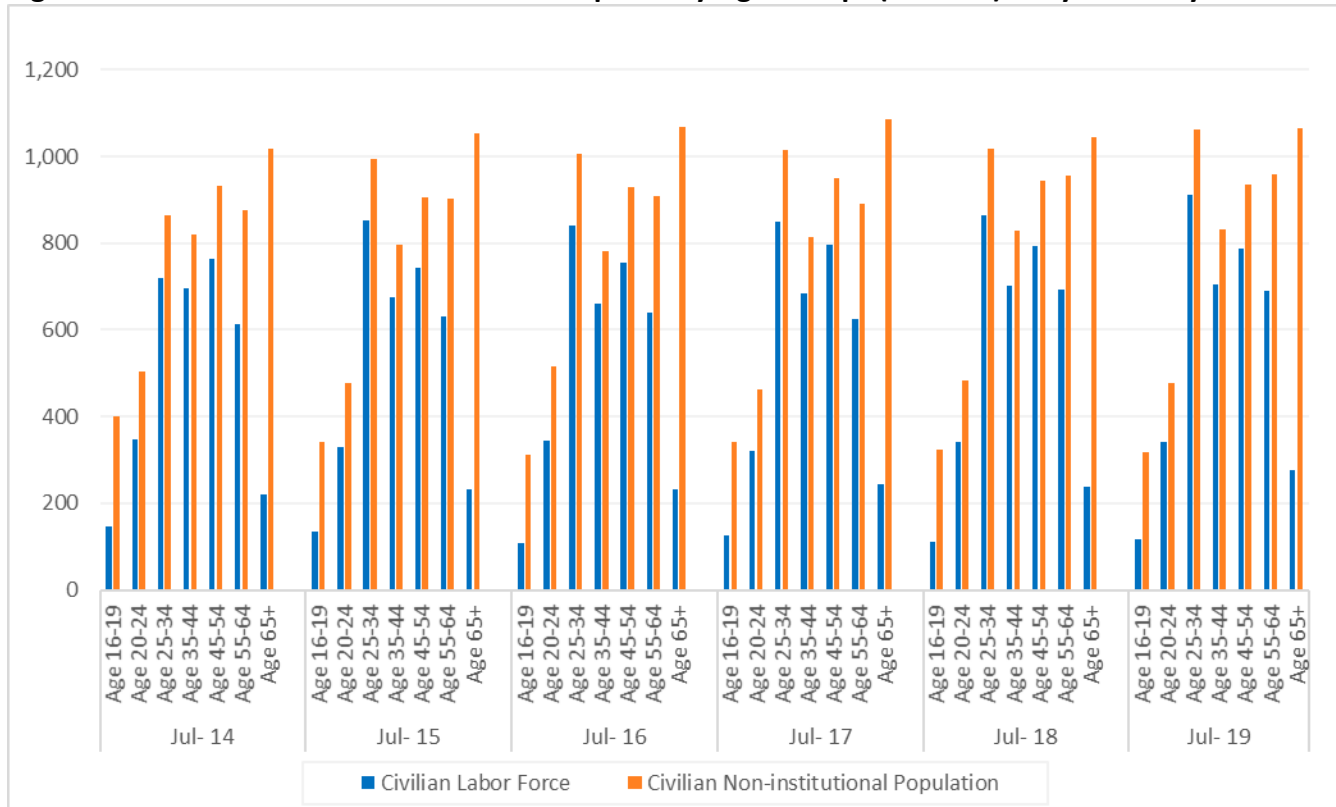
Income gaps by race measures racial disparities in income by comparing the income per capita for non-Hispanic whites against all other groups. Estimates from the 2017 U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey were used in the calculations. Nationally, per capita income for all other groups is about 60 percent of what it is for non-Hispanic whites. In Massachusetts, ranked 29<sup>th</sup> in the nation based on the racial income gap, per capita income for all other groups is about 57.1 percent of what it is for non-Hispanic whites.

#### *Age of the Labor Force*

The Current Population Survey (CPS) 12-month moving average data were used to identify trends within the Massachusetts working age population over the past five years (Figure 28). The CPS identifies seven unique age groups: ages 16 to 19, ages 20 to 24, ages 25 to 34, ages 35 to 44, ages 45 to 54, ages 55 to 64 and ages 65 and over. While the Commonwealth has fewer residents in the two youngest working age groups—ages 16 to 19 and ages 20 to 24—these two age cohorts had the largest decrease in unemployment rates over this time period.



**Figure 28: Massachusetts Labor Force Participants by Age Groups (12MMA): July 2014-July 2019**



Source: Unpublished BLS CPS 12-month moving average. Compiled by Massachusetts DUA.

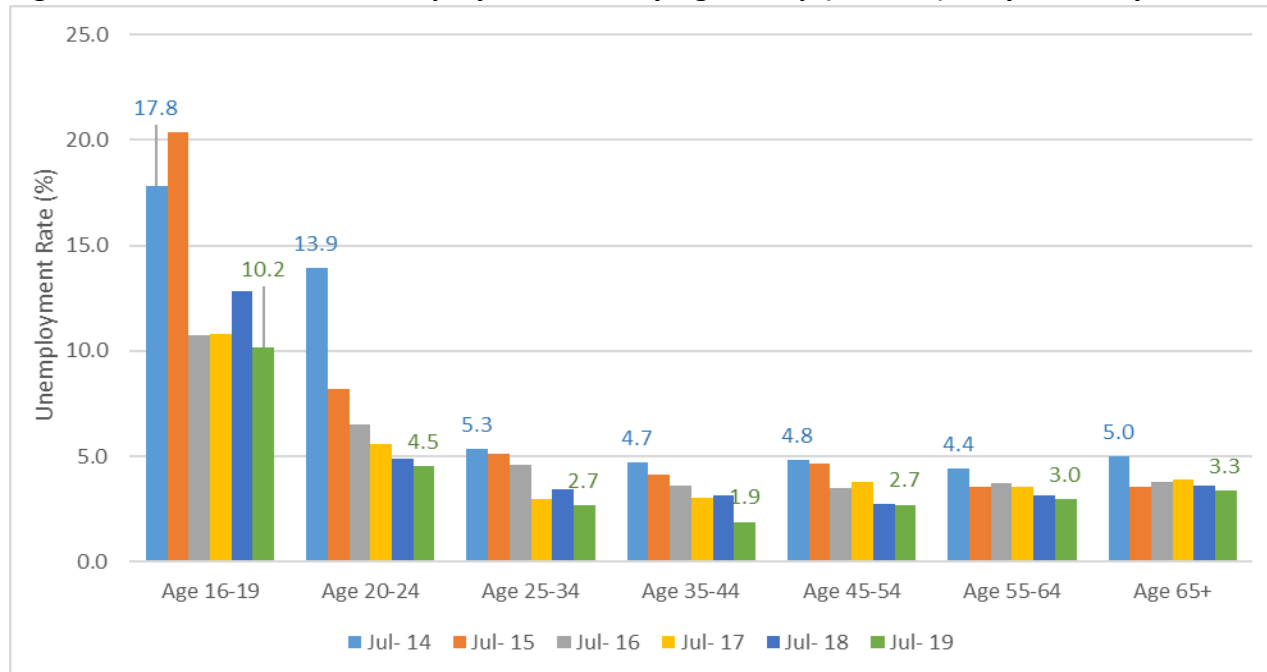
The Massachusetts population ages 16 to 19 years old has declined from 400,600 in July 2014 to 318,300 in July 2019, with this age group now accounting for only 5.6 percent of the population. During this time, this age cohort saw a slight increase in labor force participation, up 0.1 percent. An estimated 104,200 of the 116,000 individuals in the labor force were employed in July 2019, while the number of unemployed residents in this age group dropped sharply from 25,900 to 11,800. This resulted in a drop in the unemployment rate from 17.6 percent to 10.2 percent.

The age 20 to 24 cohort also saw a population decrease over the 5-year period, from 505,000 in July 2014 to 478,400 in July 2019. The labor force saw a modest decline of 5,600 individuals to a new total of 342,400. During this time, the number of employed residents in this age cohort increased by 27,200 and the number of unemployed residents decreased by 32,900.

The growth in the 25 to 34 age group accounts for the majority of growth in the Commonwealth's working-age population, labor force and employed residents. In July 2014, they were the fourth largest age cohort, with 863,200 residents, the second largest cohort in the labor force and had the highest number of employed residents at 681,900. As of July 2019, they remain the largest share of employed residents, with 912,900 of the 1,063,200 residents employed. The cohort population is the second largest, behind those ages 65 or older. From July 2014 to July 2019, the number of employed residents increased by 206,500; this is more than both population growth and labor force participation growth of 200,000 and 192,800, respectively. In July 2019, they had the highest labor force participation rate of any age cohort,

85.9 percent. Of the labor force participants, only 24,500 were unemployed and the unemployment rate was 2.7 percent.

**Figure 29: Massachusetts Unemployment Rate by Age Group (12MMA): July 2014-July 2019**



Source: Unpublished BLS CPS 12-month moving average. Compiled by Massachusetts DUA.

In July 2019, residents ages 35 to 44 years are the fifth largest population group with 832,500 residents. Of these residents, 705,000 are in the labor force, generating the second highest labor force participation rate at 84.7 percent. This cohort also had the lowest unemployment rate at 1.9 percent.

With a population of 934,700 in July 2019, residents ages 45 to 54 are the third largest cohort. Of these residents, 786,500 are in the labor force and 765,200 are employed, accounting for the second highest share of employed residents. The labor force participation rate of 84.1 percent is the second highest and the unemployment rate of 2.7 percent, which is the same as the 25 to 34 cohort, is the second lowest.

Residents ages 55 to 64 saw the second largest growth in both population and employment from July 2014 through July 2019, adding 82,600 residents and 85,200 employed to reach totals of 959,500 residents and 670,300 employed. Most persons age 55 and older who reside in Massachusetts are not in the labor force (1,044,446 not in labor force; 954,030 in labor force). The labor force participation rate of 72.0 percent was a slight decrease from July 2018 but was up 2.2 percent compared with July 2014.

Finally, the cohort of those ages 65 and over are currently the largest working age population group in Massachusetts, with 1,064,800 residents in July 2019. If trends continue, the 25- to 34-year-old cohort will soon surpass those 65 and older as the largest group. The 268,500 employed residents, an increase of 58,500 from July 2014, added to the 9,300 unemployed

residents, results in a 277,800-person labor force of those ages 65 and over. The labor force for this group has grown by more than 56,700 participants since July 2014. The 26.1 percent labor force participation rate is 4.4 percentage points higher than in 2014, accounting for the largest gain of all age groups.

### *Educational Attainment of the Labor Force*

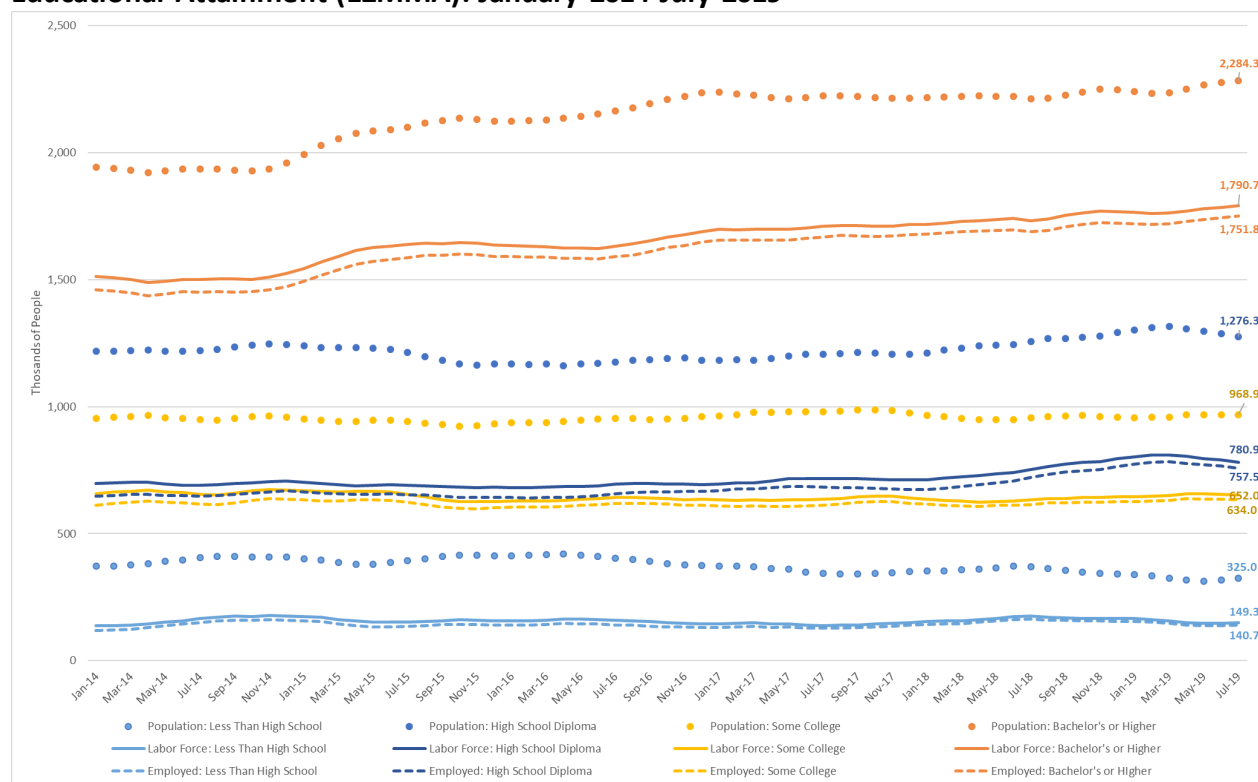
Massachusetts residents are highly educated, with two-thirds of residents having at least Some College education and 47.1 percent holding a Bachelor's Degree or Higher as of July 2019 (Figure 30). These shares are even higher for the labor force, where 72.4 percent have at least Some College education and 53.1 percent holding a Bachelor's Degree or Higher. Only 7.2 percent of workforce participants had attained less than a high school diploma.

**Figure 30: Educational Attainment for the Massachusetts Civilian Labor Force, Age 25-64**

Less Than High School	High School Diploma (Includes Equivalency)	Some College or Associate's Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
9,414,137	33,300,561	34,921,280	52,811,093
7.2%	25.5%	26.8%	40.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2018.

**Figure 31: Massachusetts Population, Labor Force Participation and Employment by Educational Attainment (12MMA): January 2014-July 2019**

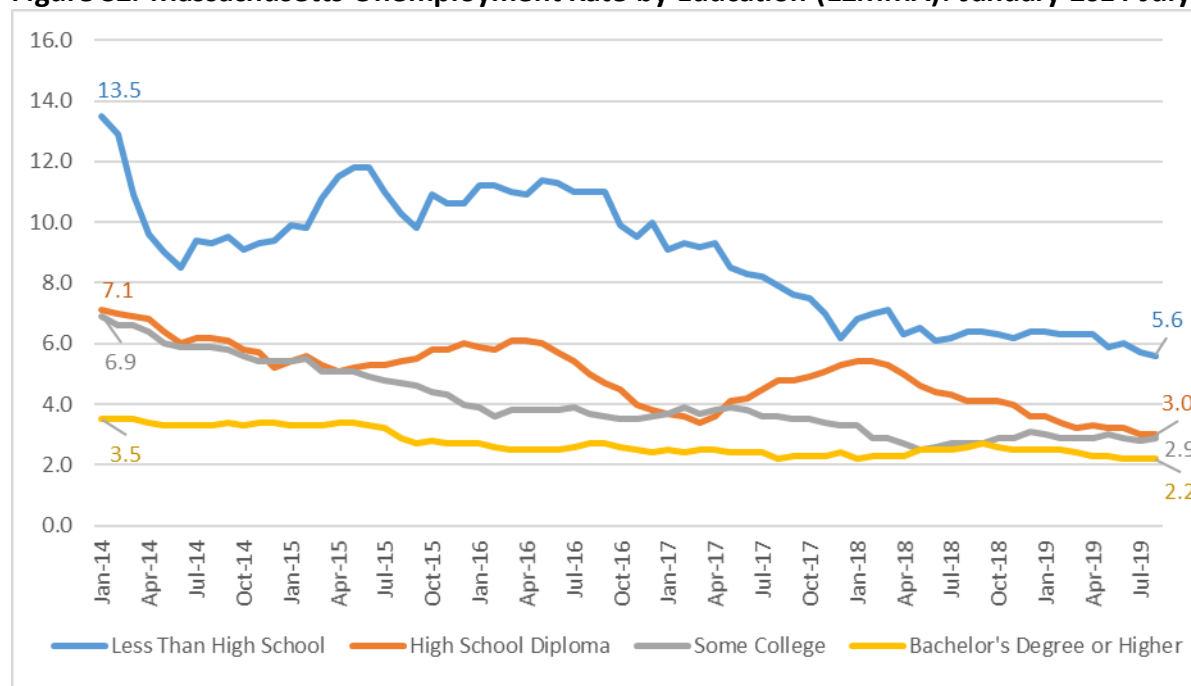


Source: Unpublished BLS CPS 12-month moving average. Compiled by Massachusetts DUA.

Trends show that from January 2014 through July 2019, there are 26,500 fewer residents with Less Than a High School Diploma, denoted with light blue lines in Figure 31. The relative share of these residents has also declined over time, now accounting for less than seven percent of

the population and only 4.5 percent of the labor force. Though the total number of residents in this cohort has decreased, their labor force participation rate has increased from 36.9 percent to 43.3 percent, 22,200 more are employed and the employment-population ratio is 43.3 percent in July 2019. This employment-population ratio is up 11.4 points from January 2014. The number of unemployed residents with Less Than a High School Diploma in July 2019 was 8,000, down from 18,500 in 2014; the 5.7 percent unemployment rate is 7.8 percentage points lower than in January 2014. While this unemployment rate has been trending downwards, it is still more than double the unemployment rate for those with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher, and it has been consistently at least two percentage points higher than any other group since August 2018.

**Figure 32: Massachusetts Unemployment Rate by Education (12MMA): January 2014-July 2019**



Source: Unpublished BLS CPS 12-month moving average. Compiled by Massachusetts DUA.

At 1,276,300 residents, the working age population for individuals with a High School Diploma or equivalent and no college is slightly higher than in January 2014 and accounts for the second highest share of working age population. In July 2019, 780,900 individuals in this cohort are attached to the labor force, a participation rate of 61.2 percent. Of this population, 757,500 residents are employed, a 59.4 percent employment-population ratio. This group had 23,400 unemployed residents for an unemployment rate of 3.0 percent.

The working age population of residents with Some College or an Associate's Degree is 968,900, of which 634,000 were employed in July 2019, generating the second highest employment-population ratio, 65.4 percent. Of the 652,000 labor force participants in this cohort, 18,100 were unemployed in July 2019, a rate of 2.8 percent, the second lowest of all cohorts. The labor force participation rate of 67.3 percent was the second highest of the four groups.

Residents with a Bachelor's Degree or Higher account for more than 53 percent of the working age population ages 25 years or older as well as of those employed. At 2,284,600 individuals, the number of Massachusetts residents in this cohort in July 2019 was 341,700 greater than in January 2014. Of this population, 1,790,700 residents are in the labor force, a 78.4 percent participation rate. The 1,751,800 residents employed is an employment-population ratio of 75.1 percent, the highest of any educational attainment cohort. This group also had the lowest unemployment rate at 2.2 percent in July 2019.

#### *Individuals with disabilities*

Most persons over the age of 16 with a disability who reside in Massachusetts are not in the labor force (125,926 in labor force; 451,241 not in labor force). The Massachusetts unemployment rate for persons with a disability was 5.7 percent in 2018 compared to 4.0 percent for all labor force participants. The unemployment rate in this population decreased five percentage points from 2017 to 2018 (the most recent year for which data are available) while the overall unemployment rate decreased six-tenths of a percentage point during that period (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2018).

For Massachusetts' adult civilian population age 25 and over with disabilities (534,42), the U.S. Census Bureau provides the following educational attainment estimates in 2018:

1. Less than high school graduate – 21.0 percent
2. High school graduate (includes equivalency) – 44.3 percent
3. Some college or Associate's degree – 15.4 percent
4. Bachelor's degree or higher – 19.2 percent

#### *Disability Employment Gap*

Looking at the rates of unemployment in states, the Census Bureau also counts joblessness among people with disabilities. According to estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey in 2017, people with disabilities were about 2.5 times more likely to be unemployed than people without disabilities. Massachusetts, where persons with disabilities were 2.75 times more likely to be unemployed, ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> in the nation based on the employment gap by disability.

#### *Labor Force Participation and income Gaps by Gender*

This metric measures the ratio of labor force participation rates for females and males in 2017, using estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Labor force participation rate were measured for the population between the ages of 16 and 64 and does not include those in the armed forces. Nationally, about nine women are in the labor force for every 10 men. Massachusetts (92.8 percent) ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in the nation based on the labor force participation gap by gender.

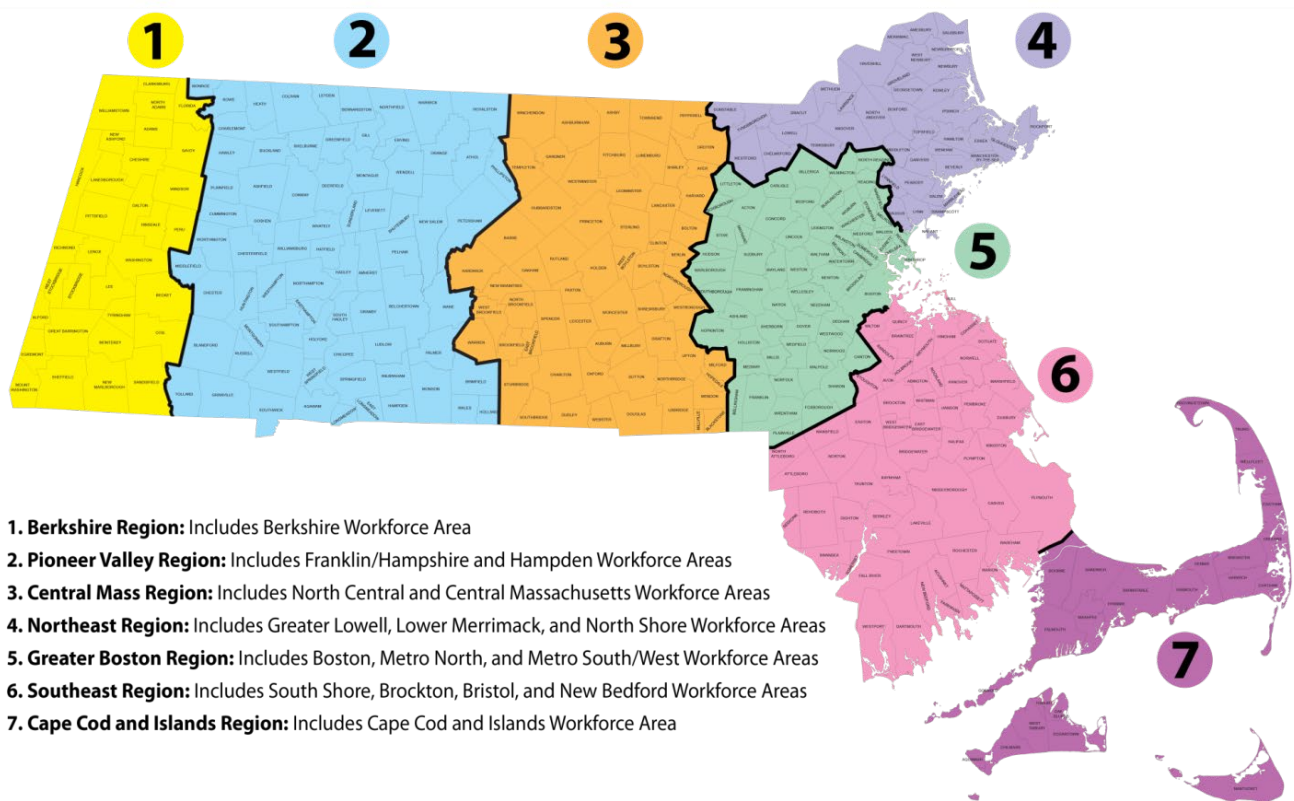
However, in comparing the median earnings of the female population to those of the male population for individuals who were employed full time year-round in 2017, in Massachusetts (ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the nation based on the income gap by gender), women took home about 83 cents for every dollar men earned in 2017.

### *Regional Workforce Skills Planning*

In April 2017, The Baker-Polito Administration launched a new regional planning initiative aimed at addressing the skills gap by bringing together regional teams of educators, workforce, and economic development professionals to create a regional blueprint for growth strategies in every region of the Commonwealth.

The original Regional Labor Market Blueprints-developed through a comprehensive year-long planning process that involved local, regional and state leadership from workforce development, education and economic development, as well as input from business and community stakeholders-reflected a collective understanding of regional priorities and strategy for investments in seven regions across the Commonwealth: Berkshire, Pioneer Valley, Central, Southeast, Cape, Greater Boston, and Northeast (Figure 33).

**Figure 33: Massachusetts Planning Regions**



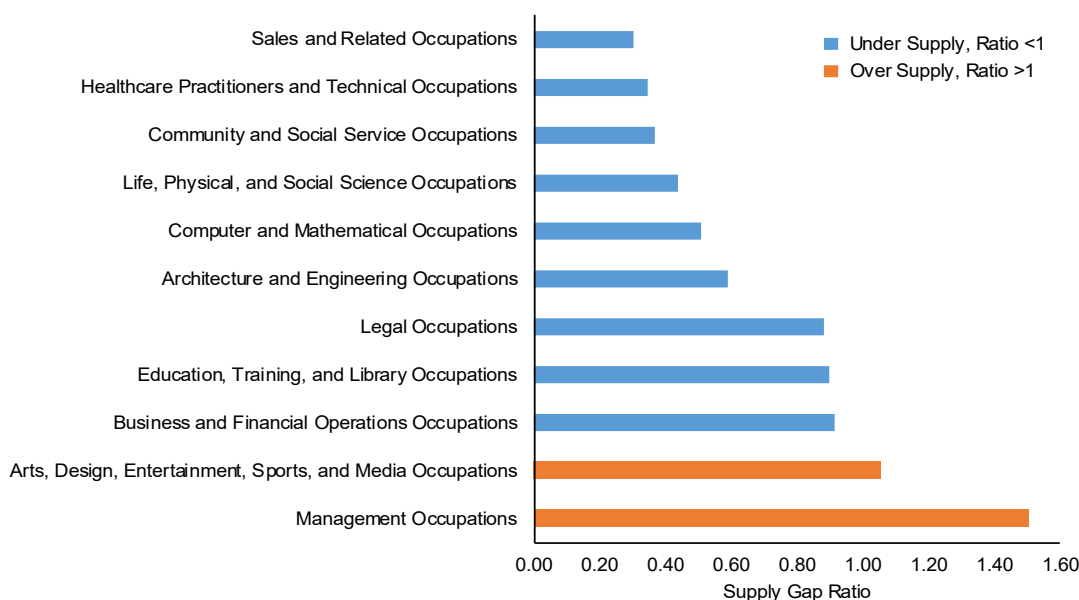
In order to promote a better understanding of the current and projected needs of the workforce system, and identify skill gaps, a series of local labor market data packages and data tools was shared with regional teams of educators, workforce, and economic development professionals. The supply and demand tool, which allows users to estimate the ratio of skilled workers to openings in regional occupational labor markets, offers a way to link statistically reliable estimates of skill gaps, job vacancies and local hiring patterns and the capabilities of job seekers, students and the unemployed.

### Supply And Demand

The 2019 supply and demand tool are intended to guide training investments and other workforce activities with indicators of balances or imbalances (i.e., skill shortages or surpluses) in occupational labor markets. The underlying accounting model compares the projected total annual job openings, due to growth and replacement needs, for an occupational labor market with: (1) the recent output of program completers from related, structured training programs (at the sub-baccalaureate level for regions, and at the baccalaureate level and above for the state); and (2) the population of unemployment insurance claimants linked to the occupation at the same geographic unit of analysis.<sup>1</sup>

The following chart shows the ratio of skilled workers to openings for each of the major occupational groups in Massachusetts.

**Figure 34: Massachusetts Supply Gap Overview: Major Occupational Groups**



Source: OES Projections 2016-2026, OES Projections 2018-2020, Burning Glass 2019, iPEDS, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, Department of Unemployment Assistance, December 2019

### Regional Profiles

In the Regional Labor Market Blueprints (see <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/view-your-regions-blueprint>), each Regional Planning Team identified a set of industry and occupational priorities for workforce investment in their region. Figure 35 show the industries and occupations prioritized in each of the seven major regions. These priorities are used to inform

<sup>1</sup> With regard to the geographic units of analysis, the higher geographic mobility of baccalaureate and above graduates' limits comparisons of occupational employment projections and training data for BA/BS completers and above to the geographic unit of analysis of the state. Because of the lower rates of geographic mobility of Associate Degree and below structured training program completers, regional comparisons of total job openings and training program completers can provide useful labor market insights for sub-baccalaureate units of analysis (i.e., occupational labor markets).



policy, practice, and funding decisions on a state and local level. (For example, a joint application for funding related to workforce development might reflect alignment to the priorities articulated in the Blueprint.) The overarching goal of this process is to foster strategic alignment between state and local programs, policies and resources to fuel job growth and address employer demand for talent across the Commonwealth.

**Figure 35: Overview of All Regional Priority Industries and Occupations**

PRIORITY INDUSTRY (# OF REGIONS PRIORITIZED)	Pioneer Valley	Berkshire	Northeast	Central	Greater Boston	Southeast	Cape & Islands
Manufacturing (4 Regions)	Supervisor Assembler/Machinist Inspector/Quality Control/Tester	Supervisor Assembler/Machinist Engineer	Supervisor Assembler/Machinist Inspector/Quality Control/Tester	Assembler/Machinist Inspector/Quality Control/Tester Biomanufacturing Tech			
IT/ Professional Tech (4 Regions)			IT Support Specialist Engineer Engineering Technician	NOTE: Multi Sector Focus on Occupations: Software Developer Cyber Security	Computer/Information Analyst Database Administrator Software Developer/Programmer IT Support Specialist	IT Support Specialist	
Health Care (7 Regions)	Direct Care Worker Social and Human Service Assistant Technical/Clinical Worker	Nursing Assistant/ CNA LPN/Vocational Nurse	Direct Care and Support Practitioners and Technical Healthcare Administration	CNA LPN RN Pharm Tech Direct Care Worker	Medical/Clinical Lab Technician Radiological Technologist MRI Technologist Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse	Dental Hygienist/Assistant Radiological Technologist Nursing Assistant Physical Therapy Assistant	Healthcare Practitioner/Technical Healthcare Support
Social Assistance							
Finance (2 Regions)			Cross-over occupations to other industries: bookkeeping/accounting administrative support			Customer Service Representative	
Hospitality (2 regions)		Chef Food Service Manager Hotel Clerk					Head Cook/Chef
Construction (2 Region)		cross over occupation: maintenance, etc.		HVAC Mechanic Apprenticeship Trades			Construction occupations
Transportation/Warehousing (1 Region)				CDL Diesel Tech			
Education (2 Regions)	Educator (All Levels) Teacher Assistant						Educator (All Levels) Teacher Assistant

Each of the Workforce Skills Cabinet regional planning teams identified priority industries and occupations (summarized above) along with “critical” industries and occupations to expand the focus for the region.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic regional planning teams continued to meet to examine the shifting economic landscape and re-affirm priority and critical industries and occupations. With new state and federal dollars directed toward workforce development becoming available, the Workforce Skill Cabinet established a framework for deploying these new resources, leaning on regional planning teams to inform localized strategies. Regional teams leveraged their ongoing collaboration and existing strategies to define investment plans, identify gaps, and take advantage of new resources by applying their blueprint strategies to meet regional supply and demand and bring upskilling programs to scale.



## The State's Workforce Development Activities

### (2) The Workplace, Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an **analysis of the workforce development activities**, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of –

(A) Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and mandatory and required and optional MassHire delivery system partners.<sup>2</sup>

The Baker Administration has launched several initiatives to better align the broadly defined workforce system with the needs of business as well as focus on expanding the impact on job outcomes for individuals with barriers to employment. Our branding initiative was launched in 2018 to unify and re-brand the workforce system.

### MassHire

The Commonwealth determined that our business and Jobseeker customers lacked awareness of the depth, breadth, and interconnectedness of public workforce resources available in the Commonwealth.

To that end, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) engaged to reposition and rebrand the Massachusetts Workforce Development System in order to increase access and visibility of the system to employers and jobseekers. The project included three phases: I) Discovery/Research, II) Brand Development, and III) Implementation.

On March 6, 2018 the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board voted unanimously to adopt a unifying brand for the Workforce System - MassHire. During the rebranding process, all local Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Centers changed their names to include MassHire and geo-locators using a consistent naming structure. Additionally, both the State Workforce Development Board and the State Workforce Agency adopted the new brand (MassHire State Workforce Board, and MassHire Department of Career Services, respectively.) Branded materials also continue to use the "A proud partner of the American Job Center Network" tagline.

MassHire signifies the state's commitment to ensuring meaningful career opportunities for job seekers and expansion of the talent pool for businesses seeking trained, skilled employees. MassHire has unified and empowered all state, regional, and local workforce entities. It enables cross-communication with clients—job seekers and businesses—with a clear, consistent, powerful message. MassHire continues to provide a foundation for conveying the depth, breadth, and connectivity of its value and services across all audiences. WIOA partner agencies co-brand with MassHire furthering unification of the workforce system through a vision shared on behalf of our customers and establishment of pathways to services focused on customers not funding streams.

## **Workforce Skills Cabinet**

The Workforce Skills Cabinet, one of many Baker Administration initiatives was created to align the resources of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the Executive Office of Education and the Executive Office of Housing and Development. In the Commonwealth, the major federal and state programs for job seekers and employers are administered by multiple state agencies and field organizations.

This section will provide an overview and analysis of the **workforce development activities** for different customers:

- All business and jobseekers (Workforce Boards and Career Centers)
- Individuals receiving TAFDC (Department of Transitional Assistance)
- Individuals receiving SNAP (Department of Transitional Assistance)
- Adult Education and Basic Skills (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)
- Multi-Agency Career-Readiness Initiative
- Individuals with Disabilities (Vocational Rehabilitation through Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind) and Community Based Organizations (CBO) funded by the Department of Mental Health and Department of Developmental Disabilities
- Youth (WIOA Youth and YouthWorks)
- Talent Pipeline Initiatives for Business (Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund and Workforce Training Fund)

## **RESOURCES AND SERVICES FOR ALL JOB SEEKERS AND BUSINESSES**

### ***MassHire Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Centers***

A large portion of the workforce activities occurs through the MassHire Career Centers (formerly One-Stop Career Centers). As of 2022, there are 25 comprehensive and 4 affiliated centers located throughout the Commonwealth (see Attachment J for a listing of MassHire Career Centers and locations.) In addition, there are 4 centers dedicated to serving the Youth population. These centers comprise the backbone of the state's delivery system for employment and training services for job seekers, businesses, and workers.

**Figure 38: MassHire Career Center Map**



The MassHire Career Center (MCC) system categorizes its services to job seekers and workers across a continuum of basic, individualized, and follow up services. Self-service activities and group services such as workshops are also available. Training may be provided through the Individual Training Account (ITA) system, on-the-job training, apprenticeship, and under specific circumstances, customized or class-sized training may be appropriate. MCCs serve as the point of access to a system of training providers with programs and services tailored to individual needs and career objectives. Services are provided in accordance with individual career plans, which are collaboratively developed by employment counselors and jobseekers, in accordance with local planning and implementation decisions.

Each comprehensive MassHire Career Center (MCC) offers an extensive array of jobseeker services that include:

- Determination of eligibility to receive assistance under WIOA
- Outreach and intake, including career center seminars that provide orientation to the information and other services available through the MassHire service delivery system
- Initial assessment of skills, aptitudes, interests and abilities, and supportive service needs
- Career counseling, job search and placement assistance
- Provision of employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, such as job vacancy listings in such labor market areas, information on job skills necessary to obtain

the jobs available, and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for those occupations

- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services
- Provision of information regarding local area performance as relates to local performance measures and any additional performance information, as available
- Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services, including but not limited to childcare and transportation
- All services are available in virtual formats

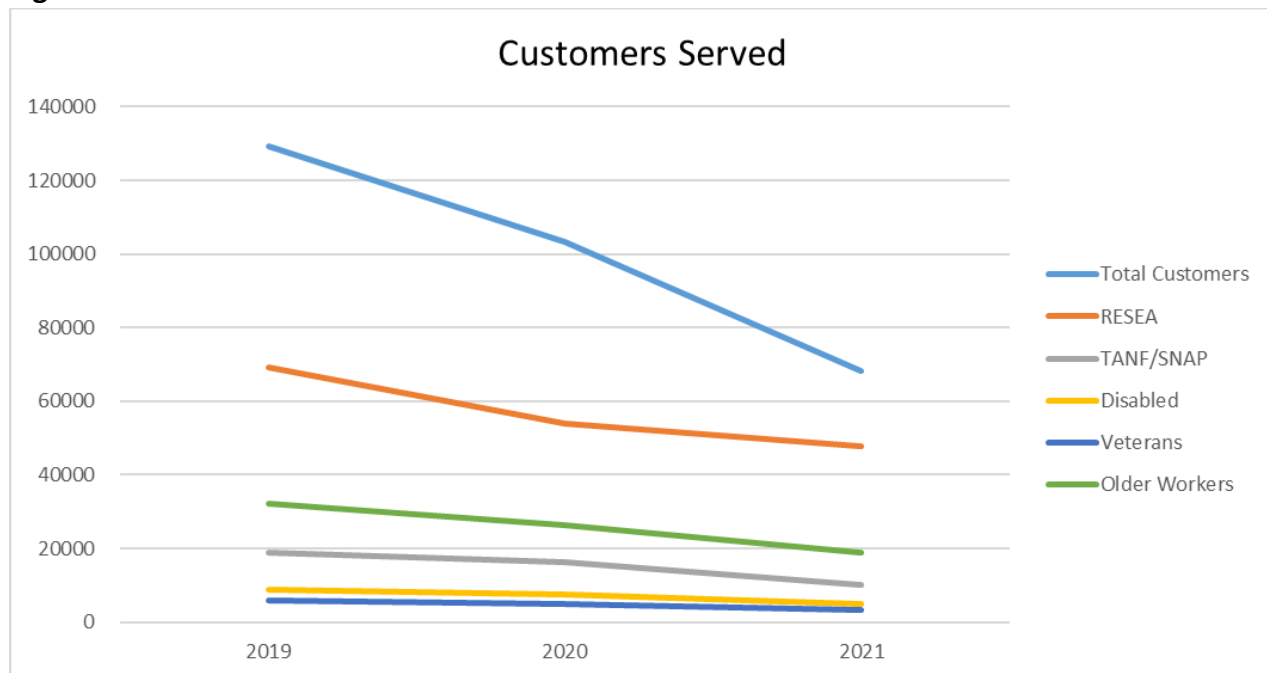
MassHire Career Centers offer a full menu of comprehensive services for businesses that include:

- Active employer outreach and solicitation of job openings
- Timely screening and referral of competitive applicants
- Provision of information regarding the full array of MCC services
- Customer assistance with online listing of job orders and access to the state's talent bank
- Basic labor market information and listings of education and training programs and resources
- Referral services for employers to sources of funding for worker training
- Community service organizations and tax credit programs
- Assistance with significant employer downsizing or layoffs, including layoff aversion strategies
- Job fairs and recruitment events are held either on site at the MassHire Career Centers or at other venues that will attract an increased number of jobseekers
- Coordination with economic development as well as various programs that can assist business
- Information sessions for businesses on tax incentive programs and the Workforce Training Fund programs—training for incumbent workers and layoff aversion programs and services
- All services are available in virtual formats

In fiscal year 2020 (July 2019 – June 2020), the MassHire career centers served 103,183 jobseekers, with Individuals connecting to the system through the Unemployment Insurance System's Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program, referrals from partners (TANF, SNAP, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.), and on a walk-in basis. The effect of the COVID pandemic, which had taken hold by late March 2020, resulted in a reduction in fiscal year 2021 (June 2020 – July 2021) to 63,138 customers served.

Below are a series of charts showing service activity at MassHire Career Centers.

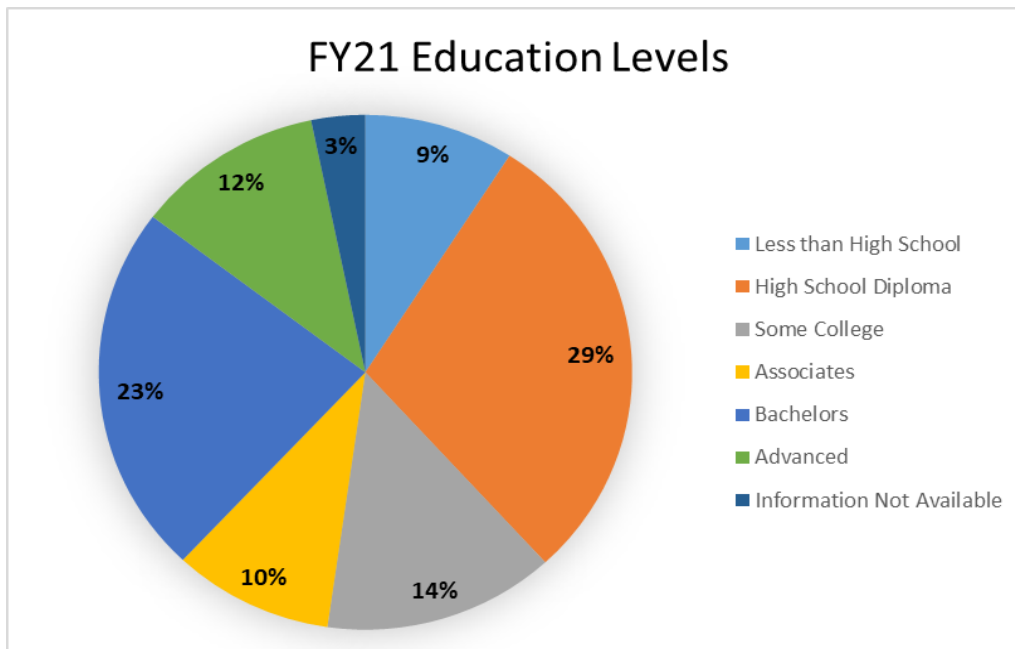
**Figure 39: MassHire Career Center Customers Served**



Source: Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System data.

Overall, MassHire Career Center customers reflect the data trend that individuals with less education experienced higher levels of unemployment and were more likely to be in need of services. In FY21, the following breakdown by education demonstrates that around 40% of the customer base only had a high school diploma or less.

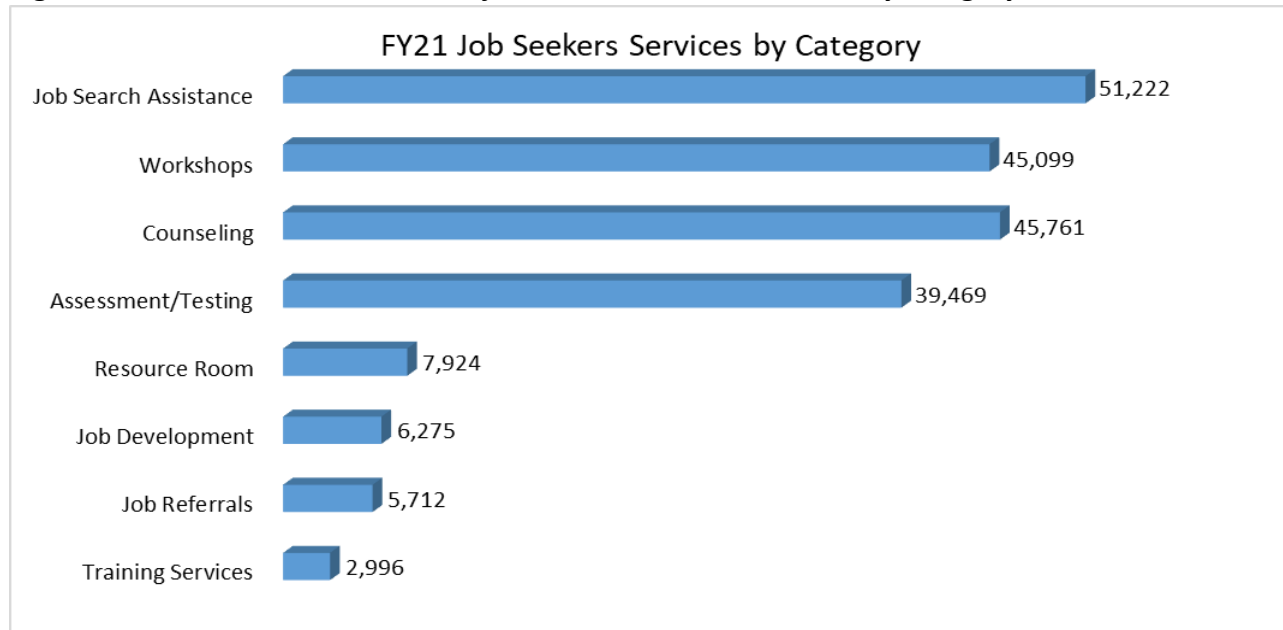
**Figure 40: FY21 Education Levels of MassHire Career Center Customers**



Source: Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System data.

A summary of the *type* activity conducted at MassHire Career Centers can be seen in the chart below.

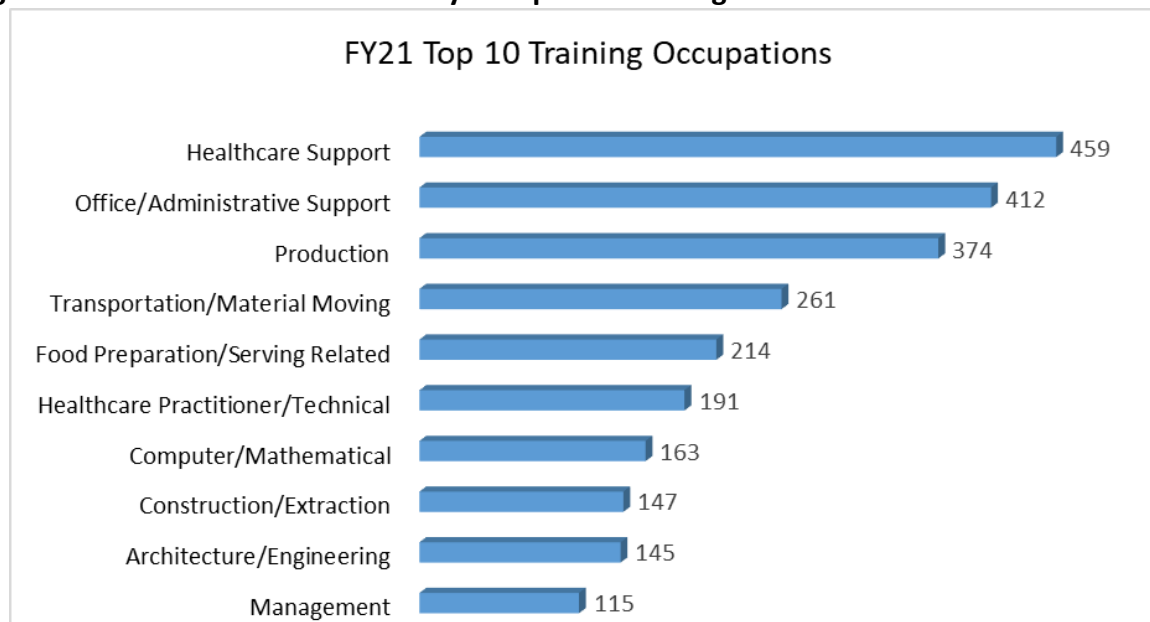
**Figure 41: FY 2021 Massachusetts’s jobseeker services delivered by category**



#### *MassHire Career Center Training Resources*

In FY21, the top ten WIOA funded training was in the following top ten occupational categories.

**Figure 42: FY21 WIOA Enrollments by Occupational Categories**



Source: Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System data.

Beyond the MassHire Career Centers, our system continues to be engaged in various programs and partnerships that incorporate additional workforce activities and supportive services. Leveraging programs that multiple agencies and workforce partners share in utilizing is key to this effort under WIOA.

**Figure 43: WIOA Partner Programs – Clients Shared/Enrolled at MassHire**

	<b>FY 2020 (Year 1 of 2020 - 2024 Plan)</b>	<b>% of Total MassHire Customer Base</b>	<b>FY 2021 (Year 2 of 2020 - 2024 Plan)</b>	<b>% of Total MassHire Customer Base</b>
MassHire Career Centers	103,183	NA	68,138	NA
<b><i>Customers Shared with Partner Agencies</i></b>				
Adult Ed	53	0.1%	26	0.0%
DTA (TANF/SNAP)	2,362	2.3%	927	1.4%
MCB	1	0.0%	5	0.0%
MRC	113	0.1%	116	0.2%
RESEA (DUA)	54,085	52.4%	47,771	70.1%
SCSEP	8	0.0%	8	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,622</b>	<b>54.9%</b>	<b>48,853</b>	<b>71.7%</b>

Source: Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System data

### ***Services to Business***

MassHire BizWorks markets business services (funded by both state and federal resources) to the business community and cross-trains staff working with business on different resources. Over the years, thousands of companies benefited from MassHire BizWorks services. The goal of MassHire BizWorks is to align the resources and services offered to Massachusetts businesses through state workforce development, economic development, and education organizations in order to help Massachusetts businesses grow and thrive. To achieve this goal, MassHire BizWorks builds relationships across agencies and with businesses; develop standard staff business service knowledge and competencies across relevant state agencies; and coordinate and link resources and information.

As a result of these efforts more Massachusetts businesses are aware of, and utilize, relevant state resources and incentives; there is “no wrong door” for businesses to connect with business support; and services and outcomes continue to be captured to demonstrate the impact of these efforts. All companies, including those that are expanding, downsizing, or looking to maintain can benefit from services offered by MassHire BizWorks.

Services to address the workforce development and expansion needs of businesses and employers in Massachusetts are organized into five main categories:

- Recruiting and hiring
- Training, consultation, and workplace safety
- Layoff aversion and management
- Business development and partnerships

- Business compliance

The MassHire BizWorks Guide includes a list of external resources (non-state affiliated), important websites, and resource contacts (names, phone numbers, email, etc.) for a number of programs listed in the guide for easy referencing. This guide is available as a hardcopy handbook produced by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), as well as a downloadable document on the MassHire BizWorks website at <https://www.mass.gov/masshire-bizworks>.

The MDCS Rapid Response Team utilized The WorkShare program in FY21 due to the increased demand during the pandemic. The Massachusetts WorkShare Program allows workers in a company, a department or smaller unit within the company to work reduced hours while collecting unemployment insurance benefits to supplement their reduced wages. The MDCS Rapid Response Team worked in collaboration with the Department of Unemployment Assistance's WorkShare staff resulting in 513+ companies participating in the program. This effort resulted in an EOLWD Performance Recognition Award.

MDCS Rapid Response Team through MassHire BizWorks continues to proactively identify at-risk companies, intervene early, and propose alternatives to layoffs. The team advises companies of available federal, state, and local assistance programs, in addition to WorkShare; the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP); the Employee Ownership (ESOP) program; and the Workforce Training Fund Program (WTFP); and matching soon-to-be dislocated workers with growing companies. The Massachusetts WorkShare Program allows workers in a company, a department or smaller unit within the company to work reduced hours while collecting unemployment insurance benefits to supplement their reduced wages. ESOPs are employee-owned businesses where the employees buy the business from the owner. Tools, such as the Layoff Aversion Services Database match businesses and non-profit organizations to various programs and opportunities based on the company's parameters.

## **RESOURCES AND SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING TAFDC AND SNAP**

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) provides employment services for TAFDC clients through the Employment Services Program (ESP). The primary goals of DTA's employment programs are to assist TAFDC clients to prepare for and connect with career pathways and resolve barriers for sustained employment. DTA case managers connect TAFDC clients to employment and training programs by referring them to appropriate activities based on their skill level and economic mobility goals.

DTA's employment program options for TAFDC clients include:

- Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES)
- Employment Supports Services Program, via the Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI)
- Secure Jobs Program
- DTA Works Program



- Young Parents Program (YPP)
- Work Participant Program (WPP), and
- Empowering to Employ (ETE).

### **Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) Program**

CIES provides training, education, and job readiness services to TAFDC families interested in obtaining employment. The primary focus is to assist clients in seeking and securing employment in jobs connected to a career pathway with the supports necessary to stay employed and achieve career growth. In FY19, DTA re-procured this program and implemented a whole family approach to providing these services. This approach is facilitated by assessing and addressing the needs of each family across their life domains of family stability, well-being, financial management, education and training, and employment and career.

Through the CIES program, DTA hopes to affect change for families by:

- Empowering participants to pursue a path to economic mobility through education, training, and job readiness,
- Actively engaging participants to develop the skills necessary to achieve economic stability in a fulfilling career path, and
- Providing participants with hope and aspiration to break the cycle of poverty and achieve personal and economic growth as they pursue their goals

The CIES program provides a comprehensive array of job search, training, and education services focused on successful employment placement, career growth, and retention. Clients may also participate in industry-validated occupational/vocational training. The CIES program recognizes that job readiness involves more than just education and work history but includes addressing issues that can significantly impact an individual's ability to maintain employment such as health, housing stability, and family life. Through workforce development, contextual learning, and barrier busting, DTA partners with CIES providers to empower participants to build family stability while obtaining and sustaining employment.

CIES providers actively engage and partner with participants to set family goals and develop individualized employment plans incorporating four components: Assessment and Goal setting, Job-targeted Education and Skills Training, and Job Retention at 30, 90 and 180 days. Job Retention Services include goal setting, continued skill development, and coordinated case management. CIES outcomes are based on these four components which are all connected directly to employment. To obtain these outcomes, CIES providers support families as they pass through recognized milestones. Providers provide post-employment supports to clients for up to one year. To ensure providers have the resources to provide post-employment supports, outcome payments are made to service providers when clients retain employment and/or experience wage growth.

### **Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI)**

The Employment Supports Services Program, administered by the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) offers unique language, cultural and employment placement skills to TAFDC recipients who are refugees, immigrants, or Puerto Rican storm victims, and those whose primary language is not English. Services are provided in the client's primary language as they work to build their English language skills. Youth participants can enroll in this program after completing a HiSET or DTA's YPP.

Through ORI services, families can overcome cultural and linguistic barriers which may hinder them from obtaining and retaining employment. ORI's employment services include comprehensive assessment of family's needs, employment readiness, access to vocational skills trainings, financial literacy, job placement and retention. Currently, ORI provides ESP services to eligible clients in the Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Framingham, Holyoke, Lowell, Malden, North Shore, Quincy, Worcester, and Springfield.

In FY20, ORI was allocated \$1M with an additional \$250,000 adding a cost reimbursement component to enhance ESOL instruction and expand vocational skill training programs, financial literacy, and other pre- and post-employment services. The additional \$250,000 created similar outcome milestones to CIES tracking employment at 90 days.

### **Secure Jobs Program**

DTA collaborates with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to administer the Secure Jobs Program, which was created through a partnership between the Fireman Foundation and the Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness. Secure Jobs supports families who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness by bringing together employment and housing agencies to help increase economic stability. The theory of change for Secure Jobs is that a focus on employment can shorten the length of stay in shelter and expedite the attainment of permanent housing, contributing to upward economic mobility and family stability. Secure Jobs focuses on three key domains: Education and Career, Stable Housing and Economic Stability, and Family Stability and Well-Being. Participants have access to flexible funds, which are used to address individual barriers to employment. By connecting housing and workforce development services, Secure Jobs offers comprehensive supports that families need to obtain employment through client-centered economic mobility plans tailored to their individual needs.

Secure Jobs serves families receiving assistance from DHCD in the areas of Boston, Brockton, Fall River, Taunton, Hyannis, New Bedford, Framingham, Lawrence, Lowell, Holyoke, Springfield, and Worcester. Through Secure Jobs, DTA and DHCD have also aligned policies to reduce barriers for our shared families that support the best outcomes. Improved policy alignment is supported by the Secure Jobs Program Coordinator who provides both administrative and programmatic support in coordination with DHCD.

In FY21, the legislature increased funding for Secure Jobs from \$1M to \$3M. These additional funds were allocated to providers based on their previous performance and are being used to provide additional supports to families through flexible funds.

### **DTA Works**

The DTA Works Internship Program is a work-ready program funded for TAFDC recipients. DTA Works provides TAFDC recipients with the opportunity to acquire or develop skills necessary to re-enter the workforce. Interns are placed at a variety of locations including DTA offices, partner state agencies and non-profit community-based organizations where they receive on-the-job training and mentor support. Interns also work with their mentor and program coordinators to identify barriers that may be interfering with their economic mobility. Once identified, the intern and coordinator create specific goals to overcome any barriers and support the intern on their path to economic mobility. DTA Works public-private sector partnerships provide meaningful internship tracks that lead to employment in high demand labor markets such as healthcare.

Interns may participate for up to 36 weeks with the option to extend to an additional 12 weeks to support their transition to work. They receive a monthly education and training stipend to support their participation. The monthly stipend is in addition to their TAFDC benefits and does not impact those benefits. In FY20, the weekly stipend payment per intern increased from \$100 per week to \$125 per week.

In FY20, DTA Works also introduced a new program component, Budget Buddies, Inc., a non-profit organization focused on empowering women with low-income to confidently navigate their financial goals. Budget Buddies provides the necessary coaching to ensure interns are better prepared to manage and plan for financial cliffs as they transition from benefits to the workforce.

### **Young Parents Program**

The Young Parents Program serves young parents, ages 14 through 24, who are receiving TAFDC or are the non-custodial parent of a child receiving TAFDC. YPP is a year-round, full-time program that focuses on education to career pathways as the primary goal for young parents. The theory of change for YPP is that a two-generation approach helps both generations make progress together and provides interventions that can break the cycle of multi-generation poverty. YPP supports positive outcomes across three domains; Education and Career; Life and Personal; Parenting and Family.

Through YPP, DTA seeks to:

1. Empower parents to pursue a path to economic mobility through education pathways and job readiness, while establishing support networks that allow parents to successfully access and maintain active benefits,
2. Actively engage participants to develop the skills necessary to advocate and care for their children so that ultimately the children in this program are safe, healthy, and thriving and,
3. Provide a sense of hope and aspiration to empower families to break the cycle of multi-generational poverty through sustained school and community involvement and engagement with the program.

The 2-Gen approach of YPP recognizes that outcomes for parents and children are intertwined and cannot develop independently of one another. Research has documented the impact of a parent's education, economic stability, and overall health on a child's trajectory. Similarly, children's education and healthy development are powerful catalysts for parents. By promoting education and supports for children along with tools to improve parents' economic situations, outcomes for both the parent and child can improve.

### **Work Participant Program**

Since the passage of WIOA, DTA has worked closely with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) to implement a new, more integrated system of workforce development for DTA clients and other priority populations with significant barriers to work. The aim of this collaboration is to:

- Develop meaningful pathways to work and economic mobility for low-income, disabled and chronically un/underemployed individuals/families, and
- Ensure that DTA clients and families with significant barriers can access the workforce system with the support needed to attain and sustain employment.

This partnership has allowed DTA to provide additional employment supports to TAFDC and SNAP clients through the network of MassHire Career Centers in the Work Participant Program (WPP). Through WPP, clients receive access to individualized career counseling and guidance, workshops, job fairs, employer recruitment, and access to free resources to assist with their job search and applications.

### **Empowering to Employ**

Empowering to Employ is a partnership between DTA and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) that maximizes employment opportunities for workforce engagement for TAFDC families and clients with disabilities. This initiative was launched on July 1, 2018, with a shared commitment to establish an integrated employment model for individuals with disabilities receiving TAFDC leading to sustained employment, economic independence, and family stability.

DTA and MRC use a jointly-funded model of client engagement and intensive co-case management to provide individualized and meaningful services with the goal to:

- Shift the paradigm from *exemption* due to a disability to individualized vocational supports needed for employment,
- Work in partnership with local teams to identify "best practices" for improved employment-related outcomes for clients with disabilities and their families,
- Engage and sustain TAFDC clients in meaningful employment-related activities that lead to jobs in high demand industries,
- Develop and "test" an intensive co-case management model to promote, engage, and support clients on their path to economic stability.

Although DTA clients have always had access to MRC services, this initiative streamlines the enrollment process and allows DTA to take a targeted approach to connecting potential

participants. Both agencies have been committed to learning each other's services, developing strategies to blend agency strengths, and creating a process to meet the needs of individuals and families, with the goal of connecting participants to the workforce.

In FY20, the ISA provided funding for MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Job Placement Specialists in five designated DTA office locations: Quincy, Lawrence, Brockton, North Shore, and Fitchburg.

### **SNAP Path to Work**

The SNAP Path to Work program offers Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients who do not receive TAFDC benefits opportunities to gain skills, education, and experience necessary to secure and maintain regular employment and economic mobility. This is done through vocational skills training, education, work experience, job search training, job search assistance and job retention services offered to voluntary participants statewide through a growing network of contracted providers. See the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program portion of this plan for a more detailed description of the SNAP Path to Work Program.

## **RESOURCES AND SERVICES FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND ESOL**

Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS), a unit at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, provides educational services to adults with academic skill levels below 12th grade, and/or adults who need English language skills to succeed in our communities. Through both federal and state grants, ACLS funds a broad network of education providers, including local school systems, community-based agencies, community colleges, libraries, volunteer organizations, correctional facilities, and others. The goal is to establish free access for eligible undereducated and limited English proficient adults, age 16 and older, to highly effective adult education services in the sixteen Local Workforce Areas in the Commonwealth. The purpose of the services is to assist adult students to achieve their education and career goals as family members, workers, and community members, and prepare them to successfully take their next steps toward those goals, in college and further training, at work, and in the community.

Adult education supports innovative programs providing services, that:

- I. assist eligible individuals in attaining a secondary school credential and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
- II. assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners to improve their:
  - A. reading, writing, speaking and comprehension skills in English; and
  - B. mathematical skills;
- III. assist institutionalized individuals to obtain the education and skills necessary to reduce recidivism and facilitate:
  - A. re-entry into society;
  - B. further education and training or employment upon release;

- C. economic self-sufficiency; and
  - D. smooth transitions in their roles as family members and citizens;
- IV. accelerate participants' educational and career advancement by providing eligible individuals with ESOL services including civics education or pre-ASE and ASE services offered concurrently and contextually with local area workforce preparation and training activities that result in students attaining one or more industry-recognized credentials.

The adult education system provides other services and programs including:

Outstationing	The purpose of outstationing is to help eligible individuals access adult education services by assisting MassHire Career Center staff with intake, assessments, and referrals to adult education programs in the local area and educate current students about career center services.
Workplace Education	Programs create partnerships among education providers, business partners and unions (where the workforce is unionized) to identify needs for instructional services for adult incumbent workers. Services integrate ABE/ESOL with industry skills training/work readiness to develop increased economic self-sufficiency and a more productive workforce.
Transition to Community College	Programs provide a foundation of services within Massachusetts community colleges that enable adult learners to transition into and ultimately complete postsecondary education.
Primary Instruction by Volunteers	Programs provide access to highly effective adult education services to eligible adults who cannot or will not enroll in class-based instructional services at a Community Adult Learning Center.

## **MASSHIRE REENTRY SERVICES**

Massachusetts has an incarceration rate of 324 per 100,000 people. Approximately 22,000 individuals are in prison or jail in the Commonwealth (Prison Policy Initiative, June 2018). The workforce system seeks solutions to assist returning citizens identify a path to employment. MassHire Department of Career Service is collaborating with other public agencies to build career pathways and accelerate employment for returning citizens. "Returning citizens" refers to any constituent with a criminal record and/or arrest record, including individuals who were the past in prison or jail, in pretrial detention, or in juvenile justice facilities at the local, state, and federal level. Returning citizens may be on probation or on parole. "Reentry services" refers to career development activities administered by the public workforce system to support skill attainment and career growth for returning citizens and potentially for individuals who are currently in prison or in jail.

Massachusetts is exploring a strategy which acquaints incarcerated individuals with the workforce system during their internment. When these incarcerated citizens do return to their communities, barriers to employment are significant. Over the next four years, Massachusetts will expand its approach to supporting both populations: those incarcerated currently, and those who have been released. This marks a change in the system's approach, which was previously to focus on job seekers after their sentences were served.

#### *Reentry Services at the Local Level*

Each MassHire Workforce Board and MassHire Career Center builds relationships with state and county correctional facilities to support returning citizens and incarcerated citizens with reintegration activities. Examples of this work include a best practice model in Hampden County. Hampden County Reentry Partnership (HCRP) consists of the multiple facilities within the Hampden County Sheriff's Department, including the MassHire Holyoke Career Center and MassHire Springfield Career Center, and the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board. The Board works with returning citizens to overcome known barriers through connection with community and business partners. In Hampden County, 6,157 reentry customers received 81,756 workforce readiness and retention services over a 3-year period (2013-2016). This reflects a percentage increase of 103% in reentry customers served, with 3,040 reentry customers served between 2010 and 2013. These customers received 81,756 services between 2013 and 2016, for a percentage increase of 92% from 2010 to 2013, when 42,560 services were administered. Of the 6,157 customers serviced, the Board has wage match data from the Department of Revenue on 5,911 individuals. Employment was obtained by 65% of that number (3,838) within three quarters of program exit. Of the 3,838 employed customers, 2,386 (62%) retained their employment in all three quarters after exit. The Director of the Hampden County Reentry Partnership received a MassHire Award for excellence in serving this population. ([MassHire Hampden County Facebook organization page, 2018](#)).

The MassHire Boston Career Center is working the Department of Corrections to provide individuals incarcerated at the [Boston Pre-Release Center](#) with eighteen months or less of their sentences with career opportunity resources to support their integration back into their communities.

The MassHire North Shore Workforce Board is pursuing a relationship with local organizations, including the Northern Essex Sheriff's Department, to resource individuals imprisoned there.

#### *Reentry Services at the State Level*

In 2020, EOLWD will work with appropriate state agencies, community organizations, and businesses to establish a workgroup to support the reemployment and integration of returning citizens. This workgroup may explore:

- The utility of a Reentry Unit at the state level comprised of central office staff
- Expanding the capacity of the workforce system to serve returning citizens by building formal regional connections between public safety, education, and health services
- Implementing data tracking and analysis needed in order to evaluate the impact of programming

- Understanding what role the workforce system might play in the reduction of recidivism

MassHire Department of Career Services and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development are coordinating involvement with the [Massachusetts Prison Education Consortium](#), a joint initiative supported by the [Vera Institute](#) and the [Educational Justice Institute](#) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which “*supports a postsecondary education continuum for currently and formerly incarcerated people.*” MDCS and EOLWD are engaging with MPEC through a workforce lens, and providing information regarding employment resources for the education, correctional, and workforce practitioners who comprise the group.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts MassHire Department of Career Services will work with the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, the Department of Corrections, MassHire Career Centers and MassHire Workforce Boards, and businesses to develop strategies to support this target population through staff training and reemployment models for returning citizens, with particular focus on marketing hiring incentives such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and the Federal Bonding Program businesses.

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development MassHire Department of Career Services was awarded a Fidelity Bonding Demonstration Grant to expand the use of Federal Fidelity Bonds to help individuals with criminal records with employment opportunities. Federal Fidelity Bonds, also referred to as bonds, protect the employer against losses incurred as a result of illegal actions by a bonded employee and are conferred through the Federal Bonding Program (FBP). The goals of this grant are:

- To improve employment outcomes for persons with criminal records
- To educate employers and partners about the availability of fidelity bonds, and the Federal Bond Program’s purpose
- To supply MassHire practitioners with a hiring tool for persons with criminal records
- To perform outreach to employers and encourage them to hire persons with criminal records

Through inter/intra-agency partnerships at the state, regional, and local levels, and through direct engagement with businesses in key industries, the public workforce system will work toward the development of new reentry strategies and resources for currently incarcerated job seekers and job seekers with criminal records.

## **SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

The major resources and support services for individuals with disabilities are administered through the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

**The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC):** Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s Vocational Rehabilitation program provides services to all individuals with disabilities over the age of 14, including students, youth, and adults so they can obtain and



maintain employment. This program is administered by the state and governed by the rules and regulations put forward by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. These programs are funded primarily by Federal monies along with the Commonwealth matching those funds. The main goal of this program is to assist people with disabilities to choose, obtain, and maintain competitive employment. Services offered include:

1. Job-driven competitive employment and training services, including job placement services, partnerships with employers, on-the-job training (OJT), work-based learning experiences, paid internships, with a focus on high-growth industries and employment opportunities.
2. Pre-employment transition services for both eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities.
3. Vocational counseling, guidance, and career development.
4. Vocational assessments and testing, job matching services, and job search assistance.
5. Provision of assistive technology to assist in obtaining and maintaining competitive employment.
6. Assistance, support, and guidance for post-secondary educational opportunities.
7. Medical and therapeutic services to assist with obtaining and maintaining employment.
8. Consult with employers about the Americans with Disabilities Act, employment tax credits, and accommodations and modifications to assist individuals with disabilities to go to work.
9. Ongoing employment support services to individuals with disabilities to maintain and advance in employment, including job coaching and counseling support.

MRC/DMH Employment Initiative provides an integrated employment framework to ensure full employment for people with mental health needs at the same rate of employment as the general population. The focus of this initiative is on individuals served by DMH through Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS). These individuals are being referred to MRC for Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services. To serve these individuals, MRC is using an Integrated Resource Team approach, where partner agencies and supports come together to craft and jointly own a Job Seeker's employment goal, to coordinate wrap-around services and ongoing collaboration and communication.

The MRC Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) program provides assessment, skills training, job placement, initial support, interim support, and ongoing support services to assist consumers in their efforts to choose, obtain, and maintain competitive employment in an integrated work setting. Through the six CIES service components, consumers receive individualized services and supports they need to achieve and maintain successful employment opportunities throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The **Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)**: provides employment-related services to eligible participants of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program beginning at the age of 14. Vocational Rehabilitation Services offered include:

1. Evaluation and counseling to identify job goals
2. Assessment of work sites and the need for assistive technology
3. Assistive technology, orientation and mobility instruction, and rehabilitation teaching to enable blind persons to be independent at work
4. Providing funds for college or vocational training
5. Job counseling
6. Pre-employment transition services
7. Supported Employment Services
8. Short and long-term internships
9. Mentorship

## **RESOURCES AND SERVICES FOR YOUTH**

**MASSHIRE WIOA Youth**: Workforce Boards in each of the 16 workforce areas ensure the provision of services designed to help in school and out-of-school youth between the ages of 14 to 24 complete their secondary education, enter post-secondary education/training, or enter employment. Out of school youth and in-school youth receive comprehensive assessments, career planning, support services, alternative education, work-based learning experiences, and occupational skills training. These programs and services are available to youth and young adults throughout the Commonwealth and are accessed through MassHire Career Centers or WIOA Youth Service Providers.

Youth and young adults eligible for WIOA programs face a variety of barriers to completing education and entering employment, including but not limited to; juvenile justice involved, foster care, pregnant or parenting, homeless, or disability. Youth and young adults participating in the WIOA youth program also receive access to required program service elements that support financial literacy, leadership and development, and entrepreneurial skills.

Programs and services including workshops, information sessions, and work experiences are offered in-person, virtually, or hybrid model.

**Career and Technical Education (CTE)/Perkins**: Building on input from industry, community organizations, educators, and economic development in WIOA regional planning in the summer of 2017, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts embarked on a new chapter in Career Technical Education (CTE) for its students, launching a “High-Quality College and Career Pathways” (HQCCP) initiative. This initiative is the outgrowth of a number of recent, complementary bodies of work that began several years ago in Massachusetts, overseen by the Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC) and aligned to the state’s WIOA plan. The WSC

was [created by an Executive Order](#) of Governor Charlie Baker in early 2015. The Cabinet aligns the Executive Offices of Education, Labor and Workforce Development, and Housing and Economic Development toward a comprehensive economic growth agenda. The Cabinet is charged with creating and implementing a strategy to ensure that individuals can develop and continuously improve their skills and knowledge to meet the varying needs of employers in the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth has developed a set of guiding principles that provide a powerful context for all HQCCPs, as well as a more specific set of characteristics that define these pathways. In addition to the state's nationally recognized Vocational Occupational Programs the state has launched two types of HQCCPs, referred to as "Innovation Pathways" (IP) and "Early College" (EC) in alignment with the Strengthening Career Technical Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (Perkins V) requirements.

These pathways provide participating students in the Commonwealth with supportive, rigorous academic experiences and career development education relevant to their next steps after high school. All three pathway programs require:

- Equitable Access
- Academic Pathways aligned to labor market information and workforce development priorities identified by regional WIOA blueprints
- Enhanced Student Support
- Connection to Career inclusive of work readiness and work-based learning activities
- Documented effective Partnerships with local Workforce Boards, Career Centers, industry and post-secondary partners

Additionally, to support student awareness of CTE opportunities and to support student success, the Commonwealth launched My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) a statewide program for student-centered, multi-year planning tool designed to provide students with ongoing opportunities to plan for their academic, personal/social and career success.

Aligned to the WIOA Plan over the last few years, Massachusetts CTE collaborations has supported approval of **75** voc-tech programs, and approval of **75** Early College and Innovation Pathway programs, based on partnerships with **16** colleges and **19** workforce partners, and twenty five percent of high school districts have participated in MyCap planning.

**Connecting Activities:** A Department of Elementary and Secondary Education initiative designed to support college and career readiness for students. MassHire Workforce Boards use Connecting Activities (CA) to establish partnerships between schools and businesses to provide structured work-based learning experiences for students that support both their academic and employment skill attainment. Students participate in a range of career-related activities including onsite placements for work-based-learning opportunities. Students in CA utilize the [Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan](#) (MWBLP) to assess skills developed through worksite learning experiences. The MWBLP includes a job description, a description of the Employability Skills and Career and Workplace Specific Skills used in the student's placement and a

performance review section. The MWBLP is a tool used to measure gains made in employability and career readiness skills competencies.

**YouthWorks:** YouthWorks is a state-funded subsidized employment program for teens and young adults aged 14 to 21 living in low-income communities across Massachusetts, administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. YouthWorks uses a model that is age, stage, and path appropriate, aiming to increase the employability of teens and young adults through experiences that prepare, coach, and support them in job readiness, career pathways and job success. YouthWorks programs serve a wide range of participants in terms of ages, levels of career awareness, and goals. In order to better provide all participants with effective and relevant youth workforce development services, YouthWorks defines its offering into three specific tiers, which include service and project-based learning, early and career trajectory employment experiences, and career pathway training and support. YouthWorks increases the employment of teens through partnerships that prepare, coach, and support teens in job search and job success.

In order to support continued and strategic service to a subset of participants, increased capacity to engage and maintain private sector partnerships, stronger alignment with Connecting Activities (the state's initiative that supports adults who broker unsubsidized work placements for teens), and an avenue for tracking participant outcomes, YouthWorks is transitioning to a full-year funding model and no longer will operate a summer program and subsequent smaller year-round program separately. As part of the program model, all participants are engaged in Signal Success, Commonwealth Corporation's innovative work readiness and career exploration initiative which is also used in WIOA youth programming. During the summer, participants work up to 25 hours per week at public, private, and nonprofit worksites. Participants also take part in job-readiness workshops to help them acclimate to their jobs. In many cases, a YouthWorks placement serves as a young person's first job.

YouthWorks grants support programs in more than 31 cities and towns and are operated by a mix of MassHire Boards, MassHire Career Centers and community-based organizations. 15.5 million in Youthworks funding will serve 4,552 low-income teens and young adults across the Commonwealth during the summer of FY20 and year-round during FY20 – FY21.

**Adult Education (WIOA Title II):** Both the federal WIOA Title II and Adult Education state funded programs serve a significant number of youth. In FY20 – 21, 2,306 out of school youth were served by the Adult Education system.

**Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC):** MRC makes Pre-Employment Transition Services available to all students with disabilities statewide who are eligible or potentially eligible for MRC services. Pre-ETS services consist of five service components:

- Job exploration counseling;
- Work-based learning experiences;
- Workplace readiness training;

- Counseling in Post-Secondary Education;
- Self-Advocacy

**YouthBuild:** YouthBuild provides services to youth and young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 that have a positive impact on life choices. YouthBuild programs offer a unique curriculum, that combines academic instruction with workforce development training. Participants engage in contextualized learning in the classroom and on the job site building and renovating affordable housing in their communities.

The Massachusetts YouthBuild Coalition (MYBC) consisting of the eleven (11) operating YouthBuild programs in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. All the Massachusetts programs are in the major urban areas across the Commonwealth in Gateway Cities. There are YouthBuild programs in Boston, Brockton, Cambridge/Chelsea, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, New Bedford, Quincy, Salem/Lynn, Springfield, and Worcester. The coalition was formed in 1996 when there were six programs in the state and over the years has grown to its present level of 11 sites.

The MYBC has evolved over the years to its present state where one of the major missions is to provide technical assistance to all the programs, highlight best practices, and provide the best experience possible for the young people served. To that end we are particularly proud of some innovative practices that are unique in the YouthBuild world. We have instituted a system of peer evaluation to make certain that all our programs are providing quality services. Each program is evaluated by the Executive Director and the team of peer directors from other programs who look at every aspect of the program, including each program component, organizational quality, and best practices which can then be disseminated to other programs. In addition, MYBC has developed a Learning Academy. These Academies which are held every year provide training opportunities for all the staff at all the programs. We highlight topics that are especially pertinent at a given time and make sure that we engage the staff in the development of future training.

The Board of the MYBC is collection of devoted members who believe in the mission of the Coalition. By working together to develop strategies for improvement as well as answers to concerns, we have developed a coalition that has served as a model nationally among the 250 programs in the United States as well as those around the world served by YouthBuild International.

**Job Corps:** Job Corps is a no-cost education and career technical training program administered by the U.S Department of Labor. Job Corps has three centers in Massachusetts; located in Chicopee, Devens, and Grafton.

Job Corps offers free hands-on career technical training in high-growth industries for low-income youth and young adults 16 to 24 years. Students can receive hands-on training in career areas such as Automotive Technology, Construction, Manufacturing, Finance and Business, Health Care, Homeland Security, Hospitality, and Information Technology. Job Corps offers industry-recognized credentials in high-demand industries. Additionally, Job Corps is committed to the development of green job training and preparing students for careers in fields that will lead to a cleaner, more energy-efficient future.

In addition to career technical training, courses in independent living, employability skills, and career success skills are offered to help students transition into the workplace. Job Corps offers career planning, on-the-job training, residential housing, food service, driver's education, health and dental care, a bi-weekly basic living allowance, and a clothing allowance. In the academic classroom, students can earn a high school diploma or the equivalent. Job Corps graduates receive job placement and college admissions assistance, in addition to transitional support services to include assistance locating and securing, housing, childcare, and transportation.

## **RESOURCES AND SERVICES FOR OLDER WORKERS**

### **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP):**

Administered by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, the Senior Community Service Employment Program, funded under Title V of the Older Americans Act through the United States Department of Labor, enables us to help employ low-income individuals, age 55 and older, throughout the Commonwealth. SCSEP remains the only federal, person-centered, workforce development program targeted to serve older workers. The Government Accountability Office has identified SCSEP as one of only three federal workforce programs with no overlap or duplication.

Enrollees are placed in temporary training assignments where they gain valuable on-the-job work experience and training needed to gain employment in the private sector. The dual goal of the Senior Community Services Employment Program is to:

1. Enable older low-income job seekers to develop the skills and self-confidence to obtain unsubsidized jobs and become financially self-sufficient; and
2. Provide valuable community service at on-the-job training sites, to improve participant's self-sufficiency, perform meaningful civic service, and to strengthen communities.

These goals are achieved through multiple strategies, which includes the use of on-the-job-experience (OJE) with efforts to engage employers through outreach and recruitment to local employers whereby participants are placed at eligible training sites for which they are paid minimum wage for 20 hours per week. Another strategy is to provide Job Club training, an intensive job search training program. EOEA will continue to provide these workshops in all service areas.

Implementing Skill Training is another primary focus as well, as EOEA assesses and evaluates MA-SCSEP participants' skills and job interests, while focusing on specific occupations and skill training pathways through WIOA vendors, community colleges and other low-cost training providers.

## TALENT PIPELINE INITIATIVES FOR BUSINESS

### *Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund*

An initiative created in 2006 and administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, the Trust Fund supports industry sector partnerships to develop training pipelines to meet the skill needs of businesses in high demand occupations. Each partnership includes businesses with common skill needs, educational institutions, workforce board/s, and other related partners. The partnerships provide training and education services for a two- to three-year period for industries including health care, manufacturing, clean energy, life science, trades, financials services, and hospitality.

\$38.5M has been appropriated for the Fund since 2007 and builds a program infrastructure that allows workforce boards to add capacity through WIOA, TAA and other programs.

Eighty-six partnerships have been supported through the WCTF since 2007; many of the partnerships continued beyond the grant period creating a platform for working strategically with critical industries to address their ongoing and changing workforce needs.

### *Workforce Training Fund*

The Workforce Training Fund Program (WTFP) helps address business productivity and competitiveness by providing resources to Massachusetts businesses to fund training for current and newly hired employees through competitive grants. Companies must pay into the WTFP in order to be eligible to apply for grant funds.

The workforce development boards, and career centers, work closely with local employers to access the Workforce Training Fund for their incumbent worker training needs. Grant programs include:

- General Programs Grants up to \$250,000 that are awarded competitively to employers, employer organizations, labor organizations, training providers, and consortia of such entities to train current and newly hired workers. Applicants may use a training provider of their choice.
- Express Program Grants assists companies with 100 or fewer employees to address their employee training needs through a list of pre-registered courses. Eligible employers complete a short, online application to request grant funds for pre-registered training courses.
- The Small Business Direct Access Program addresses smaller-scale training needs by making training slots in popular topics available, free of charge, to eligible businesses. Businesses with 100 or fewer Massachusetts employees that contribute to the Workforce Training Fund are eligible to access training through the Small Business Direct Access Program.

The Workforce Training Fund is supported through business contributions, raising approximately \$21 million each year. In FY 2019 the Workforce Training Fund, through its General Program, awarded \$17.4 million through 152 grants to support 189 businesses in training 12,4118 incumbent workers.

## The Strengths and Opportunities for Workforce Development Activities

(B) Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above. (C) Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

Leveraging resources and aligning WIOA partner agency program services are critical to workforce development activities that are comprehensive, and customer centered. The Commonwealth will continue to build on existing partnerships and develop new ones in order to expand capacity to deliver workforce development activities that meet a variety of needs for job seekers and business. The table below outlines the key areas of focus in this State Plan, addressing areas of strength, capacity and progress for the system and areas of opportunity to enhance capacity and maximize impact on the system's customers.

Figure 44: SWOT Analysis

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
<p><b>All Job Seekers and Businesses</b></p> <p><b>MassHire Career Centers (MCCs) and MassHire Workforce Boards</b></p>	<p>Unified MassHire brand across all career centers in the Commonwealth to help customers identify where public workforce development services can be accessed; unifies MassHire staff across workforce system to enhance and streamline the customer experience.</p> <p>USDOL resources integrated under one roof for "one-stop" for customers in all MCCs.</p> <p>Local "Umbrella" MOUs developed and signed by all required WIOA partners ensures locally driven, integrated workforce system.</p> <p>"Shared Customer" definition and policy developed by the state, and further articulated in local areas to ensure all partner services are provided and integrated at the MCC.</p> <p>Local "customer flow" agreements building on strong partnerships with social service entities, local service providers and non-profit organizations, particularly for serving those with barriers to employment (low-skilled, limited English proficient, etc.).</p> <p>"Customer Centered Design" elements integrated into the MCC to enhance the customer experience.</p> <p>One common data system (Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) - coordinate, schedule, monitor and report on virtually all service activities.</p> <p>JobQuest - allows job seekers and business to conduct activities such as create/modify their customer profiles, develop job postings, or search for eligible training providers. Enables customers to access self-</p>	<p>Improve and integrate MassHire and partner data systems to create operational efficiencies, as well as bolster the system's analytical capacity. Work in progress.</p> <p>More demand for subsidized training vouchers for customers compared to need. Demand has waned during COVID. Massachusetts is analyzing the landscape to determine strategies and actions toward increased training opportunities in target sectors.</p> <p>Limited MCC access during evenings and weekends creates challenges for customers who cannot visit the career center during traditional business hours (e.g., incumbent workers, those engaged in programming with partners, etc.).</p> <p>Expanding access points for career center services, including online, through co-located staff, and through community partners. Virtual access for all services has ramped up to nearly 100%. Customer digital literacy remains a challenge to be addressed.</p> <p>Integrated education and training models for partner customers (e.g., ABE students).</p> <p>To provide career pathway opportunities to those with challenges to employment through registered apprenticeship expansion.</p>



Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
	<p>service activities that augment the spectrum of staff supported services at MCCs.</p> <p>Workforce Connect (<i>in development</i>) – to allow job seekers to see their data across multiple partner organizations’ systems.</p> <p>Strong Veterans Services - Local DVOPs have direct contact and coordination with homeless Veteran shelters, the VA and local area community organizations that provide direct services and training program opportunities leading to gainful employment and self-sufficiency.</p> <p>Regional Planning Initiative defines priority industries and occupations for the region; programs in these “in-demand” careers are being designed and run by local partners to serve target populations such as veterans, youth, and returning citizens.</p> <p>Regional planning also aligns strategic initiatives and funding to locally driven regional blueprints for create career pathway opportunities for customers of the workforce system.</p> <p>Availability of multiple labor market tools to help inform job seekers decisions related to careers or business needs.</p> <p><b>These include:</b></p> <p>The Massachusetts Career Information System (MassCIS), portfolio tool that enables users to explore career outlooks, as well as knowledge, skills and abilities, and educational requirements.</p> <p>Transferrable Occupational Relationship Quotient (TORQ): An easy to navigate, easy to understand career exploration tool based on O*NET occupational competency profiles.</p> <p>MassHire BizWorks helps to ensure businesses are accessing the right resources to fit their needs; transcends across multiple partners and agencies to ensure there is no “wrong door” for businesses.</p> <p>Burning Glass Labor Insight: a tool that uses real-time data to identify emerging industry and occupational trends, find people jobs, and local employers in a specific industry, or to identify the industry category for a specific employer to find out more about what they do and what kind of workers they employ.</p> <p>WorkKeys Curriculum in all the MCCs offer an opportunity for job seekers to enhance foundational workplace competencies</p>	<p>To better track and match job candidates to available jobs through enhanced applicant tracking capabilities.</p> <p>For streamlined business experience to position the workforce system as an attractive resource to meeting a business’ workforce needs.</p>

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
<b>Resources and Services for Individuals Receiving TAFDC</b>  <b>Department Transitional Assistance Employment Services Programs</b>	<p>(reading, math, and graphic literacy) as well as soft skills and financial literacy. Tool is also shared with many Adult Education programs.</p>	
	<p>Registered Apprenticeship Expansion creates more career pathway opportunities for shared customers in the workforce system.</p>	
	<p>Work Program Participant Program (WPP) leverages the resources and expertise of DTA and MassHire services to boost employment outcomes for people on public benefits.</p>	<p>Resources for occupational skills training or career pathways is limited. Resources do not match demand.</p>
	<p>Legislative reforms assist in smoothing transition period from receiving public benefits to economically self-sufficient families.</p>	<p>Limited number of providers in rural areas creates barriers to those with transportation issues a limited number of entry points for TAFDC customers.</p>
	<p>Improved performance regarding labor participation rates.</p>	<p>Clients experience “Cliff Effects” challenges as they seek employment while on public benefits.</p>
	<p>There is a strong relationship with TAFDC and local providers. Providers maintain a regular presence at Transitional Assistance Offices (TAO) to keep TAFDC clients engaged and to more effectively coordinate services with DTA case managers.</p>	<p>To leverage partnerships and collective workforce system resources to serve clients of various needs.</p>
<b>Adult Education</b>	<p>The Adult Education system (federal and state funds) serves thousands of adults who are low skilled, basic skills deficient, lack English proficiency, lack a high school diploma or its equivalent and it helps them close the educational gap and qualify for further opportunities.</p>	<p>Because of significant barriers and low educational levels many Adult Education and ESOL students require years of ABE/ESOL before they can benefit from the opportunities of the workforce system.</p>
	<p>The Adult Education system engages a wide range of program providers (including employer partnerships for workplace education) to meet the needs of various communities with specific barriers.</p>	<p>To deepen relationship with workforce system partners to ensure productive student multi-year engagement (e.g., career pathway development, etc.)</p>
	<p>Adult Education supports postsecondary success through the Transition to College programs.</p>	<p>To support the out-stationing model with a system to track referrals and cross agency collaborations.</p>
	<p>Adult Career Pathways programs provide an opportunity for MassHire (Boards and Career Centers) to collaborate regionally on creating career pathways for Adult Education students.</p>	<p>To partner with the Adult Education and workforce systems connect Adult Career Pathways participants to relevant training, apprenticeships, and jobs.</p>
	<p>Out-stationing (an Adult Education staff person onsite at a MCC has been institutionalized over the years and</p>	<p>To scale up successful regional integrated education and training (adult career pathways) models that leverage training resources for Adult Education students.</p>

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
	<p>connects MCC with the Adult Education system.</p> <p>Adult learners are exposed to level appropriate workforce preparation activities that help them plan for next steps after Adult Education services.</p> <p>Local Adult Education representatives were involved in the MCC operator selection process and the local MOU development, ensuring system partners were adequately meeting the needs of adult learners.</p> <p>Regional Planning is influencing Adult Education's alignment with priority industries and occupations, and thus the broader workforce system. Locals are developing regional integrated education and training (adult career pathways) models that leverage training resources for Adult Education students.</p> <p>Many MCCs have been mapping out service pathways for adult learners across adult education and MassHire, establishing referral protocols and cross agency collaborations.</p>	<p>For the workforce system to provide Adult Education staff with a better understanding of regional labor market needs through shared use of labor market tools and regional planning.</p> <p>To continue connecting Adult Education out-of-school youth population with YouthWorks programs.</p>
Re-Entry Services	<p>Excellent coordination at local level with sheriff's departments to provide career center services for incarcerated job seekers.</p> <p>Some Career Centers support long term relationships with businesses owners willing to hire individuals with criminal records, initiated through proactive business outreach.</p> <p>MCCs are increasingly viewing the reentry population as including not only returning citizens, but also individuals serving time currently. In response to the need behind the wall, MCCs are exploring methods to bring staff and career development resources into prisons and jails.</p>	<p>The Federal Bonding Program and Work Opportunity Tax Credit could be packaged together as part of an incentive package to support companies hiring individuals with criminal records, which could inform a strategy to market returning citizens to businesses.</p> <p>Anti-carceral youth organizations (e.g., UTEC in Lowell) are interested in developing relationships with the workforce system to support their constituents. Through a central reentry unit, MassHire could pursue relationships in that network of organizations which, although they work with the reentry population, are not themselves correctional facilities.</p> <p>Increasingly, private and public universities are pledging to support secondary education access in prisons and jails (e.g., the Massachusetts Prison Education Consortium). The public workforce system can coordinate with these entities to support career pathways and work-based learning models which are fully</p>

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
Services for Individuals with Disabilities	The Vocational Rehabilitation agencies' (Mass Rehabilitation Commission, Mass Commission for the Blind) engagement as committed partners of the workforce system facilitate consumers with disabilities to access to broader support and workforce services.	accessible to individuals in prisons and jails.
	MRC and MCB conduct accessibility audits of MCCs to ensure tools and resources are accessible for people with disabilities.	To leverage workforce system resources, particularly as a way to serve those who do not meet the Priority of Service requirements can access workforce services.
	MRC piloted a project with MassHire to create opportunities for MRC customers to engage in occupational skills training.	To engage vocational rehabilitation services to align with state and regional priority industries and occupations.
	MRC has partnered with MassHire BizWorks to streamline employer engagement and engage in joint professional development for staff. The program operates at a large scale and impacts thousands of young people each year.	To create avenues of engagement for people with disabilities in career pathway workforce services, such as apprenticeship and other work-based learning opportunities.
Services for Youth WIOA Title I Youth Program	In-school youth aged 14-21 and out-of-school youth 16-24 receive access to a range of program services including comprehensive assessments, career planning, support services, alternative education, work-based learning experiences, and occupational skills training.	For better alignment with other publicly funded workforce development programs.
High-Quality College and Career Pathways/Perkins	WIOA Title I is designed to serve youth with barriers to entering employment as well as completing education.	For better alignment of occupational skills training to priority industries and occupations.
Connecting Activities	Through WIOA Title I, youth are provided with opportunities and resources that prepare them for successful participation in the labor force.	To build capacity for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.
Youth Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connectivity with target industries and occupations as identified through Regional Planning</li> <li>Identification of standards for high-quality career-connected youth programming</li> <li>Direct engagement and coordination between MassHire Workforce Boards and local high schools</li> <li>Use of shared workforce preparation tools, such as Signal Success, across youth workforce programs</li> </ul>	<p>To engage more private-sector employers could be engaged and provide subsidized, partially-subsidized or unsubsidized employment opportunities for teens.</p> <p>To focus on job quality of the job placement and career growth for young people.</p> <p>To align programmatic standards for in-school youth with out-of-school youth.</p> <p>To streamline workforce services across the in-school and out-of-school youth program spectrum.</p> <p>To make connections to out-of-school youth population transitioning out of secondary school, enrolled in the Adult Education system, or are connected with other youth workforce programs.</p>

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
<b>Services for Older Workers</b>  <b>Senior Community Service Employment Program</b>	<p>The program provides work readiness training through a formal curriculum.</p>	
	<p>Transitioning from a summer employment program to a year-round program.</p>	
	<p>Creates an early “entry point” into a talent pipeline for a young person with experiences such as occupational skills training and/or sector specific work-based learning.</p>	
	<p>Turning into a tiered program that meets the needs of participants at any age, stage and path, including service and project-based learning and career pathway training and support.</p>	
	<p>There is alignment with Connecting Activities and other strategic partnerships with key workforce and education programs.</p>	
	<p>A renewed focus on private sector employer engagement strategy to strengthen existing local partnerships and open doors to new opportunities especially in priority sectors.</p>	
<b>Services for Older Workers</b>  <b>Senior Community Service Employment Program</b>	<p>Staff will receive professional development to support leadership and career development for young adults and engage existing and potential employers. Program participants provide invaluable community service in public and private non-profit agencies (host agencies) by increasing the capacity of host agencies to address community needs.</p>	<p>Most SCSEP projects rely heavily on participant staff members and the maximum duration is 48 months, thus there is a lot of staff turn-over in the program.</p>
	<p>Provides career pathways and skill upgrading through the community service assignment for otherwise chronically unemployed individuals with multiple barriers to employment.</p>	<p>To leverage workforce partners to provide access to wider services and opportunities.</p>
	<p>Fosters individual economic self-sufficiency, and social and emotional well-being.</p>	
	<p>Cross-training and professional development with partner agencies (e.g., MassHire, MRC) have improved staff skill set.</p>	
<b>Talent Pipeline Initiatives for Business</b>  <b>Workforce Competitive-ness Trust Fund</b>	<p>Directly supports training for jobs that are in demand. WCTF funding has focused on populations with challenges to employment, including</p>	<p>To leverage registered apprenticeship, WIOA, youth funding, and other federal funding streams to provide training for jobs in demand.</p>

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
<b>Talent Pipeline Initiatives for Business</b>  <b>Workforce Training Fund</b>	<p>those experiencing “cliff effects” (Learn to Earn.)</p>	<p>To streamline industry sector partnerships to priority industries and occupations as identified through Regional Planning.</p>
	<p>Leverages private sector investments (there is a 30% required match.)</p> <p>Creates critical infrastructure in regions to engage with businesses to understand their needs as the industry goes through changes and can adjust strategy real-time.</p> <p>Now has a recurring revenue stream through the Workforce Training Fund leads to stability of this funding.</p>	
	<p>Dedicated funding for Incumbent Worker training tied to a business need that is related to competitive position and growth.</p>	<p>Application process can be slow for businesses without human resources capacity.</p>
	<p>Business-friendly and allows for the strengthening of employer relationships.</p> <p>Supports small businesses through the General Program, Express program, and Small Business Direct Access program.</p> <p>Express Program Course Directory provides a compendium of approved courses and makes it easier for businesses to identify relevant training for employees.</p>	<p>To align the Express Program Course Directory with Eligible Training Provider List as well as a Credential of Value list (in development).</p>

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## State Strategic Vision and Goals

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The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include:

- a. Vision. Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.
- b. Goals. Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—
  - i. Include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment<sup>3</sup> and other populations.<sup>4</sup>
  - ii. Include goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.
- c. Assessment. Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce investment system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

The 2020 vision for the public workforce system was jointly developed by all of the WIOA partners beginning in 2016, refined in 2020 and re-affirmed in 2022.

### *Vision Statement*

All Massachusetts residents will benefit from a seamless system of workforce and education services that supports **career pathways** for individuals and families and leads to a more informed, educated, **diverse** and skilled workforce that meets the Commonwealth's businesses' demands and sustains a **diverse** labor force and thriving economy.

To achieve this vision, WIOA partners will work to:

- ✓ **Design inclusive and effective career and service pathways** across partners that are aligned with business demand and support diversification of labor force demographics
- ✓ **Improve foundation skills and transitions** to education, training, and credentialing for individuals with challenges to employment
- ✓ **Assist individuals and their families with challenges to employment** to achieve economic self-sufficiency through support services, labor-market driven credentialing, and employment
- ✓ **Meet the workforce needs of job seekers and businesses** who engage in the public workforce system.

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<sup>3</sup> Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English-language learners; individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

<sup>4</sup> Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

## ***State Strategies and Goals***

- The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State’s strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State’s economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided Section (a).
- Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). “Career pathway” is defined at WIOA section 3(7). “In-demand industry sector or occupation” is defined at WIOA section 3(23).
- Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, mandatory and optional MassHire partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2)

The state strategies in the 2020-2024 WIOA Combined Plan flow from four key goals identified for the Commonwealth and on build on the strategies and impact resulting from on WIOA Workforce Development Partner network. State partners will work with regional partners to implement the following goals and strategies in pursuit of achieving the established vision for the workforce system. Many of the specific details on partnerships with business, integrated service delivery, and evaluation of results are included in Section III. The State Plan Advisory Committee established a statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Attachment C-1) to reaffirm the core and other partners commitment to implementing the goals and strategies below.

### **GOAL I: ADULT JOB SEEKERS**

**Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment (priority populations).**

The Commonwealth recognizes that all its residents benefit from education, skill development, and training that lead to sustainable careers and competitive wages. While Massachusetts strives toward an equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is especially necessary to ensure that job seekers who struggle to enter, and retain employment due to a variety of personal, educational, societal, and economic challenges receive access to education, high-quality training programs and necessary supports that will prepare them for success and accelerate employment. As such, job seekers, especially those with challenges to employment (also known as WIOA priority populations) must be prepared with training and skills necessary to be included in the pipeline to meet business demand for talent. Priority populations include individuals that are: low income, low skilled, persons with Limited English Proficiency, people with disabilities, older workers, returning citizens, racial/ethnic minorities, Veterans, unemployment claimants, and others as locally defined.



Over the next four years, Massachusetts will employ the following strategies and tactics to pursue this goal:

**Strategy: Increase the number of job seekers and incumbent workers from priority populations earning high-value credentials for priority industries and occupations.**

***Tactic 1: Expand Work-Based Learning and career pathway programs, including increasing Registered Apprenticeship in non-traditional in non-traditional fields and diversifying the apprenticeship pipeline.***

The Commonwealth continues to place an emphasis on offering programs models such as work-based learning as a method essential for developing strong employability skills and developing a work history for individuals entering the workforce or for those seeking opportunities for reskilling.

To support expansion of work-based learning and career pathway programming efforts, the Commonwealth will identify State-level programs that offer work-based learning and career pathway programs in priority industries and occupations that have successful employment placement outcomes. The work-based learning and career pathway programs will serve as models to scale across the 16 workforce areas.

Registered Apprenticeship is a viable program model that leads to careers with sustainable wages and salaries. Over the last six years Massachusetts has been involved in efforts to expand non-traditional industries and diversifying the apprenticeship pipeline. In June 2018, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and broad stakeholder representation developed a [Strategic Plan for Apprenticeship Expansion in Massachusetts](#). The apprenticeship strategic plan outlines a systematic approach to talent development, retention, and diversification of the apprenticeship pipeline. Massachusetts continues to focus on implementing the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan applying new apprenticeship grant resources toward the effort including the American Apprenticeship Initiative grant (\$2.9M), State Apprenticeship Expansion (\$3.3M), Apprenticeship State Expansion (\$1.4M), Massachusetts Capacity Building/State Expansion grant (\$3.4M), and the DEI Apprenticeship grant (\$4.0M) which focuses on enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion among apprenticeship efforts. 2020 saw growth in apprenticeships in “non-traditional” sectors; for example, manufacturing apprenticeships grew by 64%, IT/technology apprenticeships grew by 15%, and healthcare grew by 21%, and wholesale, the number of apprentices in Massachusetts increased by 40%.

Additionally, through the expansion of the Governor’s Career Technical Initiative (CTI), and introduction of the Rapid Reemployment Program, RENEW, the Success Grants for Training and Placement Programs (see “Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery”), Massachusetts seeks to expand access to training for adult learners in high-demand/high-impact fields.

***Tactic 2: Leverage WIOA funding streams (Title I, Title II (adult ed/ESOL), Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.) and increase collaboration in Perkins Post-Secondary programs to pay for training enrollments***

Through the local WIOA MOUs, MassHire and partner agencies continue to identify how funding streams can be leveraged to provide services to individuals that require a continuum of resources in order to attain their career goals. An example of leveraging funding streams could come in the form of an individual with a disability receiving training funding by WIOA Title I and the accommodations for the individual to attend the training are paid for through WIOA Title IV. Another example of leveraged funding includes the blending and braiding and blending state and federal funding to support adults engaged in the proposed Career Technical Institute (CTI).

***Tactic 3: Adopt Signal Success (career readiness) or other soft skills curricula across adult training provider network***

Career readiness and/or employability skills are characteristics that employers find desirable in job seekers of all ages. The Massachusetts workforce system is leveraging work toward modernizing the workforce system infrastructure move toward a more systematic approach of ensuring that all job seekers receive access to career readiness and employability skills curriculum.

Through these system modernizing efforts, MassHire is exploring technological platforms that can deliver career readiness and employability skills curricula that will be that will be used to compliment training and core service delivery.

***Tactic 4: Develop a validated list of high-value, Industry-Recognized Credentials***

Efforts to assist job seekers in earning industry recognized credentials of high value that lead to economic success will continue. To support this effort the Commonwealth is working toward the development of a comprehensive listing of industry recognized credentials of high value that are aligned to priority industries and occupations identified in the [Massachusetts Regional Labor Market Blueprints](#).

Massachusetts participated in the Department of Labor's Workforce Innovation Cohort - Credential Attainment. Members of the Massachusetts team consist of leadership from the following WIOA partner agencies: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development/MassHire Department of Career Services - representing Titles I and III; Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Adult Community Learning Services - representing Title II; Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission - representing Title IV. Team memberships also included leadership from the MassHire State Workforce Board, MassHire Boston Workforce Board and the MassHire Northshore Career Center.

Deliverables of the Massachusetts Credential Attainment were to develop a plan to:

- provide guidance to the workforce system on credentials, certificates, and licenses that meet the WIOA definition of industry recognized credentials.
- Create a process to include criteria in the Massachusetts's Eligibility Training Provider List Initial and Subsequent Eligibility policy - [100 DCS 14.100.3](#) that requires training providers to provide information to MassHire on attainment of industry recognized credentials for individuals enrolled in their training programs.
- ***develop a validated list of high-value, industry-recognized credentials*** in collaboration with WIOA partners and other state agencies that is aligned to priority industries and occupations identified in the Regional Planning Blueprints.

Massachusetts was also selected to participate in the Education Strategy Group Credential of Value Institute (COVI) cohort project. The Project objective was to develop a systematic approach for the Workforce Skills Cabinet (Labor/Education/Economic Development) to identify and prioritize Credentials of Value to enhance current and future strategies, policies and practices that reduce the Commonwealth's workforce skill gaps. Both the Credential Attainment Cohort and the COVI group are working collectively toward the development of a list of high-value, Industry-Recognized Credentials specific to Massachusetts that is validated and available to program staff to assist job seekers in making informed choices about viable career opportunities.

***Tactic 5: Use Prior Learning Assessments (PLA) to award college credits from sources such as work and life experiences.***

MassHire will work toward efforts to increase system-wide knowledge of and promote strategies for PLA to be used as a resource for increasing post-secondary credential attainment for Adult Learners. Pilots and initiatives for developing and implementing PLA strategies such as those launched by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning will be considered.

**Strategy: Streamline access and customer navigation across the network of workforce system partners.**

The reauthorization of WIOA has led to renewed efforts for partner agencies to work collaboratively in order to streamline access and customer navigation across the network of workforce system partner programs. MassHire and WIOA partners will deepen strategic partnerships to mitigate barriers to employment.

To that end, the need for cross-training of partner program services, and eligibility criteria has been identified. MassHire, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Senior Service Community Development Program have deployed a series of training sessions with each partner agency designed for staff to become familiar with partner program services, and program criteria. The training sessions are also designed to foster cooperation amongst staff in order to provide quality services to shared customers. In addition, the State Partner Advisory Committee has developed a sub-

Committee focused on cross-partner collaboration and training to scale up these efforts across the entire Massachusetts Workforce Development System network.

***Tactic 1: Imbed Universal Design principles in system-wide adoption of customer flow***

In May of 2018, Massachusetts was selected to participate in a Department of Labor - WIOA Innovation Cohort: Increase Programmatic Access in the Career Centers. Members of the Massachusetts team consist of leadership from the following WIOA partner agencies: Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development/MassHire Department of Career Services - representing Titles I and III; Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Adult Community Learning Services - representing Title II; Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission - representing Title IV. Team membership also included leadership from the Institute of Community Inclusion at University of Massachusetts Boston and the MassHire Greater Lowell Career Center. A key deliverable of this effort was to develop a plan for the Commonwealth to implement Universal Design principles that were conceived and developed by the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University, as standard practice throughout the MassHire system, including practical application in the MassHire Career Centers. (See Attachment F for the Universal Design Principles to be embedded within the MassHire system.) In order to do this, the Commonwealth will move towards creating system change by requiring Local MassHire Workforce Boards to ensure Career Centers are implementing Universal Design Principles as part of the Career Center certification process.

***Tactic 2: Support intentional training program design and statewide adoption of standard curricula***

The 2014 implementation of WIOA garnered renewed enthusiasm for collaboration and efforts to increase system capacity to provide streamlined services without duplication. One of the first steps toward increasing system capacity at the state and local level is to understand the programs, services, resources provided by partner agencies. It is important that staff understand the terminology used by partner agencies to describe certain program activities and how an individual's receiving services are referred to, e.g., client, student, customer, consumer, etc. In many instances partner agencies are speaking in different terms that have the same meaning. It is also important that staff are not only aware of other partner program services and resources but that they also understand respective partner agency eligibility criteria. To address this, MassHire has conducted cross-training with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance, and the Massachusetts Senior Service Community Service Program to raise understanding and awareness of the partner agencies' services. MassHire and the Adult Community Learning Services (Title II) are currently in the process of understanding how best to work together and will develop cross-training to support these efforts. The curriculum developed from these trainings will be standardized and will be recommended as part of the onboarding and professional development process for staff.

***Tactic 3: Increase proximity of services through technology and customer-centered design***

In an effort to build career center capacity and serve more jobseekers through a customer-centered design approach, we will:

*Explore opportunities for Career Centers to utilize online platforms* to offer workforce services online to job seekers. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated progress in this sphere as workforce service delivery moved online, setting the expectation for the workforce system to continue to have capacity for this service modality. The Road to Reemployment, Virtual Re-employment Pathway/MassHire Job Quest Modernization, and Employment Modernization Transformation Program have enhanced system capacity to meet this need (see “Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery”).

*Motivational Interviewing (MI) training* sponsored by the Executive Office of Elders Affairs was delivered to workforce development staff working directly with job seekers, consumers, and clients to support the provision of services within a customer-centered design approach. Through MI training, staff learned key principles, techniques, and tools of motivational interviewing. MI is a strategy that staff can use to have more effective conversation with job seekers so that they see themselves as central to the changes made in their life circumstances. The workforce system intends to explore how to scale MI across the state to better serve all workforce system customers.

*Co-location of WIOA partner program staff* in the MassHire Career Centers will continue to encourage making a variety of services available to job seekers in one location, either in-person or virtually. As a result of encouraging co-location in the 2016 WIOA State Plan, over 90 plus staff are co-located onsite at the MassHire Centers. The workforce system hopes to increase that number through further service integration efforts.

**Strategy: Enhance state and local partnerships to expand the workforce system's capacity to mitigate barriers to employment.**

***Tactic 1: Develop strategic partnerships with key support agencies (e.g., ESOL/Adult Ed, Learn to Earn partnerships, transportation, EOPSS/Department of Corrections, Perkins Programs, etc.***

Job seekers seeking career center services often have other needs that must be met in order to be positioned to enter and participate in career and training services that will lead to successful outcomes. Serving individuals through a person-centered approach requires putting the individual's needs at the center of program services. This approach often requires alignment of multiple programs and services, particularly in meeting the needs of customers who have been most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Career center staff must rely on their network of partner programs in order to provide a continuum of services to job seekers. MassHire and its partners will continue to develop strategic partnerships both at the state and local level with partner agencies that are positioned to meet the needs of jobseekers and where the roles and responsibilities of each partner are defined.

***Tactic 2: Convene business community to address opportunities and partnerships to increase employment for individuals with barriers to employment, including workplace ESOL***

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need to partner with businesses to generate employment outcomes, therefore the Commonwealth will continue to work with businesses to identify skill needs, build program curricula to match business demand, and engage in state and local partnerships that create avenues of opportunity for priority populations to access and progress along career pathways. (See “Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery”, and Goal III focused on the Business Customer)

**Strategy: Pioneer cutting-edge supports for public assistance recipients to incentivize work and address labor gaps**

***Tactic 1: Develop resource guide for workforce system customers and staff with Learn to Earn communication materials***

The Administration’s Learn to Earn Initiative is creating a messaging campaign focused on different public assistance cohorts to amplify changes to public benefit programs that incentivize work. WIOA partners will work together to finalize and distribute messaging through training for front-line staff providing workforce services to individuals receiving public benefits who want to go to work but are fearful they will hit a “benefit cliff” if they increase their wages.

***Tactic 2: Scale and enhance Work Participant Program (WPP) model for public assistance recipients***

The Work Participant Program (WPP) model requires each DTA Transitional Assistance Office (TAO) and each MassHire Career Center to have designated lead staff members that work together on behalf of DTA clients. These staff work collaboratively to ensure that Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) clients receive tailored and appropriate job readiness, job matching, coaching, and employment supports.

The DTA designates staff Full Engagement Workers (FEWs) from DTA local offices are also co-located at Career Centers and provide support, information, and resources to Career Center staff and DTA clients on a locally established schedule and frequency.

The local MOU and regular, ongoing local partner meetings should drive the model for local partner staff to work together to provide a full array of services to shared customers, the range of which encompasses initial assessment, career planning, workshops, event coverage and more. The successful completion of WPP services is expected to result in full-time, unsubsidized employment for consumers that is aligned with labor market needs and participant goals toward a career pathway.

The Commonwealth intends to enhance the WPP program to ensure all DTA and MassHire shared customers benefit from the program, including use of shared workforce tools such as the WorkKeys Curriculum and other career readiness systems.

***Tactic 3: Build MassHire/DHCD partnership to launch Moving to Work pilots for public housing recipients***

Department Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will partner with MassHire Career Centers across the state to provide career navigation support to DHCD's Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) holders. The career navigator will meet one-on-one with individuals to help them identify a career path that fits with available jobs in their region with good wages, benefits, and opportunity for advancement. The Career Navigator will work with the person to identify any training or education they need, assist with accessing those education and training resources, and then through the employer relationships of the MassHire Career Center support the individual through the process of finding a job and post-employment transition.

The goal is to assist participants with developing a pathway to high wage jobs, looking beyond initial employment to 2nd, 3rd, and 4th jobs. Career Center staff will work toward mapping regional employment opportunities leading to career opportunities for participants along the workforce continuum, from little to no work history to stable mid-career participants. The partnership between MassHire/DHCD will be supported by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Moving to Work ("MTW") funding. Outcomes of the MassHire/DHCD will be reviewed throughout the five-year commitment.

***Tactic 4: Use "Learn to Earn" resources to develop new innovations and approaches***

The Learn to Earn Initiative (LTE), proposed by Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karen Polito and adopted by the Legislature in the FY18 General Appropriations Act, is a comprehensive approach to providing unemployed and underemployed individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs with the supports, skills, and credentials they need to gain and retain employment in occupations for which employers have persistent demand.

In 2017, the Commonwealth Interagency Workgroup consisting of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Executive Office of Education, Executive Office of Health and Human Services, and the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development issued a Request for Qualifications for the Learn to Earn Initiative. Qualified partnerships were selected to work with Commonwealth Corporation for a duration of three (3) months to design or redesign an occupationally specific training and placement program that will:

- increase participants' earned income (net of any resulting decrease in public benefits),
- improve participants' and their families' economic stability, and
- meet employers' demand for talent.

Following the three-month program design period each partnership will, upon review and approval of their implementation plan, will be awarded funding to implement their program for up to two years.

LTE Partnerships will develop and test models to serve participants *in the context of their family/household*. LTE Programs will help participants set and achieve goals necessary for employment and sustained economic stability, such as maintaining and growing family net resources and minimizing the real or perceived potential impact of increased earned income on benefit receipt, including improving coordination across benefit programs and reducing benefit cliff effects.

Best practices and lessons learned from “Learn to Earn” will be used as resources for developing new and innovative approaches for servicing unemployment and underemployed individuals who receive public assistance and public benefits.

**Strategy: Develop new data sharing agreements to track customer progress along a career/wage pathway for priority populations**

Sharing data across partner programs is a critical component to ensuring the Commonwealth can track progress toward achieving workforce system goals and measuring success in impacting the lives of job seekers and their families, and businesses. The Commonwealth intends to build on progress from the 2016 WIOA State Plan, which laid the groundwork for establishing effective workforce system partnerships and conceptual framework for sharing data, by actualizing data sharing agreements and building systems that enhance the workforce system’s capacity to track and measure progress. Specifically, the Administration will work with WIOA partners on the following initiatives:

- **Leverage the Employment Modernization and Transformation Program** to connect a “shared customer” across separate systems to provide the customer a streamlined and integrated user experience across the Massachusetts Workforce Development system. See “Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery”.
- **Implement existing data sharing agreement and dashboarding tool to through the Learn to Earn initiative** to understand the patterns of “bundling” public benefit supports (childcare; TANF; SNAP; MassHealth; housing etc.) and needs of job seekers supported by public assistance. This data sharing agreement and analysis advances the Job Seeker goal in the state plan to focus on employment and outcomes for job seekers receiving public assistance.
- **Implement the P20 Initiative to connect and share outcome data on students** spanning early education, K-12, post-secondary, and workforce to understand and evaluate the impact of education and workforce programming.

**GOAL II: YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS**

**Improve career mobility and unsubsidized employment for youth, ages 16 to 24.**

Since implementation of the 2020 WIOA State Plan and through the COVID-19 pandemic, Massachusetts has continued to make strides in enhancing collaboration among WIOA-funded youth-serving organizations and other partners across the Commonwealth, including the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (DESE) Career and Technical Education



(CTE) programs (Chapter 74 and Perkins-funded), Job Corps and Youth Build. A key strategy in the 2016 state plan was to implement integrated pathways for youth across WIOA Core Program Partners using the local MOU as a vehicle to drive this integration. With all 16 workforce areas operating under a unified MOU across all Core WIOA Program Partners, Massachusetts seeks to enhance collaboration and integration in this 2020 WIOA State Plan to better streamline programs, services and outcomes for young people who may traverse across several different programs and interventions. Further, Massachusetts seeks to ensure young people have the skills and work-based learning opportunities to develop successful and thriving careers. Within these aims, two key strategies emerge:

**Strategy: Build service pathways for youth to develop employability and career navigation skills**

***Tactic 1: streamline services among workforce programs to ensure continuity and connectivity across the broader workforce system network.***

The last couple of years has brought greater attention to the amount of workforce services available for young people in local areas and regions and the lack of intentional coordination and integration among the service providers. Much of this is driven by programs and organizations responding to the mandates of their federal or state funding sources that do not require or incentivize integration. Yet, discussion among the broader workforce system network recognizes that young people, particularly those with challenges to employment, need several different programs and interventions to support them along their personal and career development pathways. Indeed, many youth are traversing across various programs, whether it be a summer employment experience (YouthWorks), an in-school work-based learning program (Connecting Activities, or Innovation Pathway program), or a community-based organization providing workforce services (WIOA Title I Youth), but the programs are not in communication or collaboration with each other. Indeed, the Workforce Skills Cabinet has focused on connectivity between YouthWorks (administered by Commonwealth Corporation) and Connecting Activities (funded by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) to ensure these programs are complementary.

Over the next four years, the Commonwealth will continue to work to streamline services among workforce programs to ensure continuity and connectivity across the broader workforce system network. This work will be driven by the State Board's Youth Committee to engage youth networks in local areas and regions with the vision of ensuring that there is a program for every age and every stage of a young person's career development. This work will start by teams of youth providing organizations creating and distributing asset maps of locally based programs and services to ensure there is awareness of the programs and services available. Engaged in this effort will be local representation from Innovation Pathway Programs, Connecting Activities, Youth Works, WIOA Title I Youth, schools and school districts, Youth Build, Job Corps, and other community-based organizations the local-based teams would like to include. Asset mapping will also include creating customer-centered referral protocols and use of shared tools and resources to streamline young people's experience as they experience multiple programs. For example, if a young person has developed a career plan in one program, that plan could follow her and continued to be followed in the next program she engages in

without the young person having to recreate the work. It is the hope that much of the referral and services coordination could be automated as Massachusetts makes progress towards developing an integrated data system.

Following the asset mapping will be identification of programmatic gaps and development of strategies to leverage existing resources or raise additional resources to address any shortfalls. Many regions have already engaged in this analysis through the MOU teams and regional planning, so much of the work will be capitalizing on existing efforts. Massachusetts will also explore using Youth Councils of the Local MassHire Workforce Board or similarly structured Committee to enact and implement some of this work as well.

Included in this streamlining effort is the Career Technical Initiative (CTI). The CTI will expand capacity of the workforce system to prepare youth and adults for skilled trade jobs by offering training at the Commonwealth's regional vocational schools (voc-tech) schools for high school students that are not enrolled in voc-tech schools (2<sup>nd</sup> shift/after school hours) and for adults (3<sup>rd</sup> shift/evening hours). The CTI will require collaboration with MassHire Workforce Boards and Career Centers as a key referral and recruitment partner of both learners and businesses. These regionally based CTI partnerships will help to support programmatic alignment as the Commonwealth seeks to build a continuum of services and resources for youth and young adults.

***Tactic 2: Adopt Signal Success (career readiness) or other soft skills curricula across broader youth provider network***

In Commonwealth Corporation's 2018 study [\*Promoting Success: What it takes to move beyond and entry-level job\*](#) [SC(1)] 232 Massachusetts businesses were surveyed about the skills and credentials an employee would need to possess to move beyond an entry-level job. Overwhelmingly businesses cited soft skills as essential for career mobility. This study validated what practitioners and policy makers have been hearing anecdotally from businesses and underscores the need for the Commonwealth to ensure that young people engaged in the workforce system have the opportunity to build on their soft skills as part of the work and career readiness efforts. Fortunately, Commonwealth Corporation developed [\*Signal Success\*](#) [SC(2)], a soft skills curriculum specifically for youth and young adults. Over the course of the next four years, the Commonwealth aims to scale use of Signal Success, or equally effective soft skills and career readiness curriculum across the youth service network to ensure that young people engage in rigorous preparation for the employability skills that are needed for success.

**Strategy: Expand Work-Based Learning and career pathway opportunities for youth**

As the Commonwealth galvanizes the youth provider network to streamline the youth customer experience and enhance employability skills (2020 WIOA State Plan Goal II, Strategy 1), it is equally important to ensure that the programs serving youth implement the most effective programmatic models serving older and out-of-school youth, as well as build toward young people acquiring a strong foundation of career awareness, skills, and experience that will yield lifelong career mobility.

***Tactic 1: Adopt High-Quality Youth Program standards for out-of-school youth pathways to align with in-school High-Quality College and Career Pathways and include Work-Based Learning requirement.***

The Commonwealth will continue to work toward expanding work-based learning and career pathway opportunities for youth to improve education and employment outcomes for youth that align with business demand for job ready employees. Youth service providers that deliver high-quality education/training are integral to pathways for youth that lead to sustainable careers.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) implemented a High-Quality College and Career Pathway (HQCCP) initiative to expand student access to high-quality career pathways. Within HQCCP school-based programs are awarded a designation that are based on the five guiding principles defined in the [Massachusetts Early College Designation – Preliminary Outline of Key Elements](#)[SC(3)] to help ensure students achieve academic and career success. While the HQCCP pathways and accompanying elements are applicable to in-school youth, the Commonwealth has been working on developing an analogous and complementary set of elements for programming for out of school youth to elevate the standard of service delivery for out-of-school youth serving education/training programs in the workforce system. This work began with the Youth Committee of the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board who drafted six key components of high-quality youth programs. The intent was to ensure youth service providers that design their programs to include the six key components will signal to employers that youth who complete their programs are a source of talent available to meet their need for qualified employees (see attachment G for a list of the draft High-Quality Youth Programs.) The elements are based on distilling best practices of effective programming for out-of-school youth.

The Commonwealth intends to continue this work by formally adopting the High-Quality Youth Programming standards to be integrated into WIOA Title I Youth policies (e.g., procurement standards, state-driven performance metrics, etc.)

***Tactic 2: Work with broader workforce system network to implement High-Quality Youth Program standards to ensure youth have the opportunity to be engaged in career-based skill development programs.***

Following formal adoption of the high-quality Youth Programming standards will be systemic implementation of these standards. This will involve providing guidance and technical assistance on implementing the components to MassHire Workforce Boards and WIOA Youth Service providers.

Implementation of High-Quality Youth Program standards will extend beyond WIOA Title I Youth, with attention paid to synthesizing with existing standards of workforce partners. For example, in addition to the HQCCP standards for in-school youth, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) has also developed a high-quality program for students ages 14 to 22 through the development of a model of services for potentially eligible youth consumers. Through this model, MRC provides the following five Pre-Employment Transition

Services (Pre-ETS) services required under WIOA to all vocational rehabilitation consumers, including those potentially eligible students:

1. Job exploration counseling;
2. Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school, after-school, or community-based opportunities such as internships. Work-based learning experiences must be provided in an integrated setting in the community to the maximum extent possible;
3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs;
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living;
5. Instruction in self-advocacy, including peer mentoring.

A key component of the HQCCP and Pre-ETS models that will be incorporated into the High-Quality Youth Program standards is ensure youth and young adults have access to Work-Based Learning opportunities to deliver foundational learning, and career pathway building opportunities. This would include career exploration experiences, and direct work experience through internships, on-the-job training, and apprenticeships. The expectation is that these High-Quality Youth Program standards will drive program development and resource allocation for WIOA Title I Youth-funded programs, state-funded youth programs, Career and Technical Education programs that engage out-of-school youth, such as the Career Technical Initiative (CTI), and similar programs within the youth provider network.

***Tactic 2: Establish target rate for youth inclusion in apprenticeship expansion***

A signature initiative of the Commonwealth is the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship, with a focus on diversifying the apprentice pipeline to include more women, people of color, and people with disabilities. The apprenticeship expansion effort also aims to build apprenticeships in non-traditional industries and occupations, especially in the Commonwealth's priority industries of advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and tech occupations. While apprenticeship expansion takes root across the state, there will be an effort to ensure that youth and young adults will be engaged in these apprenticeship opportunities. The state, therefore, will establish a rate for youth participation in apprenticeship. For example, if the inclusion rate is 20%, the Commonwealth will ensure that at least 20% of apprentices are youth or young adults. The MassHire State Workforce Board, in close collaboration with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's apprenticeship expansion staff will establish an apprenticeship inclusionary rate in the first two years of the 2020 WIOA State Plan.

***Tactic 3: Require all partner agencies to collaborate with the Executive Office Education (EOE) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to scale Innovation Pathway programs***

Innovation Pathways are of the pathways of DESE's High-Quality College and Career Pathway initiative and provide students with academic study and experience in a high-demand industry, such as information technology, engineering, healthcare, life sciences and advanced

manufacturing. In an effort to expand Work-Based Learning and career pathway building for young people, the Commonwealth seeks to scale up the Innovation Pathway model across schools and school districts in the Commonwealth, across out-of-school youth programming (following the High-Quality Youth Program standards) and bridge the programmatic divide between in-school and out-of-school youth programming geared toward career pathways in target industries and occupational groups.

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### **GOAL III: BUSINESS CUSTOMER**

#### **Accelerate business growth and sustainability by elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for business.**

Massachusetts faced a challenge in 2016 to maximize the existing labor force by accurately matching talent, training dollars, and new education and training options aligned with business demands. Workforce strategies needed to adapt to trends in STEM related fields and align with demand to bolster talent pipelines and career lattices within companies. The workforce system's revised business engagement strategy launched in 2016 was a turning point for the workforce system and its approach to business service delivery. The quality of a job-match takes precedence over the quantity of candidates submitted to a company. The tight labor market generated by the COVID-19 pandemic has brought renewed focus on business demand and highlighted the need for stronger job-matching and candidate-vetting as well as the need to implement parallel, collaborative approach with multiple stakeholders and the employer's business needs centered. The original 2020 WIOA State Plan was constructed with strong consideration towards fluctuating economic, social, and political circumstances to ensure plan resiliency during rapid and unpredictable change. As such, the strategic and tactical direction of the 2020 WIOA State Plan goal focused on the business customer remains largely unchanged, despite the upheaval from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beginning with implementation of the 2016 WIOA State Plan and accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, MassHire and its partners have built large scale recruitment models, enhanced rapid response lay-off aversion programming, developed training for business services representatives to standardize services across the MassHire Career Centers, grew apprenticeship, and built local partnerships with industry councils yield positive hiring outcomes for small and medium size employers. The workforce system expanded a wide and comprehensive range of resources to help companies weather the COVID-19 pandemic, including how to access business supports and resources.

As COVID-19 recovery is underway, accessible, equitable hiring practices are taking on a new importance, and businesses are increasingly pursuing avenues to diversify their workforce to meet their acute hiring needs, while also supporting employee access to career pathways toward personally and financially rewarding careers. The workforce system is addressing the needs of employers by applying unprecedented resources toward upskilling young people, re-careering adult workers, and developing clear career pathways into priority industries and occupations. Now more than ever, candidates with strong technical skills and good employability skills that align with workplace expectations and enhance product workflow and employee productivity are prized by companies (see Building Workforce Skills in “Massachusetts COVID-19 Response Partnerships for Recovery”).

The 2020 WIOA State Plan continues to advance and capitalize on the existing efforts of the workforce system to address the current and ongoing needs of the Commonwealth’s businesses through the following strategies and tactics.

**STRATEGY: Expand business engagement in workforce services by enhancing access to and navigation among the broader array of workforce system.**

**Tactic 1: Adopt common business customer flow across system**

Installing a universal referral, tracking, and follow-up process will further support the customer experience for businesses engaging with the workforce system. EOLWD’s Recruitment Solutions Initiative, for example, is a communications model which integrates local and statewide efforts to execute large-scale recruitments initiated by the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and/or the Governor’s Office. For the 2020 WIOA State Plan, the Commonwealth seeks to leverage the JobQuest enhancement effort as well as the Employment Modernization and Transformation Program (see “Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery”) to implement a common business customer flow whereby different elements of business services are activated according to where employers are in their respective business cycles. The expectation is that a streamlined and integrated technology platform will deliver a common set of employer-focused tools to meet the needs of business throughout the hiring and business cycle.

**Tactic 2: Build business-friendly access points with workforce system**

Through MassHire BizWorks, the workforce system has a common resource guide for businesses and staff that details workforce-related services and programs for businesses. While a useful tool, in the absence of staff support, it relies on businesses to understand and navigate a complex array of services, and it is not an interactive that guides businesses to the services and programs that fit their current or future needs. To build upon the MassHire BizWorks resource guide the Commonwealth seeks to capitalize on the JobQuest enhancement effort as well as the Employment Modernization and Transformation Program (see “Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery”) to develop a self-directed and mobile-friendly internet-based system to increase the ease with which an employer navigates workforce services.

internet-based system to increase the ease with which an employer navigates workforce services.

**Tactic 3: Establish common communication channels between and among business.**

The workforce system currently does not have a method to communicate with state or local businesses partners at scale, relying instead on locally or programmatically driven efforts to share recent developments or information about workforce services. The result is missed opportunities to expand awareness and engagement with the workforce system. The Commonwealth intends to enhance statewide and local communication channels to share information about strategic workforce initiatives and opportunities for business, labor market data, and workforce development issues of interest to business. This may be in the form of a social media, email blasts newsletters, or in-person convenings.

In addition to a new technology platform, the Commonwealth intends to develop common collateral for business services, coupled with a streamlined media strategy to market the system's services and keep employers updated about workforce services. Currently, the workforce system is not fully integrated into the business community, thus streamlining communication to businesses can foster a sense of community for businesses as a critical partner in the workforce system, as well as support the integration of workforce services professionals in the business community. A common communication method for business has the potential to be an effective avenue to facilitate a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

Meanwhile, internally, the workforce partners will also focus on enhancing communication system among staff to better facilitate joint efforts to serve businesses. For example, partner staff would share real time business intelligence about industry trends (expansions or contractions), labor market information, and new programs and services.

**Tactic 4: Enhance cross-training among partners who directly serve business.**

Cross-training across partner staff is a critical component to successful implementation of the strategic initiatives in this plan. The Commonwealth will build on MDCS's recent priority on cross-training staff to build a common understanding of the workforce system and services and instill the most effective techniques. Through MassHire BizWorks and MDCS, business-facing staff across partner agencies are trained on what is necessary to support a company at every part of the business cycle. Meanwhile, partners are exploring benefits of cross-training between MassHire and Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) to facilitate greater understanding of the array of services and incentives offered to businesses through both Economic Development and MassHire.

**STRATEGY II: Improve talent recruitment systems and processes to enhance job matching.**

**Tactic I: Invest in technology and skill development to streamline talent sourcing (including from training providers) and matching for businesses.**

Currently, the workforce system does not have an effective nor comprehensive applicant tracking program to track job candidates and job opportunities across the many stages of development, from job posting, to candidate referral, to the associated outcomes (hired/not hired.) Therefore, the Commonwealth intends to integrate this goal within JobQuest enhancement effort as well as the Employment Modernization and Transformation Program (see “Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery” to streamline the talent sourcing and matching process. “Technology tools” could refer to web applications, software, and/or hardware such as tablets, smart phones, webinar equipment, etc. These tools should have the capacity to analyze resumes to predict job match based on skills, competencies, and background; track referrals of candidates, and share quantitative and qualitative data through secure inter-/intra-agency channels.

**STRATEGY III: Engage businesses in building career pathways and enhancing the worker experience.**

Just as a key focus in Goals I and II of this plan was to engage adults and youth in career pathways and work-based learning opportunities, businesses need to be a key partner in this endeavor to ensure there is sustainable traction of these workforce interventions for industry. A key component of Massachusetts COVID-19 Response is to engage businesses in upskilling strategy and delivery to ensure that both businesses and workers thrive and experience economic prosperity (see “Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery”).

**Tactic 1: Increase registered apprenticeships and other Work-Based Learning opportunities in priority industries and occupational groupings.**

The Commonwealth will engage business in apprenticeship expansion efforts, with a focus on developing and scaling up apprenticeship in priority and critical industries and occupations, as identified through Regional Planning. (See Goal I, Strategies 1 and 3, and Goal II, strategy 2 for further explanation on the apprenticeship and work-based learning expansion efforts.)

Within the priority industries and occupational groupings, the Commonwealth will connect directly with businesses to identify skill, proficiency, and programmatic demand; determine high value credentials to create statewide list; and build career pathways: stackable, interconnected, and progressive skills and experiences that lead to high-demand, high-opportunity jobs/careers.

In addition, the Commonwealth seeks to streamline business engagement in apprenticeship and work-based learning by leveraging business customer flow implementation, communication and cross-training efforts detailed in the strategies and tactics within this Goal III. Effort will be paid to ensuring there is cross-partner collaboration as they interface with business for apprenticeships, internships, career exploration, and other work-based learning opportunities.



## **Tactic 2: Enhance job quality to improve worker recruitment and retention**

The tight labor market that emerged after the COVID-19 pandemic presents challenges to employers as they struggle to hire and retain employees. This is especially true for entry-level jobs in the lower wage band, particularly in service-related occupations. While demand for these occupations is projected to grow, so will the need for workers. Meanwhile, a key component of building career pathways is ensuring that jobs, education and training, and experience build on each other to increase an individual's skill, earnings, and career mobility towards economic prosperity. Yet, it is difficult to build career pathways with consistent turnover and job churn. As such, the Commonwealth seeks to engage business to focus on job quality to ensure workers can remain employed *and* thrive while they progress from entry-level to advanced employment.

To begin the job quality journey with businesses, the Commonwealth launched the Reinventing Work Initiative (RWI). The RWI, in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and Commonwealth Corporation, is a research and business engagement initiative aimed at pinpointing the challenges and barriers to offering high-quality, entry-level jobs that businesses face, and then working directly with business to address those challenges and barriers in an effort to improve job quality in a manner that benefits both business and worker. The learning and findings from these efforts will be shared with the wider business and workforce practitioner community to shift business practice and encourage job quality through policy development. While this effort began due to unprecedented challenges businesses face in recruiting and retaining workers due to the tight labor market, the expectation is that the practices will be applicable in any economic cycle.

## **Goal IV: Ensure Massachusetts has a world-class workforce system by integrating use of modern tools and techniques**

There has been an explosion of technological invention since the advent of the public workforce system, yet up until the COVID-19 pandemic the workforce system had been slow to integrate the use of these technological advancements in their service delivery. In this goal area, the Commonwealth seeks to make strategic improvements in the system's technological infrastructure to ensure efficient, effective, and safe service delivery. Not surprisingly, rapid progress in pursuing this goal has been made in the two years since the 2020 State Plan was implemented. As mentioned in "Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery", the Commonwealth launched two initiatives to enhance the technological infrastructure of the workforce system, the Road to Re-employment (R2R) initiative to tackle short-term, immediate needs of technological change within the system, and the Employment Modernization and Transformation (EMT) to implement the long-term vision for a streamlined, tech-enabled system that sustainably meets the needs of job seekers, youth, and business.

## ***Tactic 1: Safeguard the integrity of the system by enhancing security and reliability***

Any new or current technological tool brings risks in security and safety. The Commonwealth, therefore, is committed to ensuring any technological investment will enhance the Commonwealth's ability to safeguard data integrity, privacy, and security.

***Tactic 2: Adopt a technological system across workforce partners that can track activity, services, and outcomes of shared customers***

An unfulfilled goal from the Massachusetts 2016 WIOA State Plan was to track activity and outcomes by target customer cohorts, not funding stream, so it could be known how the system *collectively* impacted the lives of older workers, people on public assistance, people with disabilities, etc.

Through the Employment Modernization and Transformation Project, Commonwealth seeks to make progress on developing and deploying an integrated data system that can track activity, services, and outcomes of shared customers. A few promising models in this realm are being studied as guidance to how the Commonwealth will embark on addressing this issue.

***Tactic 3: Develop a new, integrated data system between unemployment insurance (UI Online) and MassHire (MOSES) that accelerates progression from job loss to job gain.***

In an effort to lay the foundation for a workforce system-wide integrated data system, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development will use the EMT to implement a data system that integrates the Unemployment Insurance data system, and the MassHire data system (MOSES) to technologically link the provision of UI benefits and the job search effort. The expectation is that an unemployed person can immediately connect with and receive services from a MassHire Center upon their first contact with the UI system, thereby accelerating their process of finding a new job and minimize the duration of collecting UI benefits. EOLWD has is in the process of identifying a vendor to focus on the new UI system, and this effort will be followed by development of a re-employment system, with the grand vision that both will function as one, integrated system for the end user.

***Tactic 4: Increase availability and delivery of virtual workforce services (e.g., career exploration, virtual job fairs, skill development, etc.)***

COVID-19 and the immediate pivot to virtual service delivery underscored the importance of the original goal of building a robust system of career pathways and Work-Based Learning opportunities through technological tools that assist customers' exposure and interaction with career paths. The Commonwealth is pursuing this goal through the Road to Reemployment Initiative, JobQuest enhancement project and the Employment Modernization and Transformation initiative (see "Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery".) Many aspects of the original vision, such as virtual job fairs, have already been development. Other aspects of the original vision, such as online career exploration gateways to increase understanding of the types of jobs available and using online platforms for development of employability or technical skills, are still in development.

***Tactic 4: Implement a job referral applicant tracking system that will enhance matching and connectivity between job seekers and job openings.***

As referenced in Goal III, the Commonwealth will seek to acquire an applicant tracking system to track services and outcomes related to the shared business customer across workforce systems through the EMT program.

## Strategic Goals - Statewide Metrics

Along with developing specific goals, strategies, and tactics the collective workforce system will pursue in this State Plan, the Commonwealth identified statewide metrics to track progress and success of achieving the goals. The tables below outline these statewide metrics for each goal. State Plan implementation efforts have focused on developing technological capacity to identify the process and methodology for capturing these systemwide metrics, as well as benchmarks and targets toward achieving the goal. (See Attachment H for a definition of these state-driven metrics.) This work is part of the ongoing Employment Modernization and Transformation Project.

1. **Adult Job Seekers:** Expand the capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment especially for those with challenges to employment (priority populations)

*Priority Populations include low-income, low-skilled persons, persons with Limited English Proficiency, people with disabilities, older workers, returning citizens, racial/ethnic minorities, Veterans, and unemployment claimants.*

Figure 45: Statewide Metrics:

All Job Seekers	Priority Populations
Shared Customers Across Partners	Entered Employment
Entered Employment	Credential Attainment
Employment Retention	Educational Advancement
Credential Attainment	Career/wage “pathway”
Educational Advancement	
Customer diversity	

Figure 46: Youth Metrics

2. **Youth and Young Adults:** Improve career mobility and unsubsidized employment outcomes for youth (aged 16 - 24).

### **Statewide Metrics:**

Youth and Young Adults
Educational Advancement
Youth diversity
Credential Attainment
Entered Employment
Career/wage “pathway”
Shared Youth Customers Across Target Programs and Partners

Percent of Youth Cohort in Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Programs
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Figure 47: Business Metrics

3. **Business:** Support business growth and sustainability by elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for business.

**Statewide Metrics:**

Business
Number of Businesses Served
Number of Repeat Businesses
Number of Businesses by Industry/Region
Number of Referred Applicants Hired
Number of Businesses Sponsoring Apprenticeship or Work-Based Learning Programs
Business Customer Satisfaction

Figure 48:

4. **Modernizing the System:** Ensure Massachusetts has a world-class workforce system by integrating the use of modern tools and techniques.

**Statewide Metrics:**

Modernizing the System
Shared Customers Served
Shared Customers' Employment Outcomes
Average Time to Employment
Number of Employers Posting Jobs
Number of Jobs Posted
Average Time from Job Post to Position Filled
Median Earnings

**Assessment and Performance**

Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary

indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to WIOA Core programs.)

Refer to Appendix I for expected levels of performance based on primary indicators of performance. The federal indicators of performance focus on employment outcomes in the second and fourth quarter after exit, median earnings in the second quarter after exit, credential attainment, measurable skill gains for job seekers and adult education participants, and effectiveness in serving employers. All partners' federally-funded programs are measured in the same way and a penalty could be applied to WIOA discretionary funds for repeated missed performance targets. This creates a shared accountability for shared customers and their outcomes.

### III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

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#### State Strategy Implementation

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##### *State Board Functions*

- State Board Functions. Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision-making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

The Baker-Polito administration utilized WIOA implementation as an opportunity to reconstruct and reinvigorate the state workforce board. The state legislation establishing the new Board (M.G.L. Ch. 23H, §7) was enacted on December 2, 2015 and imbued the Board with carrying out the responsibilities required of WIOA; providing assessments and recommendations to the governor, the Workforce Skills Cabinet, MassHire Workforce Boards, and other entities as needed regarding the effectiveness of the public workforce development system in the Commonwealth; and promoting innovative and performance-driven models for workforce development. This legislation transformed the previous Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (MWIB) from a 65-member board to a leaner 33-member Massachusetts Workforce Development Board (MWDB) to serve as the primary vehicle to provide the policy and operational framework for the state public workforce system. In August 2018, as part of the workforce system's adoption of the unifying "MassHire" brand, the state board was renamed to the "MassHire State Workforce Board".

The Baker-Polito administration intends to expand the MassHire State Board member to 35 members to be in compliance with WIOA on State Board membership. The new membership seats will include a vocational rehabilitation representative seat to be held by a Commission for either the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission or the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, as well as a business and industry representative to maintain majority business membership. Legislation to make this change will be filed in early 2022.

Functionally, the Board sits within the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). The Board is staffed by an Executive Director, in close coordination with staff of EOLWD and MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS). Senior leadership of the Board is comprised of the Governor-Appointed Board Chair (currently Joanne Pokaski) Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development (currently Secretary Rosalin Acosta), and the Board's Executive Director (currently Cheryl Scott.) Board senior leadership make high-level decisions such as the Board's scope and deliverables, meeting agendas, Board Committee membership and leadership, and other items related to Board governance.

The Board meets quarterly. During these meetings the Board is updated on and discusses high-level strategic priorities that foster continuous improvement of the

workforce system, as well as considers activities and recommendations from one of the Board's committees. There are currently four committees of the Board:

- **MassHire Performance Committee:** captures system-level performance data to drive decision-making and strategy; identifies and pursues opportunities to boost MassHire system performance, and provides general oversight of the MassHire system, including policies, programming, and development of the WIOA State Plan.
- **Workforce System Modernization Committee:** Supports the implementation of WIOA State Plan Goal IV by ensuring Massachusetts has a world-class IT system to support a modern, efficient, and accessible workforce development system. Advises on the progress of the Employment Modernization and Transformation project, as well as the development of the MassHire virtual service pathway. The UI Bond Bill Advisory Council, established by the legislature's Bond Bill, functionally reports to the Workforce System Modernization Committee.
- **Adult Pathways Committee:** supports the integration of statewide workforce-related resources, programs, and initiatives to enhance career and economic outcomes for adult job seeker customers; may be tasked with providing general oversight to MassHire initiatives that improve programs and resources for adult customers, including Apprenticeship Expansion.
- **Youth Pathways Committee:** develops recommendations to enhance integrating programming and career pathways for youth; provides general oversight on the development and implementation of the WIOA State Plan youth goal.

Additionally, the state board's enabling legislation authorized the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), the designated State Workforce Agency, to promulgate and carryout workforce policies that are operational in nature, ensuring policy guidance to inform the Massachusetts Workforce Development System's programmatic operations.

### ***Implementation of State Strategy***

Implementation of State Strategy. Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in II(c) above. This must include a description of—

*(A) Core Program Activities to Implement the State's Strategy.* Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies.

The state strategies in the 2020 WIOA Combined Plan flow from the four key goals identified by the State MassHire Board. State partners will continue to work with local partners to implement the goals and strategies to achieve the established vision for the Commonwealth's workforce system. The Massachusetts Partners maintain a statewide

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Attachment I) that memorializes the partners' commitment to implement the goals and strategies described in this section. Many of the specific details on partnerships with business, integrated service delivery and evaluation of results across the Core Program Activities are included in Section III, Implementing State Strategies and Alignment with Activities outside the Plan, which are combined in a unified response as follows.

**Implementation of State Strategies - Core Program Activities and Alignment across**

**WIOA activities:** The SPAC worked to develop the vision, goals, and strategies included in Section II. Major state strategies will be implemented through the Governor, State Workforce Board and the SPAC using the state's oversight, policy and performance roles embedded in the lead state agencies for Core Program Activities. Our goal is to use the following processes to drive change across systems:

- **State-level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**
- **16 Local MOUs**
- **Regional Planning**
- **Staff Training and Professional Development**
- **Cross-Training: State Partner Programs and Services**
- **WIOA Cohort Work**
- **Specialized Customer Service Partnerships**
- **MassHire Workforce Board Certification**
- **MassHire Career Center Certification**
- **MassHire Operator Competitive Selection**
- **Performance Analysis (federal WIOA measures and state—designed measures)**

In addition to implementing the state-level MOU and 16 local MOUs as required by WIOA, the Commonwealth has completed certification processes for Workforce Board Certification and Career Center Certification, as well as Regional Planning and the competitive selection process for MassHire Operators/Service Providers and uses the federal and state-designed performance measures to advance the vision for the system and implement the state strategies described in Section II (c) above. These processes include the participation of the WIOA Core Program Partners in review and design to align WIOA activities across programs and with activities outside of the Plan.

**State Level Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** Massachusetts fully implements the key tenants of WIOA to maintain robust partnerships across programs and services with specific focus on improving outcomes by organizing resources, services, and structures through a “customer” lens rather than the bureaucratic administration of federal or state resources. Partnerships and cross-system operations among MassHire Career Centers, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and TANF/SNAP maintained through the statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) are based on the state goals and strategies in the Plan. The State MOU was designed to outline areas of



agreement that help the Commonwealth implement WIOA through a shared customer-centered lens, including:

- *A coordinated vision* for organizing the broadly defined federally funded public workforce system
- *Development and expansion of career pathways* for business and individuals with barriers to employment and shared customers across WIOA programs
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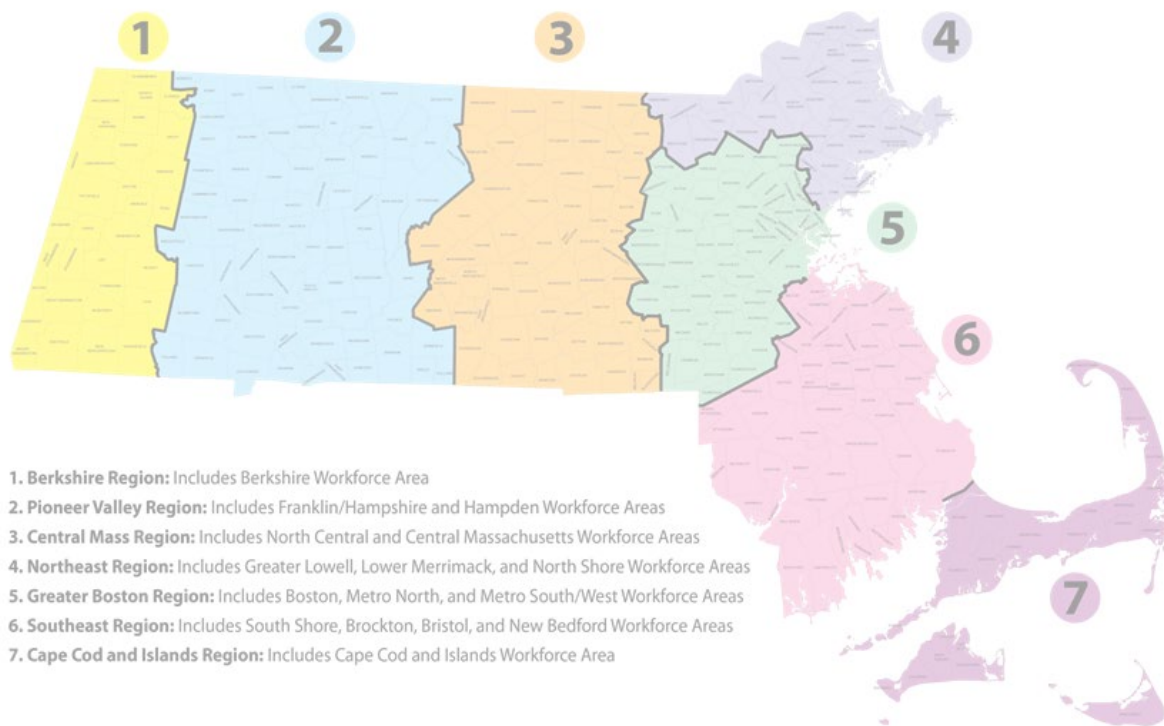
As part of the State Combined Plan Process, the State Umbrella MOU, signed by 19 Cabinet Secretaries and Agency Heads, has been updated to align with the new plan.

Additional work across WIOA Partners will promote alignment between labor demand, service delivery and customer outcomes:

**Regional Planning:** The Commonwealth established seven Regional Planning Areas in FY16, with an address to the Regional Planning teams by Governor Baker to “kick off” the planning process. The Regional Planning teams consisted of Community College presidents, Economic Development Regional Office staff, and MassHire Workforce Board members. These teams analyzed local labor market supply and demand and evaluated the labor pool for measurable gaps in talent. Each region developed a **vision, mission, and measurable goals**; determined **priority industries and occupations**; created an **asset map** of existing pipeline programs for priority industries/occupations; and identified **regional strategies** to achieve goals. Teams presented the Regional Planning Blueprints for review and comment to the Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC) Secretaries (Labor and Workforce, Education, and Economic Development), which can be viewed here: [Regional Planning Blueprints](#).

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### **MassHire Workforce Board Certification**

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The Massachusetts biennial workforce board certification process for FY20 augments the standards required for certification, the genesis of which was the 2008 “High Performing Workforce Board” initiative. Massachusetts’ enhanced board certification standards are intended to move the Commonwealth’s workforce boards further along a continuum toward performance excellence.

The MassHire Workforce Board certification includes standards for workforce board certification that are intended to promote improvements in board performance, partnering, business engagement and program oversight.

MassHire Workforce Board certification criteria promotes the articulation of regional workforce development activities to optimize services to residents, businesses, and partners. The measurable standards evidence the fact that the work of the boards is both business-driven and aligned with workforce resources through regional markets.

The criteria and standards are focused on quality systems and practices for career center operator competitive selection, career center oversight, youth services strategy and oversight, business-driven strategies and solutions and partnerships/MOUs.

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### **MassHire Operator Competitive Selection Process**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that Local Boards, in agreement with the Chief Elected Official, select MassHire Career Center Operators through a competitive process to be conducted not less than every 4 years. Local Boards must each conduct an open, transparent, procurement process to select MassHire operators in compliance with WIOA law and regulations, applicable local procurement rules/policy and Massachusetts' MassHire Operator Competitive Selection Policy

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FY21 Career Center Certification will further gauge effectiveness, service quality and strength of leadership in preparation for a new round of Operator procurement in FY22.

#### **FY2020 Adult and Community Learning Services Adult Career Pathway Partnership**

To support the State Plan “career pathways” vision, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) has committed \$200,000 in Adult Career Pathway funds to support local workforce area efforts to work in partnership with local adult education programs to identify and develop career pathway opportunities for adult learners.

The ACLS Adult Career Pathway funds have been allocated to the 16 MassHire Workforce Boards based on FY2019 adult education student enrollments in each of the local workforce areas.

MassHire Workforce Boards work in partnership with local adult education programs in the development of career pathways opportunities for adult learners. Funds provided to the Workforce Boards are intended to support the following activities: review of adult education proposals (CALC, workplace education, etc.); participation of MassHire Workforce Board staff on program quality reviews (PQR) (monitoring) and selected site visits and related trainings to determine the quality of services against a set of Indicators through a diagnostic assessment. The reviews ensure state and federally funded adult education providers are compliant with state and federal policies; promising practices will be identified and disseminated.

The funds also support the development of effective employer partnerships in order to place adult education graduates. And provide support and guidance to adult education programs related to the development of viable career pathways for adult learners in the local workforce area as well as to adult education programs related to the development of bridge classes and integrated education and training programs, serving “shared customers” and to the out-stationed adult education staff located at MassHire Career Centers

## **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Training Partnership**

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) provides training funds to MassHire Career Centers (MCCs) to provide occupational training to MRC consumers.

In FY19, MRC committed \$450,000 in funding to support workforce training for MRC consumers. MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) and MRC partner to assist training ready MRC consumers to enroll in workforce training through Individual Training Accounts (ITA) in the effort to increase employment opportunities. Funds provided by MRC for training are supplemental to WIOA training funds.

All MRC consumers referred to the MassHire Career Center system are required to complete a career center registration, which allows MRC consumers access to basic services, including labor exchange services, information on programs and services, and referrals. MRC consumers who complete a career center registration are considered shared customers.

This program continues through FY20, with an infusion of an additional \$550,000 into the MassHire Career Center system.

MRC continues to contribute funding annually to support the partnership to support MRC consumers in training identified from the Massachusetts Eligibility Training Provider List (ETPL).

[WIOA Joint Partner Communication 01.2021: MassHire and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Training Partnership](#) provides operational guidance for implementation of the partnership.

## **Work Participant Program (WPP)**

The Department of Transitional Assistance, in partnership with the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) is collaborating to operate the Work Participant Program (WPP) to provide career planning support and resources to DTA clients, who are prioritized by WIOA.

Staff work collaboratively to ensure that Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) clients receive tailored and appropriate job readiness, job matching, coaching and employment supports. The DTA designated staff Full Engagement Workers (FEWs) from DTA local offices are also co-located at the MassHire Career Centers and provide support, information, and resources to Career Center staff and DTA clients on a locally established schedule and frequency.

The Local WIOA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and regular, ongoing local partner meetings drive the model for local partner staff to work together to provide a full array of services to shared customers, the range of which encompasses initial assessment, career planning, workshops, event coverage, and more.

The successful completion of WPP services is expected to result in full-time, unsubsidized employment that is aligned with labor market needs and participant goals toward a career pathway.

The FY20 funding level for the WPP program is currently \$2,000,000.

### **Staff Training and Professional Development Overview**

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development/MassHire Department of Career Services (EOLWD/MDCS) continues the process of assessing the current skill level of career center staff and analyzing the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform each job in the career center. EOLWD/MDCS has created and implemented regular professional development opportunities for Workforce Board and career center staff to ensure that their knowledge and expertise is current and consistent with the specific opportunities and needs within their regional areas. Existing and planned training activities can be found in attachment M.

*(B) Alignment with Activities outside the Plan.* Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by mandatory MassHire partners and other optional MassHire partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

State partners—both mandatory WIOA partners and optional partners like economic development, education, human services, and other providers—signed the state level MOU to ensure alignment of service activity to the vision, goals, and strategies of the Plan. Career and Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) and Apprenticeship opportunities are aligned to workforce activities described in (A) through the state and within the 16 areas. The sixteen MassHire Workforce Boards, through their board membership participation and strategic planning develop strategies and actions promote the alignment of all programs with WIOA-funded programs and non-mandatory programs under each local MOU (the template of which is based upon the state MOU).

### ***Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Individuals***

*(C) Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals.* Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and mandatory and optional MassHire partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

The MassHire Workforce Boards and Career Centers and the Core Partner Programs continue to provide services to job seekers, consumers, participants, students based on the mission and directives of the existing resources and resulting service systems. Through the WIOA State Plan, these partners have worked together to leverage relationships with the

business community and to develop a coordinated approach to outreach and service delivery. Most importantly, connecting outreach activities to job placement across the partners is a significant task for a truly integrated system.

In addition, enhanced “priority of service” requirements ensure that individuals with barriers (including individuals who are low-income, have limited skills, are recipients of public assistance, homeless, have a disability, limited English, age barriers or face other barriers to employment) are able to access critical employment and training services through the MassHire Career Center system. All Core WIOA Program Partners and other broader workforce partners work together with MassHire Career Centers to:

- **Build out “pathway maps” or customer-centered design models** for specific populations for “shared” customers between partner programs to create a clear understanding of how multiple providers, services and resources should support an individual person or business;
- **Improve the MassHire customer flow** and service practices to prioritize individuals with barriers and work across partner agencies;
- **Utilize robust technology tools to scale-up practices and provide more significant supports for individuals with barriers to employment**, including basic skill assessment, remediation, and career development tools;
- **Sponsor cross-training for staff across partner agencies** (Statewide MOU) to understand the needs of populations and available resources to make referrals and customize services based on customer need; including cross-training for resources such as, JobQuest, TORQ, Career Information System, etc.;
- **Track and evaluate the outcomes** for individuals who face barriers to employment (see federal WIOA measures and state-designed measures in Section II).

### **Models and Services for WIOA Target Populations**

The WIOA and non-WIOA partners will continue to work with job seekers who represent populations who need additional support. Through the 16 local MO teams, who meet regularly to examine career center service provision and think through process improvements, Massachusetts has effectively re-designed specific career center services with its partners. In addition, grant-funded or state-based initiatives often supplement and expand the public system’s ability to work with individuals who face barriers to employment:

a) **Age Barriers:** MA-SCSEP works closely with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) to help promote and coordinate the SCSEP and MassHire Career Center service delivery systems. State strategies of the State Plan outline specific steps in pursuit of the goals to achieve the vision for the workforce system. To that end, EOEA (Executive Office of Elder Affairs) will work with EOLWD to enhance the services to customers of the MassHire Career Centers by:

- Training MassHire Career Center staff on the needs of people 55 and over

### III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

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#### State Strategy Implementation

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##### *State Board Functions*

- State Board Functions. Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision-making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

The Baker-Polito administration utilized WIOA implementation as an opportunity to reconstruct and reinvigorate the state workforce board. The state legislation establishing the new Board (M.G.L. Ch. 23H, §7) was enacted on December 2, 2015 and imbued the Board with carrying out the responsibilities required of WIOA; providing assessments and recommendations to the governor, the Workforce Skills Cabinet, MassHire Workforce Boards, and other entities as needed regarding the effectiveness of the public workforce development system in the Commonwealth; and promoting innovative and performance-driven models for workforce development. This legislation transformed the previous Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (MWIB) from a 65-member board to a leaner 33-member Massachusetts Workforce Development Board (MWDB) to serve as the primary vehicle to provide the policy and operational framework for the state public workforce system. In August 2018, as part of the workforce system's adoption of the unifying "MassHire" brand, the state board was renamed to the "MassHire State Workforce Board".

The Baker-Polito administration intends to expand the MassHire State Board member to 35 members to be in compliance with WIOA on State Board membership. The new membership seats will include a vocational rehabilitation representative seat to be held by a Commission for either the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission or the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, as well as a business and industry representative to maintain majority business membership. Legislation to make this change will be filed in early 2022.

Functionally, the Board sits within the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). The Board is staffed by an Executive Director, in close coordination with staff of EOLWD and MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS). Senior leadership of the Board is comprised of the Governor-Appointed Board Chair (currently Joanne Pokaski) Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development (currently Secretary Rosalin Acosta), and the Board's Executive Director (currently Cheryl Scott.) Board senior leadership make high-level decisions such as the Board's scope and deliverables, meeting agendas, Board Committee membership and leadership, and other items related to Board governance.

The Board meets quarterly. During these meetings the Board is updated on and discusses high-level strategic priorities that foster continuous improvement of the



workforce system, as well as considers activities and recommendations from one of the Board's committees. There are currently four committees of the Board:

- **MassHire Performance Committee:** captures system-level performance data to drive decision-making and strategy; identifies and pursues opportunities to boost MassHire system performance, and provides general oversight of the MassHire system, including policies, programming, and development of the WIOA State Plan.
- **Workforce System Modernization Committee:** Supports the implementation of WIOA State Plan Goal IV by ensuring Massachusetts has a world-class IT system to support a modern, efficient, and accessible workforce development system. Advises on the progress of the Employment Modernization and Transformation project, as well as the development of the MassHire virtual service pathway. The UI Bond Bill Advisory Council, established by the legislature's Bond Bill, functionally reports to the Workforce System Modernization Committee.
- **Adult Pathways Committee:** supports the integration of statewide workforce-related resources, programs, and initiatives to enhance career and economic outcomes for adult job seeker customers; may be tasked with providing general oversight to MassHire initiatives that improve programs and resources for adult customers, including Apprenticeship Expansion.
- **Youth Pathways Committee:** develops recommendations to enhance integrating programming and career pathways for youth; provides general oversight on the development and implementation of the WIOA State Plan youth goal.

Additionally, the state board's enabling legislation authorized the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), the designated State Workforce Agency, to promulgate and carryout workforce policies that are operational in nature, ensuring policy guidance to inform the Massachusetts Workforce Development System's programmatic operations.

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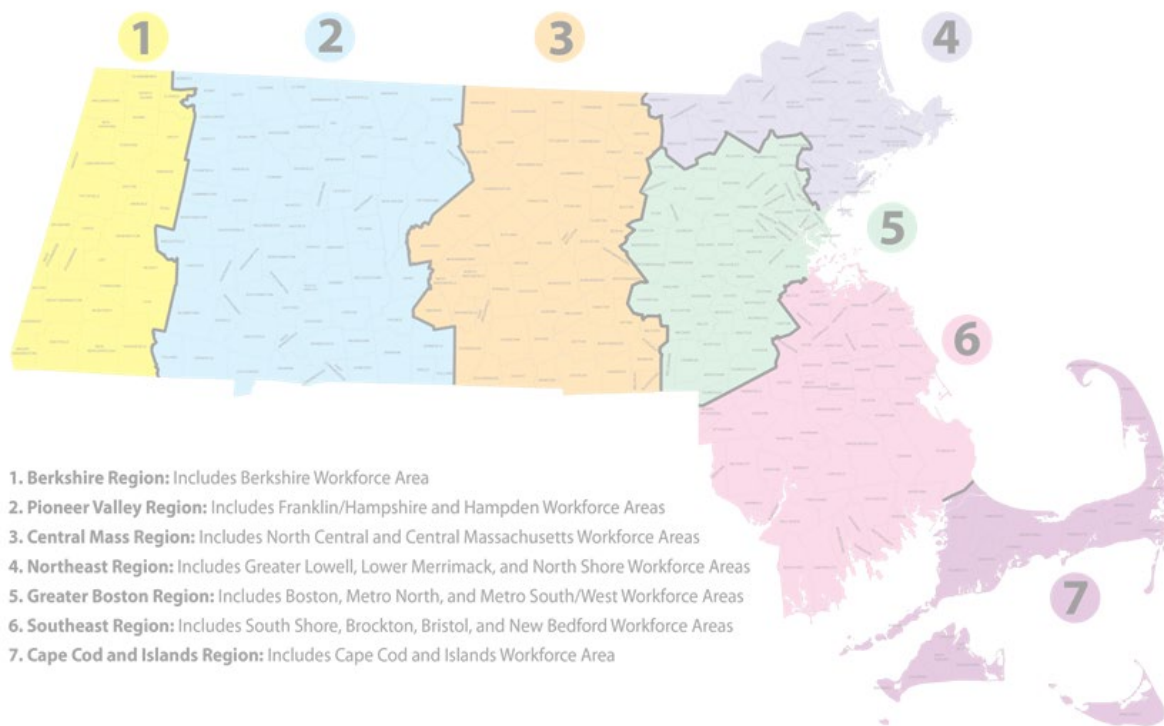
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To support the State Plan “career pathways” vision, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) has committed \$200,000 in Adult Career Pathway funds to support local workforce area efforts to work in partnership with local adult education programs to identify and develop career pathway opportunities for adult learners.

The ACLS Adult Career Pathway funds have been allocated to the 16 MassHire Workforce Boards based on FY2019 adult education student enrollments in each of the local workforce areas.

MassHire Workforce Boards work in partnership with local adult education programs in the development of career pathways opportunities for adult learners. Funds provided to the Workforce Boards are intended to support the following activities: review of adult education proposals (CALC, workplace education, etc.); participation of MassHire Workforce Board staff on program quality reviews (PQR) (monitoring) and selected site visits and related trainings to determine the quality of services against a set of Indicators through a diagnostic assessment. The reviews ensure state and federally funded adult education providers are compliant with state and federal policies; promising practices will be identified and disseminated.

The funds also support the development of effective employer partnerships in order to place adult education graduates. And provide support and guidance to adult education programs related to the development of viable career pathways for adult learners in the local workforce area as well as to adult education programs related to the development of bridge classes and integrated education and training programs, serving “shared customers” and to the out-stationed adult education staff located at MassHire Career Centers

## **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Training Partnership**

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) provides training funds to MassHire Career Centers (MCCs) to provide occupational training to MRC consumers.

In FY19, MRC committed \$450,000 in funding to support workforce training for MRC consumers. MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) and MRC partner to assist training ready MRC consumers to enroll in workforce training through Individual Training Accounts (ITA) in the effort to increase employment opportunities. Funds provided by MRC for training are supplemental to WIOA training funds.

All MRC consumers referred to the MassHire Career Center system are required to complete a career center registration, which allows MRC consumers access to basic services, including labor exchange services, information on programs and services, and referrals. MRC consumers who complete a career center registration are considered shared customers.

This program continues through FY20, with an infusion of an additional \$550,000 into the MassHire Career Center system.

MRC continues to contribute funding annually to support the partnership to support MRC consumers in training identified from the Massachusetts Eligibility Training Provider List (ETPL).

[WIOA Joint Partner Communication 01.2021: MassHire and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Training Partnership](#) provides operational guidance for implementation of the partnership.

## **Work Participant Program (WPP)**

The Department of Transitional Assistance, in partnership with the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) is collaborating to operate the Work Participant Program (WPP) to provide career planning support and resources to DTA clients, who are prioritized by WIOA.

Staff work collaboratively to ensure that Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) clients receive tailored and appropriate job readiness, job matching, coaching and employment supports. The DTA designated staff Full Engagement Workers (FEWs) from DTA local offices are also co-located at the MassHire Career Centers and provide support, information, and resources to Career Center staff and DTA clients on a locally established schedule and frequency.

The Local WIOA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and regular, ongoing local partner meetings drive the model for local partner staff to work together to provide a full array of services to shared customers, the range of which encompasses initial assessment, career planning, workshops, event coverage, and more.

The successful completion of WPP services is expected to result in full-time, unsubsidized employment that is aligned with labor market needs and participant goals toward a career pathway.

The FY20 funding level for the WPP program is currently \$2,000,000.

### **Staff Training and Professional Development Overview**

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development/MassHire Department of Career Services (EOLWD/MDCS) continues the process of assessing the current skill level of career center staff and analyzing the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform each job in the career center. EOLWD/MDCS has created and implemented regular professional development opportunities for Workforce Board and career center staff to ensure that their knowledge and expertise is current and consistent with the specific opportunities and needs within their regional areas. Existing and planned training activities can be found in attachment M.

*(B) Alignment with Activities outside the Plan.* Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by mandatory MassHire partners and other optional MassHire partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

State partners—both mandatory WIOA partners and optional partners like economic development, education, human services, and other providers—signed the state level MOU to ensure alignment of service activity to the vision, goals, and strategies of the Plan. Career and Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) and Apprenticeship opportunities are aligned to workforce activities described in (A) through the state and within the 16 areas. The sixteen MassHire Workforce Boards, through their board membership participation and strategic planning develop strategies and actions promote the alignment of all programs with WIOA-funded programs and non-mandatory programs under each local MOU (the template of which is based upon the state MOU).

### ***Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Individuals***

*(C) Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Individuals.* Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and mandatory and optional MassHire partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services to individuals including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

The MassHire Workforce Boards and Career Centers and the Core Partner Programs continue to provide services to job seekers, consumers, participants, students based on the mission and directives of the existing resources and resulting service systems. Through the WIOA State Plan, these partners have worked together to leverage relationships with the



business community and to develop a coordinated approach to outreach and service delivery. Most importantly, connecting outreach activities to job placement across the partners is a significant task for a truly integrated system.

In addition, enhanced “priority of service” requirements ensure that individuals with barriers (including individuals who are low-income, have limited skills, are recipients of public assistance, homeless, have a disability, limited English, age barriers or face other barriers to employment) are able to access critical employment and training services through the MassHire Career Center system. All Core WIOA Program Partners and other broader workforce partners work together with MassHire Career Centers to:

- **Build out “pathway maps” or customer-centered design models** for specific populations for “shared” customers between partner programs to create a clear understanding of how multiple providers, services and resources should support an individual person or business;
- **Improve the MassHire customer flow** and service practices to prioritize individuals with barriers and work across partner agencies;
- **Utilize robust technology tools to scale-up practices and provide more significant supports for individuals with barriers to employment**, including basic skill assessment, remediation, and career development tools;
- **Sponsor cross-training for staff across partner agencies** (Statewide MOU) to understand the needs of populations and available resources to make referrals and customize services based on customer need; including cross-training for resources such as, JobQuest, TORQ, Career Information System, etc.;
- **Track and evaluate the outcomes** for individuals who face barriers to employment (see federal WIOA measures and state-designed measures in Section II).

### **Models and Services for WIOA Target Populations**

The WIOA and non-WIOA partners will continue to work with job seekers who represent populations who need additional support. Through the 16 local MO teams, who meet regularly to examine career center service provision and think through process improvements, Massachusetts has effectively re-designed specific career center services with its partners. In addition, grant-funded or state-based initiatives often supplement and expand the public system’s ability to work with individuals who face barriers to employment:

a) **Age Barriers:** MA-SCSEP works closely with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) to help promote and coordinate the SCSEP and MassHire Career Center service delivery systems. State strategies of the State Plan outline specific steps in pursuit of the goals to achieve the vision for the workforce system. To that end, EOEA (Executive Office of Elder Affairs) will work with EOLWD to enhance the services to customers of the MassHire Career Centers by:

- Training MassHire Career Center staff on the needs of people 55 and over

- Offering more training classes geared to people 55 and over
- Helping Business Service Representatives (BSRs) establish more effective employer pipelines to hire older workers

b) **Low-Income, Low-Skilled:** Many individuals who are homeless, receiving public assistance or public housing, those with CORI issues, or individuals with limited skills (LEP or lack of high school credentials etc.) face challenges that require multiple supports offered across a range of partners.

State-level partners have developed curriculum and delivered cross-training to ensure staff at multiple agencies can help an individual understand available resources, the impact of work on wages and public benefits (benefits counseling or “cliff effect” information for TANF-SNAP), and next steps to move along a career pathway. The adult education network of providers contributes information on evidence-based models that support integrated education and training, career pathways, wraparound/college, and career-readiness support services to assist staff in building supports that create positive outcomes for low-income, low-skilled populations.

c) **Individuals with Disabilities:** MassHire Department of Career Services, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind as well as a variety of disability service agencies work together to enhance and build employment related services for individuals with disabilities. MassHire through its network of career centers is committed to ensuring all individuals regardless of disabilities have access to integrated programs and services.

MRC Vocational Rehabilitation and its Core Workforce partners developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each of the 16 Workforce Development Board (WDB) areas in the Commonwealth. The MOUs outline the activities that will be aligned across the partnership. These activities include but are not limited to pre-employment vocational services, post-secondary education services, Adult Basic Education (ABE), MassHire Career Center services, cross-training of staff, consultation on accessibility issues, sharing employer and labor market needs and information in specific geographic areas across the state, among others. The Commonwealth will examine options for establishing a common client ID to share information and referrals between partners regarding common consumers. The MOUs address each region’s infrastructure needs to operate successfully and ensure alignment.

The Commissioner of MRC is a member of the State Plan Advisor Committee (SPAC). In addition, MRC has staff members assigned to each MWB and career centers across the Commonwealth and plays key roles in the WIOA SPAC and associated WIOA planning committees including the Common Measures Committee, Policy and Youth Workgroup, ensuring the needs of individuals with disabilities are blended and braided into all workforce system activities.

The MRC’s job placement specialists and other assigned MRC staff work closely with local MassHire centers and core partners to provide high-quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities seeking expanded employment

opportunities and to assist the career centers and other partners to better meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. MRC provides training, including disability sensitivity training, accessibility, and information and referrals for career center and partners.

MCB has staff members assigned to each MWB and MassHire center across the Commonwealth and plays key roles in the WIOA Steering Committee and associated WIOA planning committees including the Common Measures Committee, Policy and Youth Workgroup, ensuring the needs of individuals with visual disabilities are blended and braided into all workforce system activities.

The MCB's employment specialists and other vocational rehabilitation counselors work closely with local career centers and core partners to provide high-quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with visual disabilities seeking expanded employment opportunities and to assist the career centers and other partners to better meet the needs of individuals with visual disabilities. MCB provides consultation on accessibility and training, including disability sensitivity training, accessibility, and information and referrals for career center and partners.

Massachusetts has been awarded a total of three Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grants aimed to increase access to career center services and expand capacity within existing career pathways to serve youth and adults with disabilities. DEI is jointly funded by the Office of Disability and Employment Policy and Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. MassHire Career Centers involved in the DEI projects have implemented proven practices that have improved quality of services and have contributed to increased employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Disability Resource Coordinators (DRC) were hired to implement the provision of services outlined in the grant, which includes building integrated resources teams, blending and braiding of resources, and strengthening collaborations and partnerships to serve individuals with disabilities.

The value of the Massachusetts DEI model is that it links access to education, credential training and job training and benefits counseling with utilization of the federal Ticket to Work Program. Prior grants and resources for this population were solely focused on employment and did not expand work to enroll more individuals into post-secondary or training programs.

Through WIOA, the MassHire, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other partners are participating in a customer-centered design process to identify new ways to integrate and share services. There is a goal to implement service design created for the Disability Employment Initiative grants to regions of the state that were not awarded these resources.

As a result of participation with DEI the following best practices have been identified:

1. Staff training on issues and resource regarding disabilities.
2. Benefits planning for individuals on either SSI or SSDI.

3. Engagement with MassMatch the state's assistive technology agency.
4. Exposure to Employment Networks and Ticket to Work.
5. Implementation of IRTs (Individual Resource Teams).
6. Enhanced and continued partnership with MRC and MCB.

These practices will be scaled across the 16 workforce areas to ensure a more systemic approach to serving individuals with disabilities.

d) **Homeless:** MassHire Workforce Boards and Career Centers foster ongoing local partnerships with shelters and organizations that specialize in services for homeless individuals.

MassHire Career Centers maintain lists of resources and local contacts to assist the Homeless population. The web-based registration form within JobQuest asks the “Are you Homeless” question that serves to alert staff to a customer’s situation. Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has several programs targeted to serving the Homeless, such as:

- Emergency Housing and shelter
- Housing Stabilization programs
- Secure Jobs Initiative
- Rental Assistance
- HomeBASE (provides funding for furniture; 1<sup>st</sup> and last month’s rent; utilities; travel costs, etc.)

e) **Veterans:** MassHire Department of Career Services, as well as a variety of Veteran service agencies, work together to enhance and build employment related services for Veterans. MassHire, through its network of career centers is committed to ensuring all Veterans and their families have access to integrated programs and services.

Dedicated staff is available throughout the state to help Veteran’s transition to civilian employment. Veterans and their eligible spouses receive Priority of Service throughout the full array of services provided through the Career Center system. Veterans' employment representatives also:

- Supervise services to Veterans including counseling, testing, and identifying training and employment opportunities
- Monitor federal job listings to see that eligible Veterans get priority referrals
- Promote participation in federally funded employment and training programs
- Work with the [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#) to identify Veterans who need work-specific prosthetic devices, sensory aids, or other special equipment
- Contact community leaders, employers, unions, training programs, and Veterans' service organizations to ensure eligible Veterans get the services to which they are entitled

(f) **Long-Term Unemployed:** MassHire Career Centers offer various workshops targeted to older and long-term unemployed individuals, such as:

Age-Related Questions, a clinic that gives participants an opportunity to brainstorm age-related questions that might be asked in an interview or might be in the mind of an interviewer but not asked.

Using Age to Your Advantage, explores common misconceptions about age in the workplace and outlines the advantages seasoned workers bring to the table.

Hire Opportunity is an intensive series of weekly two-hour sessions over six weeks that features group activities and peer support to help participants approach their job searches with sharpened skills, renewed energy, and focus.

Massachusetts is currently operating two Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grants to Address the Opioid Crisis, which place particular focus on long-term unemployed individuals affected by the opioid crisis.

g) **Ex-Offenders:** MassHire Department of Career Services, as well as a variety of agencies are working together to enhance and build employment related services for Returning Citizens. MassHire, through its network of career centers, is committed to ensuring individuals have access to integrated programs and services.

### ***Coordination, Alignment and Provision of Services to Employers***

*(D) Coordination, Alignment, and Provision of Services to Employers.* Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, mandatory and optional MassHire partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Coordination and collaboration of the partners and entities that provide services to businesses has been and continues to be a major business service strategy for the Commonwealth. The key principles established to guide business services across partner agencies across the Commonwealth are as follows:

1. There is “no wrong door” for business services; business assessments are consistent, regardless of the entry point.
2. A single point of contact within a coordinated regional structure/strategy is a key business-serving tenet.
3. All staff, regardless of their role, are to be well versed in the leading industry sectors in their local area and region.
4. All staff have a role in collecting business intelligence and contribute to their organization and system’s learning about business needs.

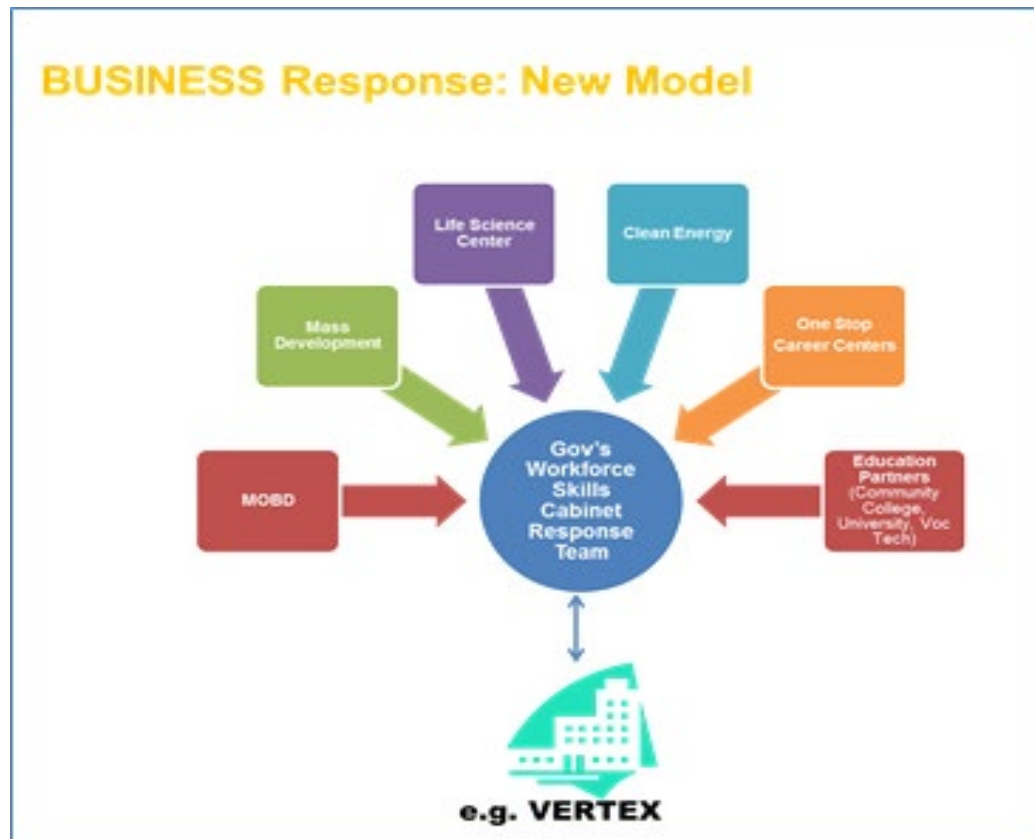
5. All staff, regardless of their role, must be well-versed in the needs of employers who are Federal Contractors to ensure that a diverse talent pool is available to meet their needs and to assist them with compliance of Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 503) at 41 CFR Part 60-741
6. All staff represent the MassHire Workforce System (not just a specific center, program, or agency) and are ambassadors to other state system partners offering business services.
7. Business-based talent development service models (sector strategies, internships, apprenticeship) are priorities.

MassHire BizWorks continues to lead efforts around marketing, staff development and systems/communications with a primary focus of information sharing, coordinating, and making linkages electronically. BizWorks played a fundamental role in the organization and work of the State Plan Advisory Committee's Business Services and Engagement workgroup that developed goals and strategies to support business growth and sustainability through leveraging interagency collaboration to increase outcomes for businesses, meet business demand for hiring and talent development, and identify industry need for skills training models (on-the-job training, apprenticeship, sector strategies).

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and MassHire Department of Career Services, with local MassHire Workforce Board and Career Center input, has developed a specialized process to support businesses seeking recruitment and hiring assistance through the Governor's Office, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development or other State Partners. The communication and accountability structure of this process is the Recruitment Solutions Initiative (RSI).

The goal of RSI implementation is to manage high-level business recruitments consistently. RSI establishes a referral team dedicated to job matching, a regional lead to coordinate all communications, and a local lead to support on-the-ground logistics. RSI is intended to increase the volume of qualified job seekers referred, interviewed, and hired by Massachusetts businesses. The RSI also establishes a consistent process for assessing, vetting, and referring qualified MassHire Career Center job candidates to business customers for employment consideration.

**Figure 50: Business Response**



The Core WIOA program partners participate in the BizWorks organizing effort as well as the SPAC Business Services and Engagement Workgroup, which developed sections of the State Plan. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) has a robust set of outreach and direct service activities with businesses across the state and most likely works with the highest number of employers across programs funded by Title IV of WIOA. MRC participates in a business strategy workgroup between key workforce partners as part of the Commonwealth's effort to coordinate services to employers amongst partner agencies and subscribes to the established key principles to guide business services amongst key partner agencies.

A key goal for the SPAC Business Services and Engagement Workgroup is to also actively engage the Massachusetts Business Leadership Network, which is an association of Massachusetts companies committed to a diverse marketplace that includes people with disabilities as both customers and employees. The Massachusetts Business Leadership Network (MassBLN) is an affiliate of the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN) initiative, a national business-led endeavor upholding workforce initiatives that enable qualified individuals with disabilities to succeed in the workplace.

#### ***Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions***

*(E) Partner Engagement with Educational Institutions.* Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's education and training providers, including community

colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges and area career and technical education schools, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv).

The vision for the WIOA 2020 Combined State Plan to promote the progression of individuals along career pathways relies upon a larger number of individuals moving into post-secondary attainment of credentials in order to meet the job demand in the Massachusetts economy. While higher education is not a required Core Partner program in WIOA, our higher education system, represented by the Executive Office of Education, is a key member of the Workforce Skills Cabinet and in the implementation of the WIOA Plan. State leaders will focus on new strategies that assist more individuals, especially individuals with limited education and skill, in accessing higher education. Education partners are building on the state's past success with the USDOL TAACCT initiatives. The Department of Transitional Assistance and the Executive Office of Community Colleges identified additional opportunities to expand access to post-secondary credentialing for SNAP recipients through recruitment and SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) reimbursements. The Administration has continued to support sector initiatives in high demand occupations as well.

The MassHire Workforce Boards and Career Centers, adult education and post-secondary systems have had the experience of rethinking the connections and pathways for individuals who need to move from low to mid to high skilled credentialing and continue to build on those lessons. New or revised accelerated, stackable programming is now delivered at many community college campuses. Statewide teams continue to deliver and look to develop industry recognized curriculum in targeted industry sectors, and the ABE system (Title II) and developmental education faculty from most campuses helped develop and are utilizing contextualized curriculum modules to better prepare students for high-demand careers.

Education partners are a critical partner to meet the training needs of MassHire job seekers. With the knowledge gained about the different systems, leveraging and braiding resources is a regular practice which has helped Massachusetts increase the number of individuals using WIOA funding through Individual Training Accounts at community colleges. In addition, the new Administration applied for a longitudinal data grant through US Department of Education to build out the capacity to share wage record data and information across education and workforce systems. This data analysis designed under this grant will open new doors to understand which initiatives and interventions are most successful.

*(F) Partner Engagement with Other Education and Training Providers.* Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's other education and training providers,



including providers on the state's eligible training provider list, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. See below.

*(G) Leveraging Resources to Increase Educational Access.* Describe how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments that have enhanced access to workforce development programs at the above institutions, described in section (E). See below.

*(H) Improving Access to Postsecondary Credentials.* Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses, or certifications, and that are portable and stackable. See below.

### ***Education Partnerships, Leveraging Resources for Education, and Access to Post-Secondary Credentials***

The vision for the WIOA 2020 Combined State Plan to promote the progression of individuals along career pathways relies upon a larger number of individuals moving into post-secondary attainment of credentials in order to meet the job demand in the Massachusetts economy. While higher education is not a required Core Partner program in WIOA, our higher education system, represented by the Executive Office of Education, is a key member of the Workforce Skills Cabinet and in the implementation of the WIOA Plan. State leaders will focus on new strategies that assist more individuals, especially individuals with limited education and skill, in accessing higher education. The concrete ways in which our state strategies engage education partners include:

- *Tri-Chairs for the Workforce Skills Cabinet Regional Team*, led by Workforce Board, Education partner and Economic Development partner. (See next section)
- *Alignment of state and regional investments in educational and training pathways* through Workforce Skills Cabinet policy and programs (e.g., grants to build pipelines through Workforce Skills Capital program, Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund, Workforce Training Fund, Manufacturing Sector funding, TRAIN grants to community colleges, etc.)
- *Education partners in sector strategies* (partnerships between business, education, and workforce to train individuals for high demand jobs)
- *Approval of education partners on the Education Training Provider List*
- *Community College operation of a MassHire Career Center* (acting as the Career Center operator)
- *Approval of education partners provide Related-Training Instruction* for Registered Apprenticeship

### ***Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies***

*(I) Coordinating with Economic Development Strategies.* Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

As discussed in Section II goals and strategies, the Commonwealth developed its Economic Development Plan with significant input from the education and workforce systems. The Economic Development Plan—titled *Partnerships for Growth*—calls out workforce development as 1 of 4 pillars in the Plan. In addition, the Governor leveraged the required WIOA regional planning process to create an integrated regional planning process across the economic, education, and workforce Secretariats. The regional planning structure is based on an aligned regional map between workforce areas, economic development, and education regions. The process required seven coordinated teams led by MassHire Workforce Boards, Community Colleges and Vocational Technical Schools, and economic development (Massachusetts Office of Business Development) with additional partners (business leaders, community-based organizations, etc.) to ensure that education and training systems are focused on the career pathways needed in the regional economy. The regional leadership from economic development therefore drives the activities of the Workforce Boards and key WIOA partners through the resulting regional plans.

Coordination between MassHire BizWorks and economic development occurs regularly between the Rapid Response team the BizWorks program and the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD), which is also a partner in the MassHire BizWorks program. The Rapid Response manager is a voting board member of MOBD's EACC board which approves tax incentives for growing business, The Rapid Response team coordinates business growth and business layoff activities with MOBD as well.

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### **State Operating Systems and Policies**

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- **State Operating Systems and Policies** The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section II **Strategic Elements**. This includes-

(1) The State operating systems that will support the implementation of the State's strategies. This must include a description of—

(A) State operating systems that support coordinated implementation of State strategies (e.g., labor market information systems, data systems, communication systems, case-management systems, job banks, etc.).

## ***Systems to Support Coordination***

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

The primary operating systems for the workforce core partners are described in the next section. The Research Division within the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance operates the primary labor market information systems in Massachusetts as part of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. The Divisions' data is possible because of its cooperative agreement with the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the United States Census Bureau. The Division is focused on producing reliable and timely data in order to assist individuals make data-driven decisions in the areas of business, career, and education.

Labor market data and economic statistics are publicly available on the EOLWD website to help stakeholders make informed plans, choices, and decisions for a wide range of purposes, including business investment decision making, career planning and preparation, education and training offerings, job search opportunities, hiring, and public or private workforce investments. The Division also works with local workforce development system partners as well as external stakeholders to provide custom workforce data, which further the efficiency and impact of the system.

Currently, the core partners each have a myriad of tools available to assist customers in the development of career pathways and the state workforce agency offers these tools to partner agencies and their clients through online systems.

**Burning Glass Labor Insight** - provides job market data to enable the identification of opportunities for training programs, closer alignment of education and training initiatives with employer demand, and improved site selection and recruiting decisions.

**Transferable Occupation Relationship Quotient (TORQ)** - an LMI tool that provides a real-time triage process, which analyzes an individual's occupational knowledge, abilities, and skills, and assesses the transferability of those characteristics to other, potentially more in demand, occupations they might not have considered.

**Massachusetts JobQuest** - the workforce system's front-facing web application used by members of the public (job seekers and businesses) to access programs and services such as job search and application, training programs research and, for employers, to locate job candidates.

**ACT WorkKeys Curriculum** - a self-paced, adaptive, online remediation system supports the evaluation and development of employability skills, graphic literacy, numeracy, and reading comprehension for the workplace. Through this assessment, staff can match the skill assets of participants against occupational requirements to improve screening and candidate referral.

**MassHire Career Information System** - is a free on-line app that is offered to all Massachusetts residents. MassHire CIS is designed to provide occupational and educational information to help people make better-informed career and school choices. MassHire CIS contains career, education, and workforce information, as well as many career exploration tools. The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's (EOLWD), MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) provides MassHire CIS to Massachusetts residents free of charge. MassHire CIS has 3 versions, Junior, High School and Adult and agency. MassHire CIS junior version supports reading, writing, decision-making, and critical thinking skills while developing self-awareness, career exploration, research, and planning skills. The reading requirement for this product is fifth-grade level, making it appropriate for special populations.

MassHire CIS version (also known as High School/Middle School version) version provides comprehensive career information for students developing and updating educational plans. Using MassHire CIS in high school supports lifelong career planning and promotes career self-reliance. MassHire CIS includes tools that encourage self-assessment, exploration, research, goal setting, and decision-making. MassHire CIS adult and Agency version provides users a resource for practically any career information needs. Easy to access and simple to use, MassHire CIS provides a wealth of occupational and educational information.

(B) Data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including those present in MassHire Career Centers.

### ***Data-collection and reporting processes***

The core partners each have separate data and operating systems, which are described in the next sub-section. To address immediate WIOA needs for the partners, the Commonwealth will explore the use of MassHire JobQuest as the main entry portal for individuals who intersect with the MassHire Career Centers and who may be "shared" between two WIOA enrollments (both job seekers and employers). In the long term, the WIOA partners are working toward a technological system integration to facilitate the customer flow for our shared customers. This system will support an upfront common intake/registration and case management tracking. The concept will utilize the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) for job seeker and employer tracking all services provided and programs and activities accessed by all shared customers across core MassHire service points.

Data Collection and Reporting Systems for Core WIOA programs - The largest group of workforce development programs are administered by the **MassHire Department of Career Services** (MDCS) within the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) and operate through the State's network of MassHire Career Centers. MDCS manages the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES): a client/server application and database that serves as the unified management information, client tracking, case management, and reporting system used by staff at career centers and other workforce development service providers in Massachusetts.

The application is distributed through an AWS (Amazon Work Space) providing users with flexibility for data entry and report access. MOSES collects information and tracks data through the MOSES database for the following programs: • Title I Adult • Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) • National Dislocated Worker Grants • Title I Dislocated Worker, including Rapid Response • Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) • Disability Employment Initiative Grants (DEI) • Title I Youth • Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) • Unemployment Insurance employment assistance services • Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA).

Several web-based applications collect information and interface with the MOSES database, including: (a) MassHire JobQuest which is used by job seekers to access job listings, eligible training providers and courses, services and workshops at career centers, and assessment tools, such as TORQ and Career Readiness, and is also used by employers to post jobs and search for qualified applicants; (b) MassHire TrainingPro which is used by training providers to register for approval under WIOA ITAs, Trade TAA and UI Section 30 (TOP, Training Opportunity Program for UI Claimants); (c) a WOTC application providing on-line access for employers seeking tax credits and that interfaces with the Department of Transitional Assistance to verify TANF/SNAP eligibility; and (d) a Foreign Labor Certification application was developed to manage H2A and H2B. However, the new application is now used only for H2B while H2A is managed through the new DOL FLAG system.

The **Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS)** unit oversees Title II. In FY19 ACLS transitioned to a commercial off-the-shelf data system, LACES (Literacy, Adult, and Community Education System) by LiteracyPro Systems, Inc. to meet the National Reporting System (NRS) requirements.

LACES is a web-based electronic data collection and reporting system. Local adult education providers submit student-level data (demographics, participation, assessment, and post-exit outcomes) and the application aggregates the information to meet the WIOA Title II reporting requirements.

LACES interfaces with GED and ETS to receive high school equivalency results and with the University of Massachusetts, Amherst to receive MAPT (Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Test) scores. Local providers can enter employment and post-secondary enrollment and credential attainment outcomes. ACLS also matches participant wage records with the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance and uploads those outcomes in the LACES records for students who signed release forms. ACLS seeks to match postsecondary enrollment by matching with the Department of Higher Education and the National Student Clearinghouse.

ACLS uses LACES to monitor grantee performance and compliance. All providers have enrollment and performance targets. State policy requires timely data collection and entry. This enables locals and the state office to monitor performance. LACES has a

range of tools, reports, and diagnostics to support day-to-day operations and identify data issues quickly.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) provide vocational rehabilitation services that fall within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). MRC and MCB are separate agencies and have individual management information/case management systems.

The **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)** has a web-based Management Information System known as MRCIS, which serves as the case management and data system for MRC's Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Data is tracked and managed at the client level for all MRC VR consumers. The system documents and covers all aspects of the VR process from referral to exit. The system is used to produce a quarterly data file entitled the RSA-911 report submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration containing detailed client and employment data. MRC is in the process of exploring further enhancements to its data system to further modernize the system and create a frontal facing portal for consumers and providers and allow better integration of data between WIOA partners. This is expected to be pursued over the course of the four-year state plan period.

The **Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)** has a Management Information System known as Aware, which serves as the case management and data system for MCB's Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Data is tracked and managed at the client level for all MCB VR consumers. The system documents and covers all aspects of the VR process from referral to exit. The system has been modified to produce a quarterly data file entitled the RSA-911 report submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration containing detailed client and employment data.

The **Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)** within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) administers the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and the employment and training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through the BEACON system. MDSC and DTA operate an interface between BEACON and MOSES by which MDSC provides information on services that selected TANF recipients (identified as work ready) received at career centers.

The **Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA)** within the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development administers the UI program in Massachusetts through its use of UI Online, a web-based system which serves as a self-service application that both job seekers and employers can use to engage with DUA. DUA staff also uses UI Online to manage DUA's operations.

### ***State Policies***

(2) The State policies that will support the implementation of the State's strategies (e.g., co-enrollment policies and universal intake processes). In addition, describe the State's process for developing guidelines for State-administered MassHire partner programs'

contributions to a MassHire delivery system, including benchmarks, and its guidance to assist local boards, chief elected officials, and local MassHire partners in determining equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure in accordance with sec. 121(h)(l)(B). Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, the State must also include such guidelines.

The WIOA State Partners have agreed that youth and job seekers that are eligible for and receive services from more than one WIOA Partner program are considered shared customers. Shared customers benefit from the 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 463.3 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." (Programs and Activities authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of WIOA)).

One of the key reforms of WIOA is the strategic alignment of workforce partners and the services they provide to their shared customers. The tracking of shared customers is an important aspect of this strategy, not only for statistical measurement, but also to avoid duplication of service and to enable staff to better align services with the goals of the customer's career plan.

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. The link to the Massachusetts Joint Partner Policy on Shared Customers, is here: [Massachusetts Workforce Innovation And Opportunity Act Joint Partner Communication](#).

WIOA law (Sec121 B1 and h) and 20 CFR §463.510 cites that all required Partners must contribute to support both shared and infrastructure costs of the MassHire centers. The Final Rule notes, "Jointly funding services is a necessary foundation for an integrated service delivery system." The State WIOA required Partners include:

- Adult Community Learning Services (ACLS)
- Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)
- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)
- Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP)

Commonwealth State Partners, MassHire State Workforce Board, MassHire Workforce Boards, Local CEOs, and MassHire Management Team agreed:

1. All partners have a joint funding responsibility to support and maintain an effective local integrated service delivery system

2. The major funding sources (WIOA and W-P) were distributed through a federal formula process
3. State Partner funds had certain imposed caps on funding for infrastructure costs
4. All other funding was part of specific grant funds, e.g., Jobs for Veterans State Grant, NDWG, TAA etc. with specific guidelines
5. Technically, local partner staff did not have the authority to negotiate infrastructure or shared cost
6. Local Partners did have the authority to negotiate through MOU and budget process the use of the funds, individualized based upon each Partners' contribution
7. All stakeholders agreed, in the best interest of the shared customers, the State Partners would develop a formula methodology for infrastructure and where applicable, shared cost distribution
8. This process allowed Local Partners to focus on customer service
9. Local Fiscal agents ensure allocations are incorporated within the integrated budget and annual planning process

Relevant section from the State Umbrella MOU:

*"The Parties of this MOU agree that all required partners have a joint funding responsibility to support and maintain an effective local integrated service delivery system. In addition, all parties to the MOU recognize that shared and infrastructure costs are applicable to all required Partners. As such, all parties to this agreement acknowledge that the Local MOU herein serves the purpose of the infrastructure funding agreement (IFA) as required by WIOA. The infrastructure funding agreement as described will be revisited on an annual basis and periodically reconciled against actual costs incurred and adjusted accordingly to ensure that it reflects a cost allocation methodology that demonstrates how infrastructure costs are charged in proportion to relative benefits received. Infrastructure funds are apportioned at the state level based on the percentage of shared customers served in each local workforce area. State Partners will establish a methodology that will ensure costs are allowable, reasonable, necessary and allocable. As appropriate, State Partners will enter into Interagency Service Agreements (ISAs) or Contracts with the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), as the designated State Workforce Agency (SWA), to issue the local allocations. Local Boards will ensure all allocations are incorporated into the local integrated budget during the annual planning process. MDCS will monitor the spending of all shared and infrastructure costs and local partners agree to meet regularly to discuss integrated service delivery strategies and the shared and infrastructure funds needed to actualize services. On an annual basis, local partners will provide suggestions and recommendations to state level partners for adjustments to shared and infrastructure funds allocated. The utilization of infrastructure funds will be reviewed quarterly."*



WIOA State and Local Partners agree that the most important activity within the local MOU process is the regular convening of local MOU teams to build new or build upon established relationships, refine services to shared customers and continually examine and improve customer flow within each of the MassHire Workforce System's sixteen workforce areas. At the state level, Partners continue to work together to develop and/or adjust the formula for distribution of infrastructure funding based upon local data from each of the 16 workforce areas, identify expected outcomes to be locally achieved and determine a methodology for redistribution or reallocation of funds if performance expectations are not met or funds are underutilized.

The Massachusetts guidance for Partner program contributions is located here: [WIOA Joint Partner Local MOU Guidance – Revised](#).

### **3) State Program and State Board Overview**

#### ***State Agency Organization***

State Agency Organization. Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

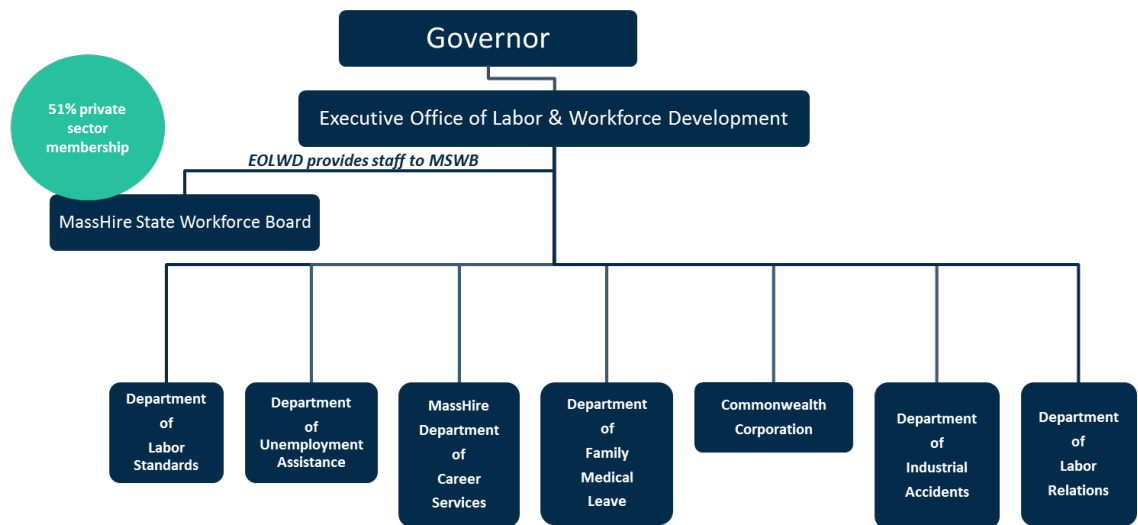
The Governor serves as the grant recipient for the Commonwealth. The Governor appoints most members of the MassHire State Workforce Board (State Board) [1] who in conjunction with the Governor provide leadership across the workforce system to ensure businesses secure a skilled workforce. The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), on behalf of the Governor oversees the MassHire Department of Career Services, the designated State Workforce Agency (SWA) that holds primary responsibility for oversight of the Massachusetts workforce development system.

The Governor has designated 16 Workforce Development Areas and the Chief Elected Officials (CEO) within those areas to act as grant recipients.

MassHire Workforce Areas: Berkshire, Boston, Bristol, Brockton, Cape and Islands, Central Massachusetts, Franklin/Hampshire, Greater Lowell, Greater New Bedford, Hampden County, Merrimack Valley, Metro North, Metro South/West, North Central Massachusetts, North Shore, and South Shore.

The Local CEOs appoint the business driven MassHire Workforce Boards (Local Boards) who in conjunction with the CEO govern the system locally including 29 MassHire Career Centers (25 comprehensive centers and 4 affiliate centers), ensuring coordination across all core partners, developing workforce strategies that meet the needs of businesses, as well as job seekers. Leadership from the State and Local Boards are strengthened by requiring WIOA core partners to have representation on all workforce boards; this partnership is further supported by requiring core partners to be signatories on the statewide MOU.

**Figure 51: Massachusetts Workforce System Governance Structure**



[1] Legislative members on the Massachusetts State Board are appointed by the presiding officer of their respective legislative chamber. All other State Board members are directly appointed by the Governor

### ***State Board***

State Board. Provide a description of the State Board, including-  
*Membership Roster*. Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

The MassHire State Workforce Board (MSWB) is a 33-member board that serves as an advisor to the Governor on building a strong workforce development system aligned with state education policies and economic development goals. The Board is charged with developing strategies that guide the Commonwealth's efforts in ensuring workers have the skills they need to fill the jobs businesses create, for a more prosperous Commonwealth, with higher wages for workers, larger profits for businesses and stronger communities for all.

### **1. Membership roster**

Provide a membership roster for the State Board, including members' organizational affiliations.

### **Governor**

**Sherry Dong**, Director, Community Health Improvement Programs, Tufts Medical Center  
*Designee for Governor Charlie Baker*

### **Business and Industry Members**

**Joanne Pokaski - Chair**, Assistant Vice President, Beth Israel Lahey Health  
**Joanne Berwald**, Vice President, Human Resources, MESTEK, Inc.  
**Anne Broholm**, Chief Executive Officer, Ahead, LLC  
**Jesse Brown**, Co-Founder/ Director of Operations, Heidrea Communications LLC  
**James Cassetta**, President and CEO, WORK, Inc.  
**Pamela Everhart**, Senior Vice President, Head of Regional Public Affairs/Community Relations, Fidelity Investments  
**Jessyca Feliciano**, Associate Director, Global Human Resources Business Partner, Takeda Pharmaceuticals  
**Rainer Gawlick**, Board Member, Progress Software  
**Axel Grippo**, Vice President of Business and Portfolio Planning, Editas Medicine  
**Juliette C. Mayers**, President and CEO, Inspiration Zone LLC  
**Randall Lyons**, Executive Director, Massachusetts Marine Trades Association  
**Jennifer Morales**, Senior Manager Internal Audit, Vertex  
**Radhames Nova**, Acting Chief Operating Officer, Association of Latino Professionals of America  
**Sherri Pitcher**, Vice President, Business Development, Fidelity Bank  
**Raymond Wrobel**, Vice President, Align Credit Union  
**2 Business seats currently vacant**

### **Legislature**

**Representative Jerald Parisella**, Representative, Sixth Essex District, Massachusetts House of Representatives  
**Senator Eric Lesser**, Senator, First Hampden and Hampshire District, Massachusetts Senate

### **Representatives of the Workforce Labor**

**Warren Pepicelli**, Executive Vice President, UNITE-HERE  
**John G. Mann**, President, NAGE, Local 292

### **Apprenticeship**

**Elizabeth Skidmore**, Business Representative/Organizer, North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters

### **Community-Based Organizations**

**Dr. Pam Eddinger**, President, Bunker Hill Community College  
**Maicharia Weir Lytle**, Senior Program Officer, Fidelity Foundation  
**Janice Ryan Weekes**, Director, MassHire Central Career Centers  
**Maria Ferreira-Bedard**, Executive Director, Southeastern Massachusetts SER-Jobs for Progress

### **Titles I and III Representative**

**Secretary Rosalin Acosta**, Secretary, Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

### **Titles II Representative**

**Robert LePage**, Assistant Secretary for Career Education, Massachusetts Executive Office of Education

*Designee for Secretary of Education, James Peyser*

### **Titles IV Representative**

**Marylou Sudders**, Secretary, Health and Human Services

### **Chief Elected Officials**

*2 seats currently vacant*

### **Other Representatives**

**Juan Vega**, Assistant Secretary for Communities and Programs, Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

*Designee for Secretary of Housing and Economic Development, Michael Kennealy*

**Board Activities.** Provide a description of the activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively.

The Board meets quarterly. During these meetings the Board is updated on and discusses high-level strategic priorities that foster continuous improvement of the workforce system, as well as considers activities and recommendations from one of the Board's committees. There are currently four committees of the Board:

MassHire Performance Committee (formerly the WIOA Oversight Committee): captures system-level performance data to drive decision-making and strategy; identifies and pursues opportunities to boost MassHire system performance, and provides general oversight of the MassHire system, including policies, programming, and development of the WIOA State Plan.

**This MassHire Performance Committee** is developing a performance dashboard for the workforce system, based on state-driven performance metrics. The Committee has also maintained responsibility for adjudicating appeals in the Career Center operator selection process and selecting winners of the MassHire Awards.

**Workforce System Modernization Committee:** Supports the implementation of WIOA State Plan Goal IV by ensuring Massachusetts has a world-class IT system to support a modern, efficient, and accessible workforce development system. Advises on the progress of the Employment Modernization and Transformation project, as well as the development of the MassHire virtual service pathway. The UI Bond Bill Advisory Council, established by the legislature's Bond Bill, functionally reports to the Workforce System Modernization Committee.

**Youth Pathways Committee:** develops recommendations to enhance integrating programming and career pathways for youth; provides general oversight on the development and implementation of the WIOA State Plan youth goal.

The Youth Pathways Committee focused on developing a convening for youth workforce development practitioners in support of implementation of the 2020 WIOA State Plan. The committee was on hiatus while youth services recalibrated after the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Adult Pathways Committee:** supports the integration of statewide workforce-related resources, programs, and initiatives to enhance career and economic outcomes for adult job seeker customers; may be tasked with providing general oversight to MassHire initiatives that improve programs and resources for adult customers, including Apprenticeship

In the advent of the COVID-10 pandemic and the acute need for virtual services, in CY 2021 the Adult Pathways Committee focused on the need for digital services and digital literacy for adult job seekers.

(A) Assessment of Core Programs. Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

(B) Assessment of Partner Programs. Describe how other MassHire delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. Such assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals

### ***Assessment of Core Programs***

The Baker-Polito Administration supports enterprise-wide performance management as a tool for both process and outcome improvement. As such, the Administration embraces the federal Indicators of Performance, as well as the latitude afforded states to create their own distinct indicators stemming from WIOA. All Partner agencies have signed the SWIS Agreement and are able to access wage data from Massachusetts (through in-state agreements with the Department of Unemployment Assistance) and other states through SWIS.

**Federally Required WIOA Measures:** All partners' federally funded programs are measured in the same way for these same outcomes. All measures are applied to participants in each WIOA primary funding stream by Partner agency. Appendix 1 provides the Federal Performance Goals as required by all WIOA Partner Agencies. The chart below shows Federal performance for Program Year 2018 for each of the Partner funding streams.

Figure 52: Federal Indicators of Performance

**FEDERAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE**

Federal Indicator of Performance	MDCS Title I Adult		MDCS Title I Youth	MDCS Title I Dislocated Worker	MDCS Title III Wagner-Peyser	DESE/ACLS Title II Adult Education	MRC Title IV Rehabilitation Services	MCB Title IV Rehabilitation Services
Employed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Employed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Employed 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Credential Attainment Rate	X		X	X	NA	X	X	X
Measurable Skill Gains	X		X	X	NA	X	X	X
Effective in Serving Employers	X		X	X	X	X	X	X

NA - Not Applicable

Proposed Goals for the Federal Indicators of Performance are provided in Appendix I.

*Legend*

- MDCS: MassHire Department of Career Services
- ACLS/DESE: Adult Career and Learning Services, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
- MRC: Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
- MCB: Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) evaluates the performance of the workforce system quarterly and annually based upon negotiated local performance goals. As warranted, technical assistance and/or corrective action is provided based upon the result of the evaluations. Refer to the Program Year 2020 and Program Year 19 Annual Reports for state and local MassHire Workforce Area performance on the WIOA Federal measures.

The WIOA performance measures provide one strategy for assessing the quality of services provided by partner programs. Presented below are other key primary metrics shared by all WIOA partners.

Figure 53: Key Primary Metrics Shared by all WIOA Partners

<b>Results for Key Populations State Designed Job Seeker Performance Measures Statewide Metrics</b>	<b>All MassHire Career Center Participants (WIOA Title I, III, Vets, TRADE, SCSEP, UI)</b>	<b>Adult Education Participants (WIOA Title II)</b>	<b>Vocational Rehabilitation Participants (WIOA Title IV)</b>
Number and Percent of <b>customers enrolled in training and employed</b> in a training related job 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	<i>Career Center customers enrolled in a training program</i>	<i>Title II individuals enrolled in a training program</i>	<i>Title IV individuals enrolled in a training program</i>
Number and Percent of <b>Veterans Employed</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	<i>Career Center customers who self-declare Veterans</i>	<i>Title II individuals who self-declare Veteran status</i>	<i>Title IV individuals who self-declare Veteran status</i>
Number and Percent of <b>Individuals with Language Barriers at Registration Employed</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	<i>Career Center customers who self-declare ESOL status</i>	<i>Title II individuals with ESOL status</i>	<i>Title IV individuals who self-declare ESOL status</i>
Number and Percent of <b>Individuals without High School Equivalency at enrollment that obtained a HS equivalency and who are Employed</b> at 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	<i>Career Center customers without HS Equivalency at intake (WIOA Title I, III, Vets, TRADE, etc.)</i>	<i>All Adult Education Participants (WIOA Title II)</i>	<i>All Vocational Rehabilitation Participants without HS Equivalency at intake (WIOA Title IV)</i>
Number and Percent of <b>Individuals with a Disability Employed</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	<i>Career Center customers who self-declare disability</i>	<i>Title II individuals who self-declare disability</i>	<i>Title IV individuals who self-declare disability</i>
Number and Percent of <b>Individuals receiving TANF, or SNAP Employed</b> at 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	<i>Career Center customers receiving TANF or SNAP required to enroll in job assistance services (WIOA Title I, III, Vets, TRADE, etc.)</i>	<i>All Adult Education Participants receiving TANF or SNAP (WIOA Title II)</i>	<i>All Vocational Rehabilitation Participants receiving TANF or SNAP (WIOA Title IV)</i>
Number of <b>Older Workers (50+)</b> who were employed in the 2nd quarter after exit	<i>Career Center customers 50+ years and SCSEP participants served at Career Centers</i>	<i>All Adult Education Participants 50+ years</i>	<i>All Vocational Rehabilitation Participants 50+ years</i>
Number of <b>New Businesses</b> served	<i>New business customers of Career Centers</i>	NA	NA

Results for Key Populations State Designed Job Seeker Performance Measures Statewide Metrics	All MassHire Career Center Participants (WIOA Title I, III, Vets, TRADE, SCSEP, UI)	Adult Education Participants (WIOA Title II)	Vocational Rehabilitation Participants (WIOA Title IV)
Number and percent of <b>Businesses</b> registered with MassHire Career Centers <b>that hired Customers referred by Career Centers</b>	<i>Career Center customers who were hired by businesses registered with Career Centers</i>	NA	NA
Number and percent of <b>Adults and Youth</b> participating in Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning (WBL) Programs	<i>Career Center customers (Adults and Youth) in Apprenticeship or WBL Programs</i>	<i>Title II individuals enrolled in Apprenticeship or WBL Programs</i>	<i>Title IV individuals enrolled in Apprenticeship or WBL Programs</i>
Number of <b>Businesses</b> sponsoring apprenticeship or WBL programs	<i>Career Center Business customers Sponsoring Apprenticeships or WBL Programs</i>	NA	NA
Number of <b>Shared Customers</b> Across Partner Agencies	<i>Career Center customers that are also receiving services from a Partner program</i>	<i>All Title II participants who are also receiving services at Career Centers</i>	<i>Title IV participants who are also receiving services at Career Centers</i>

### ***Previous Assessment Results***

Previous Assessment Results. Beginning with the state plan modification in 2018 and for subsequent state plans and state plan modifications, provide the results of an assessment of the effectiveness of the core programs and other MassHire partner programs and Combined State Plan partner program included in the plan during the preceding two-year period. Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments. Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

Federally Required WIOA Measures: All partners and their federally funded programs are measured in the same way for these same outcomes. All measures are applied to participants in each WIOA primary funding stream by Partner agency. Appendix 1 provides the Federal Performance Goals as required by all WIOA Partner Agencies. The chart below shows Federal performance for Program Year 2019 (July 2019 – June 2020) and Program Year 2020 (June 2020 – July 2021) for each of the Partner funding streams where available.



Figure 54: PY 2020 (FY 2021) and PY 2019 (FY 2020) Federal Indicators of Performance

Program Year 2020 Performance	Employed 2nd Quarter After Exit	Employed 4th Quarter After Exit	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	Credential Attainment Rate	Measurable Skill Gain
MDCSTitle I Adult	68.7%	66.9%	\$6,180	71.1%	31.1%
MDCSTitle I Youth	66.6%	63.8%	\$3,462	69.4%	44.7%
MDCSTitle I Dislocated Worker	75.9%	76.6%	10,895	69.4%	44.7%
MDCSTitle III Wagner Peyser Employment Service	56.7%	59.6%	\$7,931	***	***
DESE/ACLSTitle II Adult Education	41.8%	45.0%	\$6,852	28.3%	41.5%
MRC/MCB Title IV Rehabilitation Services*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Program Year 2019 Performance					
MDCSTitle I Adult	77.1%	76.2%	\$6,655	72.6%	42.2%
MDCSTitle I Youth	71.7%	70.4%	\$3,486	64.5%	24.9%
MDCSTitle I Dislocated Worker	81.7%	80.4%	\$10,984	74.9%	42.32
MDCSTitle III Wagner Peyser Employment Service	66.3%	68.4%	\$7,892	*	*
DESE/ACLSTitle II Adult Education	47.3%	51.2%	\$6,744	26.7%	23.9%
MRC/MCB Title IV Rehabilitation Services*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*\*\* Not required for WIOA Title III.

N/A Data not available.

\*Note that MRC and MCB Title IV are combined for Federal Reporting purposes. The Vocational Rehabilitation Program serves individuals with significant disabilities who often require multiple services over an extended period to achieve employment.

Figure 55: Combined Partner Measure

Combined Partner Measure  Effectiveness In Serving Employers	PY 2020	PY2020	PY 2019	PY 2019
	Retention with Same Employer 2nd and 4th Quarters	Repeat Business Customers Rate	Retention with Same Employer 2nd and 4th Quarters	Repeat Business Customers Rate
Combined Partner Measure	80.5%	28.9%	87.1%	29.3%

MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) evaluates the performance of the workforce system quarterly and annually based upon local workforce area performance goals negotiated with the MassHire Workforce Boards. As warranted, technical assistance and/or corrective action is provided based upon the results of the evaluations.

Refer to Career Center Performance Reports developed and posted quarterly for the State and MassHire workforce areas. <https://www.mass.gov/massworkforce-career-center-performance-reports-ccpr>.

Refer to Program Year 2020 and Program Year 2019 Annual Reports for state and local MassHire Workforce Area performance on the WIOA Federal measures.

### ***Evaluation***

**Evaluation:** Describe how the state will conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

The State may conduct evaluations and research projects with respect to the WIOA core programs in coordination with the MassHire State Workforce Board, local boards, and State partner agencies. These projects will include an evaluation component to be conducted by an independent entity and be consistent with evaluation requirements established by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA.

The MassHire State Workforce Board, the MassHire Department of Career Services and Commonwealth Corporation (both within the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development) have been in discussions to support the development of a WIOA Evaluation Agenda. It is anticipated that the Agenda, with input from partners and local MassHire workforce boards and career centers, will guide the design and implementation of program analyses and evaluations to review program impact and identify promising practices.

In a related development, Commonwealth Corporation has executed an agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance for access to wage record data. This access will allow for evaluations of the post-program outcomes of state supported YouthWorks and Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund sectoral training by using wage record matching results combined with participant characteristics and program services data. This evaluation work will be coordinated with the Agenda and, as there are shared WIOA customers in many of these programs, may suggest methods and approaches for WIOA evaluations as well.

### ***Distribution of Funds for Core Programs***

**Distribution of Funds for Core Programs.** Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

For Title I programs, provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for-

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) provides a forum for annual review of the data used for formula allocations under WIOA Title I through a Workforce Allocations Task Force established in 2014. The Task Force includes the Executive Director of the MassHire State Workforce Board (serving as the chair) and representatives from local MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Centers, local Fiscal Officers, and staff at EOLWD's MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) responsible for development and distribution of WIOA Title I program allocations. The Task Force makes its recommendations to the Governor through the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development. In addition, at the discretion of the Secretary, the Task Force may be called upon to recommend allocation methodologies for distribution of State funds appropriated for MassHire Career Centers. MDCS is responsible for computing the 16 local workforce area allocations for WIOA Title I programs based on the approved formula data and methodology and for providing the allocation levels to EOLWD's Finance Department. Local area allocations are published annually with the detailed input data and formulas through the Fiscal Year WIOA Local Operations Plan Guidance Policy and are updated as necessary during the fiscal year if there are changes in federal allotment levels.

WIOA Title I Youth and Adult local area allocations are computed in accordance with instructions in the WIOA sections identified above and are distributed by percentage share to the sixteen local MassHire Workforce Development Areas (local areas) according to the formula shown below. WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker local area allocations are computed in accordance with a formula developed by the Task Force based on requirements in WIOA.

Figure 56: Factors informing Title I Adult and Youth Formulas  
**Adult: WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3); Youth: WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3)**

FACTOR/SOURCE	WEIGHT	TITLE I YOUTH	TITLE 1 ADULT
Average Number of Economically-Disadvantaged Youths ( <i>Census Bureau, American Community Survey</i> )	1/3	X	
Average Number of Economically-Disadvantaged Adults ( <i>Census Bureau, American Community Survey</i> )	1/3		X
Number of Unemployed in Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASUs) ( <i>EOLWD/Department of Unemployment Assistance, Economic Research, BLS methodology</i> )	1/3	X	X
Number of Excess Unemployed in Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASUs) ( <i>EOLWD/Department of Unemployment Assistance, Economic Research, BLS methodology</i> )	1/3	X	X

A hold-harmless provision ensures that each local area's percentage share of the State allotments designated for local WIOA Title 1 Youth and Adult program activities does not fall below 90% of the local area's average percentage share for the prior two fiscal years.

The Workforce Allocations Task Force reviews the formula for distribution of Title I Dislocated Worker funds to local workforce areas in accordance with the requirements in WIOA section 133(b)(2)(B) and makes its recommendations to the Governor through the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development. This review is done annually to ensure that the most current data are used for the formula allocations to local workforce areas.

The Task Force's final recommendations for Program Year 2020 and Program Year 2021 are shown on the following table.

**Figure 57: Data sources for Title I Dislocated Worker Formulas  
WIOA 133(b)(2)**

<b>Required Information Element/Factor Program Year 2019</b>	<b>Data for PY20/PY21</b>	<b>Data Source</b>	<b>Factor Weight PY20/PY 21</b>
Insured Unemployment Data	CY 2019 / CY 2020 Average Monthly UI Claimants	UI Claimant Data <i>DUA Economic Research</i>	25%/27.78%
Unemployment Concentrations	CY 2019 / CY 2020 Average Annual Unemployment Rate	Labor Force Data <i>DUA Economic Research</i>	25%/27.78%
Plant Closing and Mass Layoff Data	CY 2019 / CY 2020 UI Claimants in Layoffs of 25+	UI Claimant Data <i>DUA Economic Research</i>	10%/0% (Data Not Available)
Declining Industries Data	3-Year Job Loss in Declining Industries	Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) <i>DUA Economic Research</i>	10%/11.10%
Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship Data	Not a significant economic factor in Massachusetts at 0.24% of total employment	NA	NA
Long-Term Unemployment Data	CY 2019 / CY 2020 Average Long-Term UI Claimants (26+ Continuous Weeks)	UI Claimant Data <i>DUA Economic Research</i>	15%/16.67%
Long-Term Unemployment Data	CY 2019 / CY 2020 Annual Total of UI Claimants Exhausting Benefits	UI Claimant Data <i>DUA Economic Research</i>	15%/ 16.67%

A hold-harmless provision ensures that each local area's percentage share of the State allotment designated for local Dislocated Worker program activities does not fall below 90% of the local area's average percentage share for the prior two fiscal years.

## ***Title II***

For Title II:

- Describe how the eligible agency will award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers in the State, including how eligible agencies will establish that eligible providers are organizations of demonstrated effectiveness.
- Describe how the eligible agency will ensure direct and equitable access to all eligible providers to apply and compete for funds and how the eligible agency will ensure that it is using the same grant or contract announcement and application procedure for all eligible providers.

## **Open and Competitive Request for Proposals**

On July 18, 2017, ACLS issued an Open and Competitive (O&C) Request for Proposals (RFP) for implementation of the new AE system starting July 1, 2018. The RFP was broadly disseminated to ensure direct and equitable access to eligible providers. The state trained proposal review teams comprised of state adult education staff, regional local workforce development board (LWDB) staff, and consultants as needed. In collaboration with the LWDB directors, ACLS developed a separate process for LWDB review of proposals for alignment with local plans.

The O&C process marked a new funding model which shifted from a rate-based model to a cost per student seat model. Applicants could propose a cost per seat range from \$2,300 to \$3,300 per seat. Programs could also propose a higher cost per seat with supporting rationale for consideration. Programs would be held accountable for maintaining the enrollment for the funded seats. The goal of this shift was to allow programs greater flexibility.

As a result of the RFP, ACLS funded 70 Community Adult Learning Centers (CALCs), eight Adult Education in Correctional Institutions (AECIs), ten Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs, 14 Integrated English Language and Civic Education (IELCE) programs, one distance learning hub, one primary instruction by volunteer program, and eight workplace education programs. AE programs are located in all 16 local workforce areas.

Proposals that scored under 90 points out of a total of 205 points were placed on conditional funding for FY19 and required to submit corrective action plans and/or meet with ACLS leadership. Funding beyond FY19 was contingent upon the successful execution of the approved improvement plan. DESE conducted fiscal audits on three programs that received FY19 conditional funding due to fiscal findings based on audit reviews. Eight formerly funded AE programs did not submit competitive applications but received one-year transitional grants of up to \$120,000 for FY19 only.

In FY19, using federal and state funds, the AE system served:

Figure 58: Number of Student served by Adult Education System

Category	Number of Students
ESOL/ABE (GED/HiSet)	12,322/5,758
Men/Women	6,443/11,637
Employed/Unemployed	9,959/8,121
Out-of-School Youth	3,013
In correctional institutions	927
Receiving public assistance	6,689
Parents with dependents <18	1,341

### Continuation Grant Funding

In March 2019, program enrollment was assessed for each program by averaging enrollment over a five-month period (i.e., September to January) relative to target for which they were funded. The following funding methodology was applied to the FY19 base funding award to determine program grant awards for FY20.

Figure 59 – Methodology to Determine Program Grant Awards for FY20.

ESOL FY19 average monthly enrollment relative to target	Applies only to ESOL seats	ABE FY19 average monthly enrollment relative to target	Applies only to ABE seats
> 100	3% increase	> 100	5% increase
90 - 100	Level funded	75 - 100	Level funded
89 - 80	<b>1% decrease</b>	74 - 70	<b>1% decrease</b>
79 - 75	<b>2% decrease</b>	69 - 65	<b>2% decrease</b>
74 - 70	<b>3% decrease</b>	64 - 60	<b>3% decrease</b>
69 - 60	<b>4% decrease</b>	59 - 55	<b>4% decrease</b>
59 - 50	<b>5% decrease</b>	54 - 50	<b>5% decrease</b>
49 - 40	<b>10% decrease</b>	49 - 40	<b>10% decrease</b>

<b>ESOL FY19 average monthly enrollment relative to target</b>	<b>Applies only to ESOL seats</b>	<b>ABE FY19 average monthly enrollment relative to target</b>	<b>Applies only to ABE seats</b>
0 - 39	<b>20% decrease</b>	0 - 39	<b>20% decrease</b>

In April 2019, notices for continuation funding were posted to DESE's Current Grant Funding Opportunities and ACLS websites. Each continuation application was assessed on the merits of its proposed program design, budget, and narrative responses related to activities aligned with WIOA. Awards were contingent upon the provider demonstrating satisfactory performance and average monthly enrollment relative to target.

As of July 1, 2019, these CALC activities are funded with federal and/or state funds:

- a. Literacy, ELA, and mathematics instruction for ABE students by offering a continuum of services from grade level equivalent (GLE) 0-8.9 and high school equivalency preparation at GLE 9-12 using curricula aligned with the standards and benchmarks of the CCRSAE;
- b. ESOL for ELLs lacking communication skills (i.e., reading, writing, listening, and speaking), including basic literacy using curricula aligned with the standards and benchmarks of the Massachusetts ELPS with integrated civics education and mathematics instruction as needed;
- c. Both ABE and ESOL services.

Additional activities and services include but are not limited to the activities and services described below.

- ACLS engaged in activities with WIOA partners and other interested stakeholders:
  - ACLS collaborates at the state level with core partners and has played a significant role in the development of the combined state plan. The ABE State Director is a member of the WIOA Steering Committee and several ACLS staff participate in WIOA workgroups. ACLS staff will continue cross-agency collaborations to ensure a successful implementation of the state plan and with other core programs and one-stop partners.
  - Participated in Massachusetts WIOA stakeholder activities (e.g., WIOA Steering Committee, WIOA work groups) to establish and maintain collaborations among core partners and advance the state plan.
  - Participated in national WIOA activities organized by the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTAE).
  - Provided opportunities for programs to learn about WIOA (e.g., regional meetings across the state, WIOA content at annual Directors' Meeting and ACLS sponsored events, information shared through monthly communications with the field, AE local representation on WIOA workgroups and task forces).

- In FY19, ACLS issued an RFP (including eligible providers not currently funded) to fund Integrated Education and Training pilot models.
- To ensure successful implementation of policies and initiatives, ACLS holds a required annual statewide Directors' Meeting for programs. Regular communication with the field is ensured through monthly mailings that include announcements, resources, reminders, and updates on a wide variety of topics ranging from curriculum and assessment to data collection to leadership opportunities.
- Educational and career advising supports students with the development of individual education and career plans as they pursue their college and career goals.
- Programs integrate level appropriate employability skills for students (e.g., workforce preparation, contextualized curricula, integration of job readiness skills).
- Programs integrate digital literacy in curriculum and instruction and provide:
  - a. distance learning (DL) to increase student access to educational services, instructional intensity, and technology skill development; and
  - b. expanded use of Career Ready 101, as part of the Massachusetts Career Readiness Initiative (CRI), a statewide, multi-agency effort to increase the educational attainment of Massachusetts residents and assist them in securing a desirable career. CALCs may use ACT Career Ready 101, an online remediation tool for improving hard and soft skills, building resumes, and exploring careers with the capacity to assess and pair competencies, interests, and skill level and suggest appropriate jobs. In FY20, the CRI entered into a new, two-year contract with ACT for the WorkKeys Curriculum. ACLS provides funds for 21 AE programs to receive licenses. ACLS intends to continue making this resource available to agencies that have integrated it into their programming
- Program staff and directors collaborate on multiple levels and for multiple purposes. AE is represented on each statewide WIOA working group led by the workforce system. In each workforce region, one AE director is selected to represent AE on the local workforce board and AE directors are encouraged to participate in WIOA working groups and discussions of regional employment needs. ACLS continues to convene the MassHire Workforce Board AE representatives on a quarterly basis. Career center operations, adult education messaging, and local area collaborations are typical meeting agenda items.
- ACLS intends to continue convening the MassHire Workforce Board AE representatives on a quarterly basis. ACLS staff will also be available to meet with workforce board and career center directors to discuss issues related to AE operations. In addition, ACLS will continue to provide orientations to new representatives to help familiarize them with the role and responsibilities of the



position. ACLS also intends to attend a sampling of local area workforce board and local WIOA partner meetings each year.

- Additionally, ACLS funds programs to provide direct service to MassHire Career Centers in the form of out stationed staff who help with intake, assessment, and referral of customers who need AE classes. ACLS outstationing funds are used to support programs in connecting career center customers with AE programs in the region. The outstationing model was revised to ensure that out stationed AE staff also connects eligible AE students with partner services to ensure that eligible AE students become “shared customers” with the workforce system and get the workforce services they need.
  - ACLS supports the provision of family literacy and family engagement activities to help adult learners who are parents and caregivers achieve their goals as learners, workers, and community members as well as their goals as parents and caregivers. Data consistently shows that approximately 40% of enrolled students are parents of school age children. Programs use multiple tools to integrate family literacy in programming including family centered contextualized curriculum, family action plans, and family engagement activities, often in collaboration with early childhood programs and/or schools.
  - Workforce preparation activities provided include but are not limited to:
    - integration of college and career readiness culture in all programs;
    - development of Individual Education and Career Plans for students at all levels to promote college and career awareness;
    - integration of job readiness skills (i.e., level appropriate foundation skills) at all levels;
    - integration of digital literacy at all levels to prepare adult learners for employment and further education and/or training;
    - when applicable, for students in higher levels, curriculum contextualized to in-demand industries as identified in local plans; and
    - in collaboration with workforce partners, further development and promotion of concurrent education and training opportunities through ITAs, participation in MassHire Career Center (MCC) training programs, and other integrated education and training models.
- (2) AE providers are required to integrate workforce preparation activities into all levels of AE programming. To assist programs with this task, ACLS offered a workshop at an annual directors’ meeting, Workforce Preparation and Employability Skills. The workshop was presented by Sandy Goodman, Co-Director, SABES Program Support PD Center. Participants learned about resources and strategies that can be used to teach interpersonal, intrapersonal, cognitive workforce preparation, and lifelong learning skills.
- (3) Workplace education partnerships continue to be funded in two phases: (1) planning and (2) implementation grants for applicants that conduct a successful

planning process. During implementation, workplace education programs include AE and literacy activities concurrently with workforce preparation activities so that low-skilled incumbent workers can improve their skills and more easily advance to more high demand occupations with their current employers. ACLS made expanding the number of workplace education programs a goal in FY20. Targeted outreach was done to all 16 MassHire Workforce Boards and adult education providers. In June 2019, ACLS received nine proposals in response to a Workplace Education Planning RFP. The previous year, ACLS only received three proposals in response to its Workplace Education Planning RFP. This outreach tripled the number of proposals received from one year to the next (i.e., from three to nine).

- (4) ACLS also issued a separate O&C RFP for Distance Learning Hub(s) for FY19-20 and Primary Instruction by Volunteers (FY19-22) to provide services statewide.
- The purpose of the DL Hub RFP is to establish and support DL instructional Hubs in order to increase access to and the intensity of educational services for eligible adult learners in order to strengthen their technology skills in preparation for college and careers.
  - The purpose of the FY19-22 Primary Instruction by Volunteers RFP is to provide eligible adults who cannot or will not enroll in class-based instructional services at a CALC with access to highly effective AE services. The priority is to support one statewide standalone program that offers volunteer tutoring services annually to approximately 1,000 eligible adult students in cities and towns in the Commonwealth including [Gateway Cities](#).

## Future Direction

ACLS will issue an open and competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) and Request for Responses (RFR) in FY22 for the implementation of Title II services in FY23. Massachusetts will distribute AEFLA funds to provide adult education and literacy services in all 16 workforce regions of the Commonwealth.

The projected timeline for implementing the FY23 Open and Competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) follows:

<b><u>Step</u></b>	<b><u>Timeframe</u></b>
<i>Post RFP Announcement</i>	<i>March 2022</i>
<i>Draft RFP</i>	<i>April 2022</i>
<i>Final Draft</i>	<i>May 2022 – June 2022</i>
<i>Post RFP</i>	<i>July – August 2022</i>
<i>Bidders Conference</i>	<i>August – September 2022</i>
<i>Proposals Submitted</i>	<i>October 2022 – November 2022</i>
<i>Announce Awards/Letters</i>	<i>December 2022</i>

The Open and Competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process will consist of two separate competitive processes.

- A regional competition will make funding available for Community Adult Learning Centers (CALCs) offering ABE and/or ESOL services, which may also include Adult Career Pathways or bridge programs, Integrated Education and Training, and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education grant programs, etc. The regional allocations will be determined using a formula that takes into account data from the American Community Survey. Successful applicants will be awarded funding based on the quality of their responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA. They will also be awarded points based on past performance. The regional competition will be reviewed for alignment with local plans by local boards.
- a. A statewide competition will make funding available for programs that may include Adult Education in Correctional Institutions (AECI), Transition to Community College, Primary Instruction by Volunteers, Workplace Education, and Distance Learning Instructional Hubs, etc. Applicants will compete for funds based on a statewide allocation and be awarded funding based on the quality of their responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA without regard to the workforce regions in which they are located. The statewide competition will also be reviewed for alignment with local plans by local boards.

#### ***Title IV***

##### **Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation**

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

By formula, 85% of Massachusetts's VR funding goes to the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and 15% of the VR funding goes to the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB).

MRC makes funds for needed services available to any eligible consumer without regard to location within the state.

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind allots vocational rehabilitation funds to local offices as necessary throughout the year, the agency's currently and funds for needed services are made available to any eligible consumer without regard to location within the state.

#### ***Program Data***

##### ***Data Alignment and Integration***

Data Alignment and Integration. Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs

included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

(i) Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.

(ii) Describe the State's plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.

(iii) Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across mandatory MassHire partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.

(iv) Describe the State's plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).

***1. Describe the State's plans to make the management information systems for the core programs interoperable to maximize the efficient exchange of common data elements to support assessment and evaluation.***

Ensuring that Massachusetts has a world-class workforce system by integrating the use of modern tools and techniques is a primary goal over the next four years. This will be accomplished through the adoption of a technological infrastructure across workforce partners to track activity, services, and outcomes of shared customers. The development of an integrated data system between unemployment insurance (currently UI Online) and the MOSES and associated applications is a critical step to achievement. These changes are driven by the need to increase the availability and delivery of virtual workforce services (e.g., career exploration, virtual job fairs, skill development tutorials, etc.) and provide first class connectivity between job seekers and businesses. Toward this end EOLWD has engaged a multi-faceted process to initiate needed changes: strategically redesign business processes and prioritize interim solutions that support current systems and build capacity; design a future customer-focused streamlined technology architecture that considers commercial solutions that meet needs; and create a comprehensive data management strategy to include a transition to a new system/platform.

Certain efforts are currently underway. The Commonwealth's current workforce system will be augmented by aligning programs, services, and activities across core partners identified within WIOA. This entails a common intake/registration application with real-time triage processes. This common intake and case management system is imperative to our ability to strengthen the consistency and quality of services provided by the system to job seekers and businesses. This new functionality will also serve to support the design of the new customer flows for shared customers described elsewhere in this plan and in the state MOU.

MassHire currently uses MassHire JobQuest, an online application that connects to the MOSES database and is the front-facing web application used by members of the public (job seekers and businesses) to access programs and services such as job search and application, training programs research and, for employers, to locate job candidates. MassHire JobQuest serves as a portal to register individuals working with WIOA Program partners who will be co-enrolled in the MassHire system for career development, job search, educational and occupational assessments, occupational training, and job placement. A goal of the new functionality will be to allow all program partners to easily register individuals at MassHire Career Centers, track referrals and track the service results for those “shared” customers. Currently, no cross-program, cross-agency tracking process exists.

***2. Describe the State’s plans to integrate data systems to facilitate streamlined intake and service delivery to track participation across all programs included in this plan.***

See response to 1 above.

***3. Explain how the State board will assist the governor in aligning technology and data systems across required MassHire partner programs (including design and implementation of common intake, data collection, etc.) and how such alignment will improve service delivery to individuals, including unemployed individuals.***

A primary goal for the workforce system is to modernize the system and ensure that Massachusetts has a world-class workforce system by integrating the use of modern tools and techniques.

1. Safeguard the integrity of the system by enhancing security and reliability.
2. Adopt a technological system across workforce partners that can track activity, services, and outcomes of shared customers (job seeker and businesses) – e.g., Learn to Earn DULA, P20 data system etc.
3. Develop integrated data system between unemployment insurance (UI Online) and MassHire (MOSES/MassHire JobQuest) that accelerates progression from job loss to job gain.
4. Increase availability and delivery of virtual workforce services (e.g., career exploration, virtual job fairs, skill development, etc.).
5. Implement an applicant tracking system that will enhance matching and connectivity between job seekers and job openings.

Refer to additional information in item 1 above.

***4. Describe the State’s plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).***

The MassHire Department of Career Services will be responsible for coordinating production of the Annual Performance Report, the contents of which are described below and to be submitted per required report formats.

The State commits to performance reports that adhere to the requirements described under section 116, moreover, the reports will include a mechanism for electronic access

to the State local area and ETP performance reports. The state submits the required data described below through the PIRL report.

*WIOA Section 116(d)(2): Performance Reports – Required report content for core programs:*

*(2) Contents of state performance reports. – The performance report for a State shall include [subject to Data Validation] –*

- (A) information specifying the levels of performance achieved with respect to the primary indicators of performance described in subsection for each of the programs described in subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii) and the State-adjusted levels of performance with respect to such indicators for each program;
- (B) information specifying the levels of performance achieved with respect to the primary indicators of performance described in subsection (b)(2)(A) for each of the programs described in subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii) with respect to individuals with barriers to employment, disaggregated by each subpopulation of such individuals, and by race, ethnicity, sex, and age;
- (C) the total number of participants served by each of the programs described in subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii);
- (D) the number of participants who received career and training services, respectively, during the most recent program year and the three preceding program years, and the amount of funds spent on each type of service;
- (E) the number of participants who exited from career and training services, respectively, during the most recent program year and the 3 preceding program years;
- (F) the average cost per participant of those participants who received career and training services, respectively, during the most recent program year and the 3 preceding program years;
- (G) the percentage of participants in a program authorized under this subtitle who received training services and obtained unsubsidized employment in a field related to the training received;
- (H) the number of individuals with barriers to employment served by each of the programs described in subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii), disaggregated by each subpopulation of such individuals;
- (I) the number of participants who are enrolled in more than 1 of the programs described in subsection (b)(3)(A)(ii);
- (J) the percentage of the State's annual allotment under section 132(b) that the State spent on administrative costs;
- (K) in the case of a State in which local areas are implementing pay-for-performance contract strategies for programs--

- (i) the performance of service providers entering into contracts for such strategies, measure against the levels of performance specified in the contracts for such strategies; and
  - (ii) an evaluation of the design of the programs and performance of the strategies,  
and, where possible, the level of satisfaction with the strategies among employers and participants benefitting from the strategies; and
- (L) other information that facilitates comparisons of programs with programs in other states.

### ***Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success***

Assessment of Participants' Post-Program Success. Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

Massachusetts has a long-term goal of development of a longitudinal follow-up capability on participant employment using wage record data and completion of education and attainment of degrees by use of higher education data. However, this capacity will not be pursued until more immediate data exchange and required performance reporting are in place for all core workforce partner agencies.

Massachusetts will be using results from wage record matches of program exiters/completers on the required measures that assess employment, earnings, and persistence in employment for one year following exit for the core WIOA programs. We will similarly follow up for the year following exit for program participants that entered training or postsecondary education as part of their program services.

### ***Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data***

Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data. Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

Based upon the WIOA requirements to utilize wage record data for performance review and evaluation, EOLWD led a process with the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) to discuss WIOA wage record matching needs of partner agencies and to design MOUs with the partners to match wage records of Core Program Partner participants to develop baseline data for the WIOA Plan. The Massachusetts Workforce Board, EOLWD, and DUA will work with each of the Core Program partners to continue to meet performance accountability reporting requirements. Specific MOUs for ongoing wage matching are in place.

In addition, the Administration passed state legislation to allow the use of wage record data for WIOA reporting. Additional legislation will be filed to meet the evaluation and research goals set to support data sharing with education agencies to evaluate the long-term impact of investment and workforce outcomes for individuals who move along a career pathway. The Commonwealth is setting up a Data Advisory Group across major Secretariats and agencies to help guide this process (building off the members of the WIOA Performance Workgroup) and to implement a recent US Department of Labor grant award to build out a longitudinal evaluation of education and workforce programs.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) each worked with EOLWD, Massachusetts Adult and Community Learning Services, and DUA to initiate a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and data sharing agreement in order for MRC, MCB and DESE to obtain client-specific UI wage data records for the purposes of WIOA reporting and to measure progress on the Common Performance Measures.

Under WIOA, the MRC is required to report VR data to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) through the RSA-911 report which will be submitted via the RSA portal on a quarterly basis with open and closed case data. As part of its WIOA reporting process to report data and to measure performance on the Common Measures to RSA, MRC requires individual level wage data from Unemployment Insurance data. MRC reports data for consumers exiting from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program both successfully and unsuccessfully at the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarter after exit from the VR program for the following fields from Unemployment Insurance data from DUA based on Social Security Numbers provided by MRC to DUA using a secure interchange method of data transmission.

Data fields to be provided to MRC from DUA for matching records using an interchange secure data transmission system will be as follows:

- Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Earnings (at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarter after exit)
- Employer Name (at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarter after exit)
- Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) (at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarter after exit)
- Matching Quarter
- NAICS Code (4 digits)

MRC requires a record for each matching client with individual earnings per employer.

The MOU agreement ensures adequate time for MRC staff to test the process for scripting this data into the RSA-911 report prior to the first quarterly submission as required by the final rules and regulations of the revised RSA-911 file. MRC will use the MRCIS case-management system to submit the RSA-911 data file to the RSA portal on a quarterly program schedule.



MCB and DESE receive similar information from DUA under MOUs entered into with those agencies.

All Massachusetts core partner agencies participate in the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) clearinghouse to obtain employment wage data from other states to supplement wage data provided by DUA.

### ***Privacy Safeguards***

**Privacy Safeguards.** Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

All Federal and State laws and provisions concerning the privacy of personal and business information for all partners will be strictly adhered to and protocols will be established to monitor all partners' access to and use of participant and employer data required to fulfill their programmatic requirements.

As such, the Commonwealth and its workforce development partners are subject to and must comply with all applicable federal and state regulatory and statutory requirements, and any amendment thereto, pertaining to confidentiality and privacy, including but not limited to: General Laws Chapter 151A, §46 ; General Laws Chapter 23H, §6(b) ); Fair Information Practices Act (G.L.c. 66A); General Laws Chapter 214, §3B; General Laws Chapter 93H, § 2; General Laws Chapter 151A, § 14P; and Internal Revenue Code 6103 and 801 C.M.R. 3.00 et seq. In addition, the Commonwealth and its workforce development partners must comply with the notification requirements of M.G.L. c. 93H (Security Breaches) and Executive Order Number 504 (Order Regarding the Security and Confidentiality of Personal Information), and Executive Order 526, Non-Discrimination Policy, including any supplemental procedures or regulations thereto. MDCS gives training to all its staff and partner staff on safeguarding personal and business information, and all MDCS staff and partners must sign off on the EOLWD Confidentiality Policy and EOLWD Information Technology Resources Policy.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/dcs-policy-03-109-massachusetts-identity-theft-legislation/download> (Workforce Issuance Number 100-DCS-03-109) Mass Identity Theft Legislation and

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/confidentiality-for-eolwd-and-non-eolwd-employees-contractors/download> (Workforce Issuance No. 100-DCS-03-106) Policy to Protect Confidential Information)

### ***Priority of Service for Veterans***

**Priority of Service for Veterans.** Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority of service provisions for Veterans in accordance with the requirements of the Jobs for Veterans Act, codified at section 4215 of 38 U.S.C., which applies to all employment and training programs funded in whole or in part by the Department of Labor. States should also describe the referral process for Veterans determined to have a significant barrier to employment to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist.

Massachusetts has established policies for the delivery of priority of service for Veterans and eligible spouses by the state workforce agency or agencies, MassHire Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Centers for all qualified job-training programs delivered through the Commonwealth's workforce system. The policies:

- A. Ensure that covered persons are identified at the point of entry and given an opportunity to take full advantage of priority of service.
- B. Ensure that covered persons are aware of a) their entitlement to priority of service; b) the full array of employment, training, and placement services available under priority of service; and c) any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services.
- C. Require MassHire Workforce Boards to develop and include policies in their local plan to implement priority of service for the MassHire Career Centers (MCC) and for service delivery by local workforce preparation and training providers.

The MSCCs are fully and seamlessly integrated with the full array of WIOA, Wagner-Peyser and other key workforce partner services co-located under one roof. The goal is to as quickly as possible, deliver the desired and appropriate services.

Recipients and sub recipients of DOL funds are required to provide Priority of Service to Veterans and eligible spouses. Agreement of a program operator to implement priority of service is a condition of receipt of DOL funds. Priority of Service to Veterans applies to all WIOA Wagner-Peyser Title III funded activities including technology assisted activities, Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Indian and Native American Programs (INAP), National Farmworker Job Training Programs (NFJP), Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs (TAA), job training programs funded by the Women's Bureau, and other current or future qualified job-training program.

For the purposes of eligibility for priority of service, the broad definition of Veteran under 38 USC 101(2) applies. To be eligible for priority of service the term Veteran means a person who served at least one day of active duty (other than active duty for training) and was discharged or released under other than dishonorable conditions, under 38 USC 101(2). Eligible spouse is defined under 38 USC 101(2) applies to any Veteran who died of a service-connected disability, has a total 100% service-connected disability; is missing in action, or captured or detained in the line of duty. Veterans and eligible spouses eligible for priority of service are referred to as covered persons; while those not eligible for priority of service are referred to as non-covered persons.

Priority of service means that Veterans and eligible spouses are given priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under a qualified job-training program. Priority means that a covered person is entitled to precedence over non-covered persons for services. This means that a covered person receives access to services before a non-covered person, and if resources are limited instead of a non-covered person.

All operators must enable covered persons to identify themselves at point of entry through a user-friendly process, such as our online Massachusetts Job Quest registration. During any registration process, all customers are prompted by staff to determine if they are a Veteran or the spouse of a Veteran. Once the Veteran or eligible spouse has been identified as a covered person, they must be made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, and subsequently informed of the full array of employment, training, and placement services and the eligibility requirements for those programs and services.

Verification of covered persons is not necessary or desired at point of entry to provide priority of service unless the covered person is to immediately undergo eligibility determination and become registered or enrolled into a specific program and the applicable federal rules require verification of Veteran status at that time. Veterans and covered persons are encouraged to identify themselves through self-attestation at all points of entry.

Prioritizing services to the targeted Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) is facilitated by specifically “flagging” such “at risk” Veteran customers within the Massachusetts One Stop Employment System (MOSES) database. The initial assessment identifies the individual’s “job readiness”. If the Veteran is not identified as having an SBE, services are provided on a “priority” basis by MCC staff. If individual career services are appropriate, a case plan is developed and the Veteran is assisted directly by the DVOP or referred to supportive services, as appropriate.

For those programs with statutory priorities that require preference to be given to a particular group, covered persons who meet those statutory requirements receive the highest priority for the program or services; while covered persons receive the highest priority for programs or services without any discretionary targets. (Covered persons who are veterans receive the highest priority).

Monitoring of Priority of Service is a shared responsibility with each local area, career center, and multiple program operators. The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) places genuine emphasis on priority of services to Veterans through routine leadership visits, periodic staff training, and scheduled Field Management and Oversight (FMO) WIOA program monitoring. Priority of service elements are incorporated in the MDCS monitoring process. In conjunction with MDCS, Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service, (DOL/VETS) periodically conducts site visits to ensure signage is posted and career center staff understand the requirements and implementation of priority of service.

### ***Addressing the Accessibility of the MassHire Delivery System***

**Addressing the Accessibility of the MassHire Delivery System for individuals with disabilities.** Describe how the MassHire delivery system (including MassHire Career Center operators and the MassHire delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic

accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's MassHire Career Center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

WIOA NPRM at 20 CFR §678.800 requires that the state's network of MassHire Career Centers be certified by the Local Boards. WIOA further mandates that the State Board, in consultation with chief elected officials and Local Boards must establish objective criteria and procedures that Local Boards must use when certifying career centers. These career center standards further and are consistent with the Governor's and State Board's guidelines, guidance, and vision. The criteria evaluate the MassHire career center delivery system for effectiveness in addressing business and job seeker needs in the Massachusetts business-driven workforce delivery system. The criteria also ensure compliance with WIOA Section 188 nondiscrimination provisions and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In order to implement the MassHire Certification process and policy under WIOA, the Massachusetts State Board created the Career Center Standards and Process Workgroup (CCS&P). The CCS&P Workgroup comprised a statewide diverse group of workforce professionals, representatives of core and other partner programs, including Vocational Rehabilitation, representatives of targeted customer groups, and business representatives. The group rolled out Massachusetts' inaugural statewide career center standards in the areas of cost effectiveness, integrated services, **accessibility**, effective leadership, performance, and responsiveness to the business-driven model. Accessibility standards include the examination of systems to ensure staff knowledge of and compliance with Section 188 of WIOA.

The standards are a core driver of continuous service quality improvement. Through the MassHire Career Center standards development process, career center responsive service delivery structure was determined to be a critical element in career center operation. This includes assessing the career center location for accessibility to the communities it serves, whether hours of operation are responsive to all partners', possessing adaptive technology, and ADA-compliance.

The MassHire Workforce Board Certification standards include the examination of board systems to conduct comprehensive annual reviews for programmatic and physical accessibility, including level of engagement of the disability community in conducting these reviews. Standards for certification will also require MassHire Workforce Boards to demonstrate how MassHire Career Centers are incorporating a universal design approach as the basis of standards for accessibility, ensuring a comprehensive process that focuses on both programmatic and physical access to meet the needs of a full array of customers.

In accordance with policy 100 DCS 08.109: Accessibility within the Massachusetts Workforce System WIOA Section 188, local areas follow their policy to address

compliance with and implementation of WIOA Section 188 physical and programmatic requirements. As stated above, the certification process for MassHire Career Centers and the state guidelines for local WIOA plan submissions both address matters pertaining to physical and programmatic accessibility. The MDCS Field Management and Oversight unit conducts on-site monitoring at all 29 MassHire locations, using the MassHire Career Center Quality Assurance Standards. Further, the Massachusetts Department of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) conducts an accessibility review for any new leases or lease renewal activities based on ADA guidelines. Policy dictates that if any deficiencies are identified that MassHire Career Centers are informed in writing of the findings and given a deadline for when corrections need to be completed.

MDCS has made a commitment to work with the MassHire Workforce Boards and Career Centers to continue to improve the accessibility of programs and services to individuals with disabilities. Accessibility is part of MassHire Career Center quality assurance and has been incorporated as a basic tenet in MassHire staff training. The high percentage of individuals identified as having a disability utilizing the career center system is indicative of the full accessibility of the MassHire system.

The MassHire Department of Career Services adheres to Section 188 of WIA, [The Governor's Executive Order No. 478](#), and the [100 DCS 03.102](#). All career centers, statewide, have incorporated practices to effectively serve persons with disabilities through required assistive technology and equipment at each center. Accessibility to serve job seekers with a disability is reviewed annually. Standard adaptive equipment for MassHire Career Centers include: ZoomText, Jaws, Scanner for Jaws/ZoomText, Dragon Naturally Speaking hands-free voice-activated software, Braille Labeler, Assistive listening devices, Text TTY line, height-adjustable tables, and Trackball mouse, and other assistive technology.

**Addressing the Accessibility of the MassHire Delivery System for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency.** Describe how the MassHire delivery system (including MassHire Career Center operators and the MassHire delivery system partners) will ensure that each MassHire Career Center is able to meet the needs of Limited English Proficient individuals, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials.

It is the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) policy to provide universal access to programs and services to persons who are limited in English proficiency.

MassHire Career Centers are required to develop standard operating procedures that include a Language Access Plan (LAP). The local LAP follows the Commonwealth's guidelines, policies, procedures, and protocols as established in the EOLWD's Language Access Plan, which represents the Secretariat's administrative blueprint to provide meaningful and universal access to EOLWD agencies' programs, services, and activities for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals.

Please refer to the Multilingual Services Resources webpage on MassWorkforce System website <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/multilingual-language-guidelines> for assistance to provide access to language services to LEP individuals.

Also, refer to Mass Workforce Issuance 100 MDCS 08.101

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/updated-language-services-guidelines-to-assist-limited-english-proficiency-lep-customers/download> for more specific language guidelines -

Office of Multilingual Services:

The Office of Multilingual Services provides ongoing support, guidance, and expertise on Language Access issues (i.e., quality control and consultation on translation, interpretation, and cultural awareness) to the Workforce and Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) partner's agencies, which are co-located at MassHire Career Centers.

The Multilingual Unit Staff possesses a vast array of international and multicultural knowledge, including collective fluency in 12 languages, resulting in excellent communication with the LEP community. The Office acts as the central internal language facilitation unit for all EOLWD departments and its Partners.

The Multilingual Unit currently operates a 12-language toll-free telephone line, which LEP claimants (who speak one of the 12 statutory languages) can call should they have any issues or concerns.

**Interpreter Services:** In addition, the Career Center Staff have access to a professional over-the-phone language services (vendor providing over 170 languages) to provide language services to customers needing interpreter services.

**Training:** On a regular basis language access training is provided to MassHire Career Centers staff having contact with the public, so such staff be trained to work effectively with LEP customers and telephonic interpreters.

**Internal Volunteer Bilingual Staff:** The Office of Multilingual Services maintains an Internal Volunteer Bilingual staff list made up of Career Center staff who have the linguistic capability to assist customers across the Commonwealth.

**Communications:** Statewide communications are disseminated in 12 different languages to customers based on language preference as established during the enrollment process. Standard Publications are translated and posted on the EOLWD website: <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/office-of-multilingual-services> "Your right to an Interpreter" poster is displayed at all MassHire reception areas announcing the availability of free language assistance services.

**Language Flashcards:** "I Speak" language flashcards are available at the front desk area for a customer to point to language of choice if they should not be able to speak English, which will trigger the language assistance plan.

**Websites:** The Office of Multilingual maintains several language access sites:

- Multilingual webpage at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/office-of-multilingual-services>

- MassWorkforce System resources at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/multilingual-services-staff-resources>
- Multilingual Intranet: <http://intranet/CO/SitePages/Home.aspx>

## IV. COORDINATION WITH COMBINED STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

**IV. COORDINATION WITH COMBINED STATE PLAN PROGRAMS.** Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required MassHire partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

### Massachusetts Joint Policy Workgroup

The Commonwealth’s workforce system is continuously strengthened through joint coordination and development of services and activities across a variety of WIOA core partners using the strategic framework initially established in the 2016 WIOA State Plan.

The WIOA implementation planning process started in November of 2014 through the creation of a new WIOA Steering Committee of the then Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board. The WIOA Steering Committee and its subcommittees served as the main organizing body for joint planning and coordination of WIOA core and partner programs. See 2016 WIOA State Plan for a full description of the WIOA Steering Committee and Subcommittees.

After submission of the 2016 WIOA State Plan, members of the WIOA Steering Committee continued to meet regularly under a newly formed organizing body, the WIOA Joint Policy Workgroup (“Joint Policy Workgroup”). The Joint Policy Workgroup provided oversight of WIOA State Plan implementation across all partner program agencies, coordinated policy and program development, recognized emerging promising practices, and supported the broader workforce system through technical assistance. Members of Joint Policy Workgroup and their corresponding agencies included:

- Adult Education (ABE)/Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS)
- Title II Apprenticeship/Division of Apprenticeship Standards
- Economic Development/Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED)
- Older Workers and Senior Community Service Employment (SCSEP)/Executive Office of Elder Affairs, and Operation A.B.L.E. and Senior Service America
- State Administration for USDOL Programs—Titles I and III, TRADE, DOL Veteran etc./MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS)

- Vocational Rehabilitation/Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)/Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)
- Low-Income/Temporary Aid for Needy Families, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program/Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)/Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)
- Unemployment Insurance/Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA)
- State Board/MassHire State Workforce Board (MSWB)
- Workforce Skills Cabinet/Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED), Executive Office of Education (EOE)
- Youth Build
- Job Corps
- Local Workforce Investment Boards/Massachusetts Workforce Board Association and MassHire Career Centers/Massachusetts Workforce Professionals Association (MWPA)—later jointly represented by the merged organization, the Massachusetts Workforce Association
- Sector Projects, Research, Evaluations/Commonwealth Corporation
- Higher Education/Department of Higher Education (DHE)
- Veterans/Department of Veterans' Services (DVS)

Meeting monthly or bi-monthly, the Joint Policy Workgroup coordinated across MassHire partner programs and other programs to hold two WIOA State Plan Convenings for all required and non-required partners at the state and local levels to receive information and guidance on implementing the WIOA State Plan, as well as engage in peer-to-peer sharing of promising practices emerging from locally-driven partnerships.

The Joint Policy Workgroup also developed and issued [Joint Partner Policies](#) and [Joint Partner Information](#) across the broader workforce system network to inform all partners of key policy or programmatic changes in the workforce system. Examples of key Joint Partner Policies include policies on the local Memorandum of Understanding (local MOU), WIOA State Partner Infrastructure contributions, and WIOA Shared Partner Contributions.

In December 2018, the MassHire State Workforce Board established the framework for developing the 2020 WIOA State Plan, which included utilizing the Joint Policy Workgroup (renamed to the State Plan Advisory Committee - SPAC) as the body to establish identify key priority and strategy areas of the WIOA State Plan and create a plan for implementation. The SPAC was tasked with carrying out an initial “Visioning Session” of representation from state and local partners. Then, based on the 2020 WIOA State Plan emerging themes of: (1) Accelerating Employment; (2) Scaling up proven



models, and (3) Modernizing the workforce system, develop a framework of workgroups for developing the WIOA State Plan.

In March 2019, the MassHire State Workforce Board approved the SPAC proposed WIOA State Plan development framework, which included naming four functional workgroups for development of the WIOA State Plan that reports back to SPAC, while the SPAC focused on developing a cohesive vision for the workforce system and developing policy and operational recommendations to align all partners of the system toward meeting the needs of the system's customers and meeting job demand/industry need. In addition, the SPAC focused on further development of cross-agency partnerships to increase system impact.

The following is an overview of the 2020 WIOA State Plan workgroups with an explanation of the workgroup charge and areas of exploration within which each workgroup was to develop key goals, strategies, and tactics for the WIOA State Plan.

**Challenges to Employment.** This workgroup will work to accelerate employment and economic self-sufficiency for target populations (*people with disabilities, people with Limited English Proficiency, Veterans, returning citizens, older workers, youth, low-income, low-skilled, underemployed, etc.*) by streamlining service provision, case management, and skill development across partners. This group explored cross-partner communities and/or teams to support retention and long-term engagement with people with barriers to employment; integrated case management for long-term career planning; and modernized training and skill development.

**Business Services and Engagement.** This workgroup supports business growth and sustainability by aligning and elevating workforce services for businesses. This group explored cross-system adoption of modern job matching processes and tools; statewide business adoption of work-based learning models (apprenticeship, co-ops, etc.); streamlined information sharing between businesses and workforce system for more effective operations; enhanced and aligned engagement with key industry sectors (health care, manufacturing, tech).

**Data Integration and Analytics.** This workgroup generated and maximized data-sharing across WIOA partners to capture cross-system activity and outcomes to drive data-driven decision-making. The issue areas of exploration for this workgroup includes data and information sharing across systems; using shared data to streamline customer experience and case management; supporting cross-partner communities and/or teams through shared data and reports; and measuring long-term engagement with the customer.

**Cross System Alignment.** This workgroup, which consists of members of the SPAC, engendered broader workforce system unification by developing an infrastructure for cross-system operations, policies, and information sharing. This workgroup explored cross system policies on co-location, shared costs, referrals to support cross-partner communities and/or teams; cross-training priorities and processes to streamline

workforce system operations; and effective methods for partner information sharing and collaborating.

Under the direction of the SPAC, each workgroup featured representation across the broader workforce system partnership, including required WIOA career center partners. It is anticipated that once the 2020 WIOA State Plan is submitted and approved, the SPAC will transition to a body comprised of required and non-required partners focused on providing guidance and support to state and local partnerships in implementation of the vision, goals, and strategies of the WIOA State Plan.

### **Massachusetts WIOA State Plan Modification Public Comment Process**

Massachusetts will provide an opportunity for public comment on the WIOA State Plan Modification to allow interested stakeholders input and to participate actively, effectively, and transparently in the development of the plan and the modification, including via accessible means for individuals with disabilities. The review and comment period will be February 11, 2022 – February 22, 2022. The WIOA State Plan Modification will be posted to the Massachusetts WIOA State Plan website:

<https://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-wioa-state-plan-and-workforce-area-plans>.

Interested parties will be able to provide commentary and feedback on the WIOA State Plan Modification.

Additionally, two State Plan Modification virtual public sessions will be held on February 14, 2022, and February 16, 2022. Both sessions will be 90 minutes in duration. The virtual public sessions will be held in collaboration with the WIOA Partners comprised of the Executive Office Labor and Workforce Development, MassHire Department of Career Services, Department of Unemployment Assistance, Adult and Community Learning Services (Adult Education), Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, Department of Transitional Assistance, and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (SCSEP). The WIOA partners will collectively provide an overview of modifications to WIOA State Plan during an initial 60-minute session followed by 30 minutes breakout sessions led by each of WIOA partner to provide attendees an opportunity to ask WIOA partner agency specific questions and seek additional information directly from WIOA partner agency staff. All commentary and feedback provided during the review and comment period and virtual public sessions will be posted on the Massachusetts WIOA State Plan website.

Figure 60: Common Assurances

## V. COMMON ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:	
	<a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-policy-issuances-by-category">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-policy-issuances-by-category</a>
1.	<p>The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;</p> <p>All Commonwealth employees and appointed members of the State and Local Workforce Development Boards are “special state employees” within the meaning of the Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law, G.L.c. 268A, §S 125, and, therefore, are subject to the provisions of that statute. The State Ethics Reform Law, G.L.c. 268A, § 28, imposes education and biennial online training requirements on public employees, including individuals appointed to Local Workforce Development Boards. All Commonwealth employees and local Board Members are provided with a Summary of the Conflict of Interest Law prepared by the State Ethics Commission and must take an online training every two years. See: <a href="http://www.mass.gov/ethics/education-and-training-resources/implementation-procedures/state-employees-summary.html">http://www.mass.gov/ethics/education-and-training-resources/implementation-procedures/state-employees-summary.html</a>  <a href="http://www.mass.gov/ethics/new-online-programs-available-december2012.html">http://www.mass.gov/ethics/new-online-programs-available-december2012.html</a></p> <p>During the MassHire Workforce Board certification process, local boards are required to provide assurance that they are adhering to the Commonwealth’s Conflict of Interest Law, including receiving Conflict of Interest training on a biennial basis.</p> <p>The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and the Governor’s Office of Boards and Commissions ensures that state board members are properly apprised and trained of the Commonwealth’s Conflict of Interest Laws during the appointment and reappointment process, and on a biennial basis.</p> <p>MRC has conflict of interest policy for all employees as well as for consultants and SRC members.</p>
2.	<p>The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding the activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;</p>
	<p>The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is in compliance with WIOA §101(g) - the “Sunshine Provision”, and the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, G.L.c. 30A, §§ 18-25, which impose certain obligations on Workforce Boards. Among these obligations are the legal requirements to conduct all business in an open and transparent manner. The purpose of the Open Meeting Law is to ensure transparency in the deliberations on which public policy is based. The Local Board must assure compliance at all times with the Open</p>

	<p>Meeting Law by, among other things, posting all meeting notices in a manner consistent with the law, by opening all meetings up to the public to attend, and by keeping accurate minutes of all meetings.</p> <p>The MassHire Workforce Board biennial certification process requires that local workforce boards attest adherence to the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law,</p> <p>The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, and relevant state agencies, ensure that the State Board maintains compliance with the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law.</p>
3.	<p>The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;</p>
	<p>The Massachusetts statewide Memorandum of Understanding (state MOU) requires that all signatories review, comment and approve the elements of the Combined State Plan as it pertains to the programmatic and fiscal operations supporting services to shared customers.</p>
4.	<p>(a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering the core programs, required MassHire partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public;</p> <p>(b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The State Plan Advisory Committee (SPAC), comprising all required partners and additional partners has been meeting on a bi-weekly basis since May 2019 State Board to address the strategic and operational opportunities generated by the new planning process and to create this Combined State Plan. The SPAC and its issue-specific sub-committees consisting of representation from local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, community colleges, core program partners, training vendors, and community-based organizations to ensure the perspective of the workforce systems' stakeholders are included in the development of the combined state plan.</li> </ul> <p>Please refer to the Massachusetts Combined State Plan Public Comment Process on page 175.</p>

	<p>The draft State plan is posted on the Massachusetts' WIOA State Plan website <a href="https://www.mass.gov/wioa-state-plan">https://www.mass.gov/wioa-state-plan</a>, where interested parties can submit commentary and feedback on the draft plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MassHire Workforce Board was provided a draft Combined State Plan in February and met for review and comment on the plan and its elements; the Board voted to approve the state plan on March 9, 2020.</li> </ul>
5.	The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;
	The state utilizes the Commonwealth's mandated MMARS (Massachusetts Management Accounting and Reporting System) System supported by agency accounting records and a structure which includes data warehouse systems and reports, annual audits, certification of local systems and intensive monitoring.
6.	The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);
	<p>The Commonwealth's Field Management and Oversight unit conducts annual on-site fiscal and program monitoring, according to State Monitoring policies - <a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-field-management-oversight-policy-issuances">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-field-management-oversight-policy-issuances</a>, all Title I and Title III programs are monitored in each local area in accordance with the requirements established in the draft Regulations in NPRM §683.400 and 683.410 to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations and policies. Monitoring includes biannual systems certification and annual review of all local policies and standard operating procedures.</p>
7.	The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination as applicable; (See section III.(b)(8))
	<p>The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is in compliance with WIOA §188, M.G.L. 151B (Mass. non-discrimination statute), and Massachusetts Executive Order 526 (Massachusetts non-discrimination and equal opportunity Executive Order), 100 DCS 03.101 (MDCS complaint policy). MDCS regularly trains career center staff on non-discrimination and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) customers. Further, through the Workforce Board certification process and the Career Center annual planning, all local areas have attested to be in compliance with non-discriminatory practices, as required under the state and federal laws referenced above.</p>

8.	The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;
	The Commonwealth continues to utilize an aggressive system of monitoring grant reports, MOSES data and local grant activities together with mandated biennial certification of local systems in order to ensure that Federal funds are only utilized to support the grant activities reasonable, necessary, and appropriate to and authorized by each fund source.
9.	The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;
	The State Board, as part of its ongoing workgroup to address WIOA implementation, created a sub-committee dedicated to establishing a new cost infrastructure standard which addresses mandated partner support for infrastructure costs including cost support for the Commonwealth's Performance Accountability system. Agreements to the shared infrastructure costs are included in the Massachusetts State Agency WIOA Memorandum of Understanding (state MOU).
10.	The State has a MassHire certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all MassHire Career Centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);
	The Commonwealth of Massachusetts imbedded adherence to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) to its One-Stop Certification policy to ensure comprehensive programmatic accessibility to all MassHire Career Centers. <a href="#">Career Center Certification for Local Workforce Development Boards</a> .
11.	Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate;
	<p>The Commonwealth of Massachusetts hereby assures that it will comply with Chapters 41 and 42 of 38 U.S.C. and provide proper oversight to ensure DVOP Specialists provide case management services for Veterans with significant barriers to employment. State agency partners agreed to establish referral processes for Veterans, including those SBEs, in the WIOA MOU.</p> <p>MDCS ensures continuance of a plan that targets those Veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE), as well as any populations targeted by the Assistant Secretary DOL/VET. MDCS will monitor and provide proper oversight to ensure proper case management services are provided for Veterans with an SBE.</p>
12.	Priority of service for Veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.

	<p>The Commonwealth of Massachusetts hereby assures that priority of service for Veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.</p> <p><a href="https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-veterans-policy-issuances">https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-wioa-veterans-policy-issuances</a></p>
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## VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

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### ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

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#### **General Requirements**

#### ***Regions and Local MassHire Workforce Development Areas***

Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State.

#### **Massachusetts WIOA MassHire Workforce Areas**

Berkshire	Greater New Bedford
Boston	Hampden County
Bristol	Merrimack Valley
Brockton	Metro North
Cape Cod and Islands	Metro South/West
Central Massachusetts	North Central
Franklin Hampshire	North Shore
Greater Lowell	South Shore

#### ***Process for designating local areas***

Describe the process used for designating local areas, including procedures for determining whether the local area met the criteria for “performed successfully” and “sustained fiscal integrity” in accordance with 106(b)(2) and (3) of WIOA. Describe the process used for identifying regions and planning regions under section 106(a) of WIOA. This must include a description of how the State consulted with the local boards and chief elected officials in identifying the regions.

#### **Process and Identification of Local Areas**

On May 20, 2015, the Department of Career Services issued [MassWorkforce Policy number 100.DCS 03.100](#) “Initial Designation of Local Workforce Development areas,” providing local chief elected officials the opportunity to request designation of the current workforce investment area as a workforce development area under WIOA. **All the sixteen local workforce areas designated under WIA requested and were granted designation under WIOA.**

Massachusetts, through its Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) database maintains quarterly reports for each local area that determine local programmatic performance against federal performance goals. Each of the sixteen workforce areas in Massachusetts demonstrated successful performance. Staff of the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) determines the sustenance of fiscal integrity based on reviews of quarterly fiscal reports. Additionally, staff of the MDCS Field Management and Oversight unit conducts annual local reviews for each of the



sixteen local workforce areas, including an analysis of fiscal and programmatic performance.

### **Process for determination of Planning Regions**

Pursuant to WIOA Section 106(a), the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) on behalf of Governor Baker presented draft proposed regions to the Workforce Skills Cabinet (i.e., Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development; Secretary of Economic Development; and Secretary of Education) as part of the Governor's regional planning process. These proposed regions were submitted to local Chief Elected Officials, Local Workforce Boards, and the State Workforce Board for consultation via [MassWorkforce Issuance #100 DCS 03.103](#). EOLWD and the State Board have reviewed comments on the proposed planning regional designations and finalized the regional designations in accordance with the above-cited issuance.

### **Massachusetts WIOA Planning Regions**

The seven regions identified below have been designated as the Massachusetts WIOA Planning Regions:

- **Berkshire Region:** Comprises the Berkshire Workforce Development Area
- **Pioneer Valley Region:** Comprises the Franklin/Hampshire and Hampden Workforce Development Areas
- **Central Massachusetts Region:** Comprises the North Central and Central Massachusetts Workforce Development Areas
- **North Shore Region:** Comprises the Greater Lowell, Merrimack Valley and North Shore Workforce Development Areas
- **Greater Boston Region:** Comprises the Boston, Metro North, and Metro South/West Workforce Development Areas
- **South Shore Region:** Comprises the South Shore, Brockton, Bristol, and Greater New Bedford Workforce Development Areas
- **Cape Cod and Islands Region:** Comprises the Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket Workforce Development Area

### ***Appeals process – local area designations***

Provide the appeals process referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas.

MDCS Policy 100.DCS 03.101.2, Unified Workforce Development System Complaint and Appeals Process, posted on May 29, 2018 delineates the process to appeal the Governor's decision rejecting a request for designation as a workforce development area. <http://www.mass.gov/massworkforce/issuances/wioa-policy/03-legal-regulatory/>.

### ***Appeals process – infrastructure funding***

Provide the appeals process referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding.

MDCS Policy 100.DCS 03.101.2, Unified Workforce Development System Complaint and Appeals Process, posted on May 29, 2018 delineates the process to appeal infrastructure funding. <http://www.mass.gov/massworkforce/issuances/wioa-policy/03-legal-regulatory/>.

From the WIOA MOU policy: A MassHire Career Center/Partner may appeal its portion of funds required for Career Center infrastructure costs after determination by the Governor under the State infrastructure funding on the basis that the State Board/Governor's determination is inconsistent with proportionate share requirement in 20 CFR 678.735(a), the cost contribution limitation in 20 CFR 678.735(b), or cost contribution caps in 20 CFR 678.735.

The appeal must be made in writing to the MassHire State Workforce Board within ten (10) business days of the Governor's determination. The appeal will be heard at the next MassHire State Workforce Board meeting, provided there are at least 14 days before the next meeting. If the Council's regularly scheduled meeting is sooner than 30 days from the appeal submission, the Council chair will schedule an auxiliary meeting at least 30 days and no less than 30 days from the appeal submission. The MCC/partner program entity shall have the opportunity to submit written and verbal information to the Workforce Development Council. The Council will issue a decision within 14 days of the Council appeal hearing. Its decision will be final. Each partner may only appeal once per program year.

The request for appeal and/or formal appeal hearing must be sent to:

Executive Director  
MassHire State Workforce Board  
Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development  
Charles F. Hurley Building  
19 Staniford Street 4th Floor  
Boston, MA 02114

If the appellant chooses to request an appeal without specifically requesting an appeal hearing, the State Board, or its designee (Authorized State Official - ASO), may decide to either make a determination based solely on the information included in the case file or conduct further investigation and issue a written determination without scheduling a formal hearing.

In either case, the State Board/ASO must submit a written determination to the appellant within 30 days of receipt of the original appeal request or 30 days after having received additional information from further investigation or 30 days after a formal hearing request.

If the State Board/ASO has made a written request for information to the appellant or the appellant's authorized representative, and they do not respond within the given time frame the appeal is considered resolved.

If the State Board/ASO deems that a formal hearing is necessary or if the appellant specifically requests such a hearing, the State Board/ASO will notify the parties (in writing) that the matter has been scheduled for a formal hearing. The notice must inform the parties of the following conditions of the hearing process:

#### Formal Hearing Process

The notice must inform the parties of the following conditions of the hearing process:

- The date, time, and location of the hearing.
- Instruction that the State Board/ASO will conduct and regulate the course of the hearing to assure full consideration of all relevant issues and the actions necessary to ensure an orderly hearing are followed.
- Instruction that the State Board/ASO must rule on the introduction of evidence\* and afford the parties the opportunity to present, examine, and cross-examine witnesses.
- For clarity it must be noted that an administrative hearing is not the same as a Court of Law. Technical rules of evidence do not apply. It is up to the State Board/ASO to follow principles and procedures that are designed to assure credible evidence that can be tested through cross-examination.

In conjunction with the hearing process the State Board/ASO:

- May decide to make a determination based on the information included in the case file or investigate further prior to the formal hearing.
- May decide to conduct a hearing on more than one appellant if the issues are related.
- May permit (at his/her discretion) the participation of interested parties (amicus curae) with respect to specific legal or factual issues relevant to the complaint/appeal.
- May choose to conduct the hearing at a single location convenient to all parties (preferred) or, if that would represent a hardship for one or more parties, the State Hearing Official may elect to conduct the hearing by a telephone conference call.
- Must conduct the hearing and issue a written determination to the appellant, the respondent, and any other participating interested parties within 30 days from the date the hearing was requested. The State Board/s/ASO's written determination must include:
  1. the results of the State level investigation;
  2. conclusions reached on the appeal;
  3. an explanation as to why the decision was upheld or not upheld;

A decision under this state appeal process is final and may not be appealed to the U.S. Secretary of Labor. 20 CFR 683.630(b)(3).

### ***Statewide Activities***

Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities.

The Commonwealth utilizes its' authority to set-aside 15% of its Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth as Governor's Discretionary funding to accomplish all the required statewide employment and training activities under WIOA including: Program Administration and Oversight, Evaluation, Monitoring, Technical Assistance, establishing and disseminating information on best practices, eligible training providers, and performance.

The Commonwealth has utilized these funds to: develop sector partnership initiatives in Healthcare, Manufacturing and STEM; and develop statewide initiatives to target specific customer populations, including, but not limited to homeless individuals, individuals with disabilities, long-term unemployed, out-of-school youth and other individuals facing significant barriers to employment, as well as for the effort to rebrand the Commonwealth's workforce system (primarily workforce development boards and MassHire Career Centers.)

From 2020 to 2024, the Commonwealth will utilize Governor's Discretionary funding to design and develop programs and initiatives that support the implementation of the four goals outlined in the WIOA Combined State Plan.

### ***State use of Governor's Rapid Response set aside funding***

Describe how the State intends to use Governor's set aside funding. Describe how the State will utilize Rapid Response funds to respond to layoffs and plant closings and coordinate services to quickly aid companies and their affected workers. States also should describe any layoff aversion strategies they have implemented to address at risk companies and workers

Rapid Response Set-Aside (RRSA) funds represent a portion of the Commonwealth's allotment of WIOA Dislocated Worker funds that may be identified and reserved at the state level (WIOA Sec. 133(a)(2)).

If available, RRSA funds are specifically held aside for layoff or plant closing events:

1. Of insufficient size to meet application requirements for a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG); or
2. For which a high number of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)-related layoffs require additional funds to support staffing needs; or

3. For which RRSA funds are needed as a “bridge” while awaiting the award of a requested NDWG, whether the NDWG is a new application or a modification request for additional funds.

Please refer to the [Rapid Response Set-Aside Funding](#) policy for more detail.

Describe how the State provides early intervention (e.g., Rapid Response) to worker groups on whose behalf a Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition has been filed. (Section 134(a)(2)(A).) This description must include how the State disseminates benefit information to provide trade-affected workers in the groups identified in the TAA petitions with an accurate understanding of the provision of TAA benefits and services in such a way that they are transparent to the trade-affected dislocated worker applying for them (Trade Act Sec. 221(a)(2)(A) and Sec. 225; Governor-Secretary Agreement). Describe how the State will use funds that have been reserved for Rapid Response to provide services for every worker group *that files a TAA petition*.

The Commonwealth’s Rapid Response, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA) and National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) programs are fully integrated and the TAA/TRA program is fully automated.

Upon determination that the employees of a company were impacted due to competition from a foreign country, the Rapid Response (RR) team initiates a petition through the MDCS TAA Unit. This information is available to all parties including the career centers and DUA TRA unit. In cases where Rapid Response is not working with the employer upon notification that a petition has been filed, the TAA Unit notifies Rapid Response in order that outreach efforts to that employer can commence. The state also compiles a list of those workers who have filed UI claims against the company from the impact date to present through interfaces with the Massachusetts UI Online system and receives updates to those lists to provide notice to individual workers regarding the TAA Program. When available, the Trade Unit also uses a list from employers to provide these notices. Two years ago, TAA sent their notification letters to readability experts for review to ensure the notices are understandable and comprehensible to workers receiving the notice. The notices reference the state’s website and DOL’s website for more detailed information regarding benefits and directions to contact their local MassHire Career Center immediately. Notices are sent with babel notices for those who speak English as a second language.

Since the impacted worker has attended either a “Gateway Session” or a Career Center Seminar (CCS - Career Center Orientation) they have received information regarding the Trade program and its benefits. Upon certification of the TAA petition, the impacted workers are immediately notified of potential eligibility for trade reemployment services and benefits and instructed to visit a MassHire Career Center to begin the eligibility process. An ICON appears within the MDCS MOSES (job seeker database) to inform the career center of the customers’ pending eligibility. This information is also available in the MDCS Central TAA unit, as well as DUA TRA Unit. All the TAA and TRA eligibility is processed electronically.

The job seeker works with the career center case counselor to determine the appropriate career pathway, which in most cases leads to training. The job seeker receives case management throughout the TAA/TRA process, and all information is readily available to all parties. In keeping with transparency, all TAA policies are disseminated to career center staff and posted through workforce issuances for the public to research and obtain. Training is regularly conducted for field staff and state policies are posted on the MDCS website for staff and customers to reference. A dedicated phone line is also available for customers to contact the TAA Unit with other specific questions or concerns.

MDCS has established a process that allows local workforce areas to seek grants to address lay-off aversion strategies, bridging the gap between receipt of NDWGs and staffing grants if a significant lay-off or multiple lay-offs that occur in a local area or region.

#### ***In case of natural disaster***

In addition, describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.

In cases of natural disaster, Rapid Response provides services to both the affected Business as well as affected employees. When a Natural Disaster occurs, Rapid Response coordinates with FEMA, MEMA, and the Department of Labor Natural Disaster Coordinator as well as the MassHire Career Center(s) and Workforce Board(s).

Services for businesses include coordinating with the Small Business Association (SBA) as well as other Economic Development agencies that can assist with connecting the businesses with loan and grant programs. Rapid Response also coordinates services with Unemployment Assistance (UI)/ MassHire Career Centers for other business assistance and assists affected employees by providing information about all career center services including unemployment assistance and disaster-related employment, if applicable.

Massachusetts Rapid Response responds to all disasters, including those that are not considered “natural” events, such as fires, explosions, etc. that affect the operation of businesses cause job loss to employees.

### **Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Requirements**

#### ***Alternative Training Models***

*Work-Based Training Models.* If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g., on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State’s strategies for how these models ensure high-quality training for both the participant and the employer.

### ***On-the-Job Training (OJT)***

The success of the Massachusetts OJT National Emergency Grant demonstrated that one of the most effective methods for ensuring sustainable employment for many customers is OJT. Massachusetts' initial OJT NEG award was made in June 2010, which gave impetus to the implementation of a statewide system for OJT in Massachusetts. Policy, standardized procedures, statewide training and technical assistance were developed, including a website providing policy guidance, training presentations, OJT forms, sample training plans, outreach materials and other resources intended to support local areas in OJT implementation.

In 2016, USDOL approved a sliding scale waiver for Massachusetts OJT employer reimbursement under the WIOA DW formula program. The waiver is also applicable to Dislocated Worker Grants on an as-requested basis. Massachusetts has included a new application for this waiver within this state plan.

### **Other Work-Based Training Models**

Several training providers in the Boston area possess experience and capacity to develop industry-specific contextualized training in advanced math and reading, as well as soft skills, career exploration and counseling support. Boston has also had success with integrated ESL/Skill Training models for the limited English population. The Merrimack Valley is also experienced in the development of additional career pathways which generally combine contextualized education and occupational skills training for individuals who may need language or educational remediation in combination with technical skill development to obtain employment, particularly in the health care or IT fields.

### ***Registered Apprenticeship***

*Registered Apprenticeship.* Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., job center staff taking applications and conducting assessments).

Massachusetts' Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS) and MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), both under the auspices of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), collaborate to ensure information about the registered apprenticeship opportunity is widely disseminated to stakeholders in the broader workforce system, including Workforce Boards, Career Center staff, and WIOA partner staff, who in turn communicate with business and job-seeker customers.

MDCS is the recipient of multiple Department of Labor apprenticeship grants, totaling more than \$8M. The overarching goal of the Massachusetts American Apprenticeship Initiative [AAI] grant and State Apprenticeship Expansion [SAE] is to expand the registered apprenticeship model to non-traditional industries and diversify the apprentice pipeline. The Apprenticeship Accelerator grant supported the hire of an Apprenticeship Liaison, to conduct business outreach and assists with program

development. Via the Apprenticeship Liaison, DAS has engaged the Community College system, vocational schools, chambers of commerce, and professional organizations in the apprenticeship conversation. The AAI, SAE and the most recently awarded Apprenticeship State Expansion (ASE) grant support the development of apprenticeship industry intermediaries that will sponsor and develop programs in the state's priority industries as well as engage MassHire Career Centers in recruitment and screening.

The initiatives supported by the DOL-funded apprenticeship grants spearheaded and strengthened the working relationship between MDCS and DAS. Both agencies are committed to the growth of apprenticeship in traditional and non-traditional industries and occupations and support the [Apprenticeship Expansion in Massachusetts: Strategic Plan](#), published in June 2018. In September 2019, with support from the SAE grant, the Commonwealth hired a new Director of Apprenticeship Expansion and Work-Based Learning, charged with implementation of the apprenticeship strategic plan.

The regional planning process resulted in identification of three priority industries across the Commonwealth: Healthcare, Technology and Manufacturing. In support of apprenticeship expansion in these industries, Massachusetts implemented a [Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit](#). Employers are eligible for up to \$4800 in tax credits for each qualified apprentice.

DAS frequently informs MDCS of apprentice recruitment opportunities. MDCS shares the information with Career Center Directors, Workforce Boards and WIOA Partners via MassHire Workforce Informational Issuances in order to reach the largest possible pool of jobseekers.

As part of DAS's program approval process, all newly approved registered apprenticeship sponsors receive with their program approval letter a second letter containing information about automatic eligibility for, and the benefits of, inclusion on the Massachusetts Eligible Training Provider List. (See ETPL section below for additional details)

The MassHire Career Center Seminar includes an overview of Registered Apprenticeship (RA). Jobseekers are provided with resources to connect to construction and trade apprenticeships and to non-traditional apprentices in industries such as manufacturing, healthcare, and technology.

MDCS includes topics related to Registered Apprenticeship on the agenda at Workforce Partners Meetings, hosted by MDCS on a bi-monthly basis. Attendees of these meetings are practitioners from WIOA partner agencies. Topics have included the new Registered Apprenticeship Tax Credit (passed in 2018, effective in the 2019 tax year), and the benefits of working with Apprenticeship Intermediaries such as Apprenti Massachusetts, or MassHire Workforce Boards.

The Commonwealth participates in National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) annually by hosting, encouraging, and attending events that highlight the success of Massachusetts



registered apprenticeship programs. Each year during NAW, the Governor issues a proclamation in support of apprenticeship expansion in the Commonwealth.

EOLWD, MDCS and DAS collaborated on the development of a Sponsor Application package and an Apprentice Agreement for programs in expansion industries, making the language more user friendly to sponsors and apprentices in non-traditional occupations. The sponsor application includes the application for the Registered Apprentice Tax Credit. Forms tailored for construction and trade programs remain available for employers and apprentices in traditional occupations.

Funds from an apprenticeship line item in the state budget supported development of print marketing material, both employer and jobseeker-facing. Materials include general information about apprenticeship, case studies and contact information for interested employers and job seekers. Additional materials under development will be industry specific and include resources for employers interested in sponsoring registered apprenticeship programs.

MassHire BizWorks, a federal and state collaboration designed to enhance and align the services offered to Massachusetts businesses, publishes a Resource Guide for employers in the Commonwealth. The guide contains information related to registered apprenticeship and in 2020 and going forward, MDCS and MassHire BizWorks will formalize a training series with information specific to separate groups of practitioners, Workforce Boards, Career Center Directors, Career Center Staff, and business service staff. Topics will include apprenticeship basics, employer engagement, apprentice support, data collection and data entry into Massachusetts One Stop Employment System (MOSES).

The Massachusetts Community College system comprises 15 Community Colleges located within 50 miles of each other across the Commonwealth. Each college has a Business and Industry department that is in constant contact with employers and industry associations. Currently 6 of the 15 Community colleges are directly involved in the AAI and SAE grants. MassHire DCS communicates frequently with Massachusetts Association of Community Colleges (MACC) related to DOL funded apprenticeship grant announcements and possible areas of collaboration on apprenticeship projects and programs.

### ***Training Provider Eligibility Procedure***

*Training Provider Eligibility Procedure.* Provide the procedure for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including Registered Apprenticeship programs (WIOA Section 122). Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), which applies to individualized career services and training services funded by the Adult Formula program. Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

The MassHire Department of Career Services and the Department of Unemployment Assistance jointly issued and have revised over the years policy 100.DCS 14-100.5 “Massachusetts Eligible Training Provider List (Massachusetts ETPL) Initial and Subsequent Eligibility Process – UPDATED on June 30, 2020. Please follow the link to access the policy. [Massachusetts Eligible Training Provider List \(MA ETPL\) Initial and Subsequent Eligibility Process - Revised](#).

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) sponsors and/ or their vendors are included on the Massachusetts Eligible Training Providers list. The RA Sponsors must apply to the local workforce board to be placed on the list. Massachusetts DAS accepts a training provider that appears on the licensing board’s website for licensed occupations. For unlicensed occupations Massachusetts Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS) accepts vendors approved by the Massachusetts Department of Education, in conjunction with Massachusetts Division of Professional Licensure (DPL) Occupational Schools Division. Massachusetts DAS approves in-house related instructional programs in unlicensed occupations if: the instructor has six or more years in the occupation, attends adult learning seminars through Massachusetts DESE, and curriculum materials are industry approved. After the program receives RA approval from DAS, they can apply through the local board to be placed on the ETPL list.

MassHire Boards, MassHire Career Center Operators and other local providers of federally funded employment and training programs must review all policies and procedures to assure compliance with the POS requirements, including the assurance of POS requirements for Veterans at each point of entry for all applicable employment and training programs.

Massachusetts has developed training and will continue to revise and conduct training to staff of the Career Centers regarding POS related to federal employment and training programs.

Career Center Staff must assure that at the initial contact point (point of entry) at Veteran and/or covered persons are made aware of:

- their entitlement to priority of service;
- the full array of employment, training, and placement services; and
- any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs or services.

State and Local policies and procedures will ensure:

- a. monitoring and evaluation of priority of service will be incorporated within monitoring policies and procedures; and
- b. all reporting requirements will be met.

**Describe how the State will implement and monitor the priority for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient in accordance with the requirements of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), which applies to**

individualized career services and training services funded by the Adult Formula program.

Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

### ***Priority of Service Implementation and Monitoring***

Please see the Massachusetts policy regarding priority of services, here: [WIOA Priority of Service for Jobseeker Customers](#).

Priority of Service implementation is included as part of annual local monitoring of MassHire Career Center operators by the MassHire Workforce Boards. MDCS monitors the boards on an annual basis, ensuring sound monitoring procedures and practices.

**Local Funds Transfer:** WIOA allows a local board to transfer, if such a transfer is approved by the Governor, "up to and including 100% of the funds allocated to the local area under paragraph (2)(A) or (3), and up to and including 100% of the funds allocated to the local area under paragraph (2)(B), for a fiscal year between (A) adult employment and training activities; and (B) dislocated worker employment and training activities."

Massachusetts requires that local Boards submit a formal request for such a transfer that includes the following information:

- Amount of funds being transferred
- Program from/to
- Assurance that the transfer of funds will not impact the level of services available to the population from which the funds are being moved
- Number of participants to be served by each program
- Number of participants receiving training services for each program

The Massachusetts WIOA Funds Transfer Authority Policy may be viewed, here: [WIOA Funds Transfer Authority](#).

### ***Youth Program Requirements***

- Youth Program Requirements. With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA, —

### ***State-developed criteria***

Identify the State-developed criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth workforce investment activities and describe how the local boards will take into consideration the ability of the providers to meet performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance for the youth program as described in section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA in awarding such grants. <sup>5</sup>

Local boards follow [Youth Procurement Guidance: 100 DCS 19.100](#) and Training Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) WIOA. 21-16 to procure and award grants for youth workforce investment activities. As part of the procurement process bidders will describe how they will meet primary indicators of performance. Local boards will review youth performance of competitively procured youth service providers on an annual basis and take performance outcome information into consideration when refunding contracts.

Local boards are responsible for the youth service strategy in the local workforce area and as such will procure services that meet the needs of the respective youth population. As stated in 20 CFR §681.400, a local board may determine that the grant recipient or designated fiscal agent may, “provide directly some or all of the youth workforce investment activities. It is highly encouraged that Local Boards with recommendations from the local area Standing Youth Committee, when such a committee is established, determine the most effective and cost-efficient delivery of youth services.

#### ***Youth Program Elements***

Describe how the State will ensure that all 14 Program elements described in WIOA section 129(c)(2) are made available and effectively implemented. <sup>6</sup>

Policy [100 DCS 19.107: WIOA Youth Individual Service Strategy](#) states program staff must inform youth of the 14 WIOA program elements. The policy further states that WIOA eligible youth must participate in at least one of the WIOA program elements as required for program participation. Program elements should be selected based on the youth’s objective assessment and individual need.

Youth are required to have access to all program elements and may benefit from a mix of program elements and services. Local areas may have policies in place that require all youth to participate in a specific set of program elements.

Youth program staff must document in the youth Individual Service Strategy (ISS) the program element(s) in which the youth will participate. Staff must also document in the ISS when a youth is referred to an appropriate service provider for participation in a program service element.

#### ***Requires Additional Assistance***

Provide the language contained in the State policy for “requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out of school youth specified in WIOA sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).

The State policy [100 DCS 19.104](#) *Youth Requires Additional Assistance* provides language for requiring additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for out of school youth specified in WIOA sections 129(a)(1)(B)(iii)(VIII) and for “requiring additional assistance to complete an education program, or to secure and hold employment” criterion for in-school youth specified in WIOA section 129(a)(1)(C)(iv)(VII).

Local Workforce Boards may choose to establish locally approved additional barriers based on demographic and unique local area circumstances. Utilization of the Youth Requires Additional Assistance barrier for program eligibility determination must be supported by a locally approved policy. The local definition must be approved by the Local Board and included in the Annual Plan. Implementation of the Youth Requires Additional Assistance barrier must include documentation that clearly demonstrates that the youth meet this definition.

#### ***State Definition of Alternative Education***

Provide the State’s definition of “alternative education”.

In accordance with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an Alternative School is defined as an initiative within a public-school district, charter school, or educational collaborative established to serve at-risk students whose needs are not being met in the traditional school setting. For the purposes of this definition, Alternative Education does not include private schools, home schooling, high school equivalency services, or gifted and talented programs. Alternative Education may serve some students with disabilities but is not designed exclusively for students with disabilities.

Alternative Education may operate as a program or as a self-contained school:

- Alternative Education Programs may function within a single school or be a program affiliated with one or more schools or districts. Alternative Education programs must be affiliated with at least one school that has a school code assigned by the Department.
- Alternative Education schools that operate as self-contained public schools must comply with Massachusetts laws and regulations that guide the operation of schools in the Commonwealth and must be assigned a school code by the Department.
- Students enrolled in Alternative Education programs or schools shall be taught to the same academic standards established for all students in the Commonwealth. Alternative Education programs or schools shall employ highly qualified teachers as defined by the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. At the secondary level, Alternative Education programs or schools shall not limit student access to the opportunity to earn a high school diploma. All students enrolled in an Alternative Education program or school must be reported in the Student

Information Management System (SIMS) as an enrolled student and assigned the designated Alternative Education code.

- Students who may benefit from an Alternative Education include those who are pregnant/parenting, truant, suspended or expelled, returned dropouts, delinquent, or students who are not meeting local promotional requirements.

### ***Not attending school***

Include the State definition, as defined in law, for not attending school and attending school as specified in WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B)(i) and Section 129(a)(1)(C)(i). If State law does not define “not attending school” or “attending school,” indicate that is the case.

Not Attending School - An individual who is not enrolled or not attending a secondary or post-secondary educational program is considered out-of-school. An individual who attends a high school equivalency program or is enrolled in non-credit postsecondary courses is considered out-of-school.

According to the Department of Labor, providers of Adult Education under Title II of WIOA, YouthBuild Programs, and Job Corps programs are not considered schools. WIOA youth programs may consider a youth to be out-of-school for the purposes of WIOA youth program eligibility if they are attending Adult Education provided under Title II of WIOA, YouthBuild, or Jobs Corps. (§681.230).

Attending School: An individual who is enrolled and attending a secondary or post-secondary educational program is considered in-school unless the individual attends a high school equivalency program or is enrolled in non-credit postsecondary courses in which case the individual is considered out-of-school.

### ***Basic Skills Deficient***

If utilizing the portion of the basic skills deficient definition contained in WIOA Section 3(5)(B), include the specific State definition.

Massachusetts’ definition of an individual that is basic skills deficient is defined as youth or adults that have English, writing, or computation skills at or below 8.9 grade level or are English Language Learners or an individual that meets the following criteria:

- Lack a high school diploma or high school equivalent and is not enrolled in secondary education
- Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education/Literacy program
- Lack basic computer literacy or basic financial literacy skills

### ***Single-area State requirements.***

Single-area State requirements. In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In

such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)). States with a single workforce area must also include:

- Any comments from the public comment period that represent disagreement with the Plan. (WIOA section 108(d)(3).)
- The entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds, as determined by the governor, if different from that for the State. (WIOA section 108(b)(15).)
  - The type and availability of WIOA title I Youth activities, including an identification of successful providers of such activities. (WIOA section 108(b)(9).)

Not applicable.

### ***Waiver Requests***

Waiver Requests (optional). States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested: Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan;

1. Describes the actions that the State or local area, as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;
2. Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;
3. Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:
  - supporting employer engagement;
  - connecting education and training strategies;
  - supporting work-based learning;
  - improving job and career results, and
  - other guidance issued by the Department.
4. Describes the individuals affected by the waiver, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and
5. Describes the processes used to:
  - Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver;
  - Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver;
  - Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request;

- Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver.
- Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report.

(6) The Secretary may require that States provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the existing waiver in cases where the State seeks renewal of a previously approved waiver.

Massachusetts is requesting the approval of 2 WIOA waivers at this time:

- On-the-Job Training for Small Employers
- ETPL Training Provider - waiver of obligation to collect performance information on all students

**1. On-the-Job Training (OJT) - reimbursement during training period of up to 90% of trainee's wage for small employers (50 and fewer employees).**

The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), is requesting a waiver to the current allowable employer reimbursement rate of up to 50 percent of the wage rate of an On-the-Job Training (OJT) participant for the extraordinary costs of providing training and additional supervision related to the OJT as described in WIOA Section 134(c) (3)(H)(ii)(II). The waiver request has been developed in accordance with the WIOA guidelines in Section 189(i) (3) (B) and the WIOA Federal regulations at 20 CFR 680.720 (b).

Massachusetts is proposing a sliding scale of reimbursement to the employer based on employer size. Under the waiver, the following sliding scale will be implemented: up to 90% reimbursement for employers with 50 or fewer employees; up to 75% reimbursement for employers with 51 – 250 employees; and for employers with more than 250 employees, the statutorily defined 50% limit will continue to apply.

The waiver is requested for use with all WIOA formula funds: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, National Dislocated Worker Grants, and other Discretionary grants, as appropriate. MDCS looks forward to approval of this waiver for Massachusetts and, upon approval request that the waiver period be effective immediately.

**A. The statutory and/or regulatory requirements for which the waiver is requested:**

WIOA Section 134(c) (3)(H)(ii)(II) and the accompanying regulations as promulgated at 20 CFR 680.720 (b) state that employers may be reimbursed up to 50 percent of the wage rate of an OJT participant for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the OJT.

**B. Description of the actions the state or local area has undertaken to remove state or local barriers:**



There is no state or local statutory or regulatory barrier to implementing the proposed waiver.

**C. Description of the waiver goals; relationship of goals to the strategic plan goals; and expected programmatic outcomes:**

The waiver is consistent with national policy to develop a workforce system that is responsive to the demands of both individual and employer customers. The Commonwealth anticipates the following goals will be achieved with approval of the waiver request:

- Maximize the flexibility needed to impact local economic vitality and direct resources where demand for services is greatest by assisting local areas in marketing OJT as a vehicle to engage employers, particularly in targeted sectors, to hire and provide training to new workers. This will build the capacity and future viability of both the workforce and the industries themselves.
- Assist with the transformation of the current workforce system to a demand-driven, sector based and regionally driven talent development pipeline.
- Increase training and transitional employment opportunities for unemployed workers and hard-to-serve youth and adults.
- Equip individuals with relevant job training and transferable skills in high-skill, high-wage, high-demand occupations and industries.
- Increase business usage of the local workforce system by providing added incentives to hire and train new workers.

Local workforce development partners have provided feedback with regard to employer needs for assistance with economic competitiveness in the current economic downturn. Allowing businesses to be reimbursed on a sliding scale will address the primary reason for prior limited use of OJT and increase employer participation. Employer feedback indicates that they will be more likely to use this opportunity if reimbursement was greater than 50%.

Small to medium-sized employers are responsible for 51% of all the jobs in Massachusetts, therefore the Commonwealth estimates that small to medium-sized employers will comprise a significant percentage of OJT opportunities.

**D. Description of the individuals impacted by the waivers:**

The need for training is especially acute for those workers most in need: dislocated workers transitioning to new occupations and industries, long-term unemployed individuals in need of advancing outmoded skills in order to catch up with emerging technologies, and low-income and entry-level workers seeking to start their careers in a weak economic climate. Approval of the waiver will increase training options for WIOA-eligible job seekers.

The reduced match requirement for employers, particularly new start-ups and other small to medium-sized businesses, will provide an attractive and cost-effective financial incentive, increasing the opportunity to utilize the OJT model to hire and train new workers. This waiver will allow Massachusetts businesses to more rapidly adapt to both technological and general marketplace changes by improving their capacity to expand and remain competitive with affordable OJT options uniquely designed to achieve their specific developmental goals.

**E. Description of the process used to: Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment from business and labor; provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver; provide affected local boards the opportunity to comment; and monitor implementation:**

The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) actively sought the input of local regions during the development of this waiver request. As with all major workforce policies and procedures, the Commonwealth has solicited dialogue and input from local workforce boards, MassHire career center operators and workforce development partners concerning the impact of this waiver. The local workforce areas overwhelmingly support this request based upon past experience with the utilization of this waiver.

MDCS will monitor implementation of this waiver and work with the 16 local workforce development regions to implement the appropriate state and local policies to govern its individualized use by local regions.

**2. Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) Waiver – waiver of the obligation of training providers listed on the ETPL to collect performance data on all students.**

For training providers listed on the Massachusetts ETPL, this waiver eliminates the need to report performance outcomes for students whose training is not funded through the Workforce System. The Commonwealth continues to require training providers to report on customers attending training funded through one of the Workforce System's funding resources (i.e., WIOA, Trade, Training Opportunities Programs (Section 30), National Dislocated Worker Grants, etc.).

MassHire Workforce Boards will base ETPL approval on performance that is reported for those students whose training is funded through the MassHire workforce system.

The Commonwealth anticipates achieving the following goals with implementation of this waiver:

- Removal of a potential disincentive for schools and training providers to participate in ETPs in anticipation of maximizing the available marketplace of training curriculum.
- An increase in varied training offerings for individuals utilizing Individual Training Accounts (ITA) via the public workforce system (increased consumer choice).

- Greater utilization of the ETPL by individuals pursuing training in the Commonwealth related to jobs that are in-demand by employers.
- Improved overall performance outcomes for individuals pursuing training utilizing ITAs.
- Strengthen partnerships and relationships between training providers and the public workforce system.
- Enhanced ability of local boards to respond quickly and efficiently to immediate local job seeker and employer needs.

### **Statutory and/or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived - Eligible Training Provider List Requirements**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is seeking a waiver from the requirements outlined in the WIOA at Sections 116 and 122, and at 20 CFR 677.230 and 20 CFR 680.400 through 680.530, which require the collection and reporting of performance related data on **all** students participating in training programs listed on the state's ETPL.

#### **Background**

With the passage of WIOA, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts implemented the new law's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) provisions. In July 2016, the state launched its new ETPL requirements and some new features for providers related to data entry. Massachusetts's revised ETPL requirements provide an improved and enhanced vendor experience compared to the state's former requirements. Massachusetts is currently working to leverage existing data systems and data sources to assist with meeting the WIOA ETPL performance reporting requirements.

Despite these efforts, Massachusetts has faced several challenges while working to implement the WIOA ETPL requirements, which include:

- Ensuring that local areas have sufficient numbers of, and diversity of, training providers necessary to create an effective marketplace of training programs for WIOA participants utilizing ITAs.
- Ensuring fairness in the process of determining training provider eligibility.
- Reducing the burden of the requirement for training providers to submit performance information to the state, which may not be readily accessible.
- Much of the performance information is self-reported through surveys, etc., which makes it difficult to get accurate performance data since students may not respond to surveys and, as a result, schools may just provide performance information previously collected without resurveying students.
- Proprietary schools do not currently have a statewide system to report student data, and as such, there is no way to automatically match students with other

data sources to calculate outcomes. This results in a large burden on what tends to be the smaller training providers.

- Proprietary schools would have to collect sensitive information, such as social security numbers, etc., on all students for the state to match wage and earnings information on students utilizing ETPL programs, which may leave students open to identity theft, privacy considerations, etc.
- The burden on training providers to collect and provide information on all students once they leave or graduate from the program, results in certain providers electing not to be on the ETPL, which limits consumer choice, especially for proprietary schools.
- WIOA-paid students at Community Colleges represent a small portion of their enrollment. Non-WIOA paid students are more likely to be planning to enter training-related employment after an entire suite of courses over a longer period of time. Therefore, including these (non-WIOA) students in the cohort that count toward that course's performance unfairly skews the outcome in a negative direction.
- Providing information on eligible training programs to WIOA participants in a way that helps make informed decisions about how to use their ITAs is challenged by the inclusion of non-WIOA students in performance calculation.

#### **Actions Undertaken to Remove State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers**

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts regulations and policy statements are in compliance with current federal law.

#### **Waiver Goals and Outcomes**

Goals and outcomes related to this waiver request include:

- Remove the most significant disincentive for schools and training providers to participate in the ETPL, in anticipation of maximizing the available marketplace of training curriculum.
- More numerous and varied training offerings for individuals utilizing ITAs via the public workforce system (in other words, greater consumer choice).
- More training providers can lead to lower cost options.
- Greater utilization of the ETPL by individuals pursuing training in the Commonwealth related to jobs that are in-demand by employers now and in the future.
- Improved overall performance outcomes for individuals pursuing training via ITAs.
- Strengthen partnerships and relationships between training providers and the public workforce system.

- Enhanced ability of local boards to respond quickly and efficiently to immediate local job seeker and employer needs.

### **Individuals Impacted by the Waiver**

Individuals who access training services in Massachusetts via ITAs, Commonwealth of Massachusetts staff and partner staff, AJCs, subcontracted service provider staff, and training providers will benefit from this waiver.

### **Monitoring Progress and Implementation**

Annual WIOA on-site programmatic reviews will include an evaluation of how waivers are impacting local programs to ensure programmatic goals and outcomes are being met.

State staff involved with the administration of the ETPL, and performance reporting will periodically examine the appropriateness and the effectiveness of this waiver. This strategy ensures that the goals described above, as well as those outlined in the State's Combined Plan, are consistent with established objectives of the WIOA and federal and state regulations.

### **Notice to Local Boards and Public Comment**

In accordance with the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.135, Massachusetts is submitting a Massachusetts' waiver request is currently posted on our website for comment and review by required parties and the general public.

Currently waived through June 30, 2020: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/dcs-policy-16-100-wioa-waiver-for-eligible-training-providers-approved/download>.

Figure 61: Title I-B Assurances

#### ***TITLE I-B ASSURANCES***

<b>The State Plan must include assurances that:</b>	
1.	The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients or basic skills deficient;
	The MassHire Department of Career Services has established a policy that requires that Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of career and training services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients or basic skills deficient. <a href="#">WIOA Priority of Service for Jobseeker Customers</a>
2.	The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring Veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services

	provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;
	When meeting with veteran job seekers, career center staff refer SBE veterans to the DVOP specialist following SBE eligibility determination. MDSCS runs SBE reports for DVOP staff identifying any SBE veterans that receive a career center services.
3.	The State has established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;
	The MassHire Department of Career Services Local Workforce Board Certification policy sets forth criteria and process for chief elected officials to use when making appointments to the local MassHire Workforce Board. This is the most recent policy, to be updated this year: <a href="#">Local Workforce Development Board Certification Guidance</a>
4.	The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);
	Massachusetts Boards have been certified under basic WIOA requirements. Please refer to Massachusetts Policy Issuance number <a href="#">100.DCS 17.102.1</a> . Massachusetts has certified all its 16 boards under this policy through June 30, 2020.
5.	Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;
	n/a
6.	The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;
	The Massachusetts Workforce Development Board created a Workforce Allocations Committee (formerly the Workforce Allocations Task Force) which is composed of members of the workforce system, including representatives of chief elected officials. This board sub-committee brings to the full state board recommendations on the factors of distribution for Title I within state Allocations; once adopted by the Board, these recommendations are submitted to the Governor for state adoption.
7.	The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);

	The Commonwealth hereby assures that it will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7)
8.	The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;
	Through the Workforce Allocations Committee (formerly the Workforce Allocations Task Force), the Commonwealth established a policy on the formula and methodology for distribution of Title I adult and youth funds, within WIOA guidelines. A hold-harmless provision ensures that each local area's percentage share of the State allotments designated for local WIOA Title 1 Youth and Adult program activities does not fall below 90% of the local area's average percentage share for the prior two fiscal years.
9.	If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;
	The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) are the two state agencies that administer state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, and the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) is the state agency that administers the Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, and Youth Programs under Title I. All agencies are party to the WIOA MOU that establishes agreement to cooperate and coordinate across shared customers.
10.	The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.
	The State hereby agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.
11.	The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);
	<p>The State performs Annual on-site monitoring reviews of each local area to ensure compliance with 2 CFR part 200, as required by WIOA section 184(a)(3). During this on-site review,</p> <p>(A) The State ensures that established policies achieve the appropriate program quality and that outcomes meet the objectives and regulations of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA).</p>

	<p>(B) The review enables the Governor/State to determine if sub-recipients and contractors are compliant with WIOA and Wagner-Peyser requirements.</p> <p>(C) The review enables the State to determine whether a local plan will be disapproved for failure to make acceptable progress in addressing deficiencies as required in WIOA section 108(e)(1); and</p> <p>(D) The review enables the state to ensure compliance with the non-discrimination, disability, and equal opportunity requirements of WIOA 188.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State reports the review outcomes, provides technical assistance and follow-up, and initiates corrective action (if necessary).</li> </ul> <p>Local Boards, as part of the annual planning process assure to adhere to the financial recordkeeping, cost principles, and cost allocation requirements in WIOA. (See: <a href="#">MassWorkforce Issuance 100 DCS 04.106.1</a>)</p>
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## WAGNER-PEYSER ACT PROGRAM (Employment Services)

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### ***Employment Service Professional Staff***

#### ***Provision of Labor Exchange Services***

Describe how the state will staff the provision of labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act, such as through state employees, including but not limited to state merit staff employees, staff of a subrecipient, or some combination thereof. *(Note- States not seeking to utilize the staffing flexibility in the final rule as part of their 2020 State Plan submission can answer this question by entering that the state will utilize state merit staff employees.)*

The Commonwealth will continue to employ its current staffing with regard to provision of Wagner-Peyser services. The Commonwealth and its WIOA partners will research the potential impact of the options outlined in the final rule as part of the ongoing agenda for the WIOA state planning team.

#### ***Professional Development***

Describe how the State will utilize professional development activities for Employment Service staff to ensure staff is able to provide high-quality services to both jobseekers and employers.

The Commonwealth recognizes the importance of providing quality customer service to both our job seeker and employer customers. The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development/MassHire Department of Career Services (EOLWD/MDCS) continues the process of assessing the current skill level of career center staff and analyzing the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform each job in the career center. A curriculum including a series of training modules has been designed, developed, and continues to grow to deploy customized training to career center staff, including all partner staff to meet these training needs.

EOLWD/MDCS continues the work of MassHire BizWorks providing training on standard staff business service knowledge and competencies across multiple state agencies that are responsible for the provision of a myriad of programs and services to the Commonwealth's employers.

EOLWD/MDCS is invested in ensuring Career Center management and staff have the knowledge and understanding of the local, state, national and global economy as the Commonwealth implements a demand-driven system. EOLWD/MDCS has focused on additional specific areas of professional development as follows:

Platform Skills: MDCS has reviewed the levels and skills sets that are required to enhance/improve staff abilities to conduct one on one career counseling, workshops and public presentations and giving exceptional customer service to both job seekers and employers. These skills are critical to ensuring that the employer and jobseeker customers understand the depth and breadth of the services available to them and to

promote knowledge and utilization of the Massachusetts Workforce Development System.

**Labor Market Information (LMI):** It is essential to understand that LMI touches every aspect of the job search, as far as locating and understanding the skills level of in-demand jobs, and how to identify transferable skills, or the need to upgrade current skills to meet the needs of employers. It also assists staff and customers identify appropriate salary demands and many labor trends. Staff and customers will also understand the need for researching companies and building interview skills to prepare for the interview and negotiate salaries. EOLWD/MDCS has invested in tools to help in this effort.

**Using Tools Effectively:** Staff have and will continue to be provided training on: Burning Glass/Labor Analytics, Mass Career Information Systems (Mass CIS), O\*Net Online and TORQ. The training demonstrates how to assist job seekers to search for and access valuable labor market information on industry trends and career projections that will inform their choices in seeking employment and/or training. Breaking down job descriptions and resumes to identify and focus on the skills required for the job utilizing such software, as TORQ moves Massachusetts significantly in a demand driven manner.

**Business and Demand Driven Methodologies:** By utilizing a variety of training and professional development resources including classroom training and online resources, such as <https://www.workforcegps.org/> staff will stay current with the latest tools and techniques for enhancing employer engagement and connecting jobseekers with quality jobs.

**Technology:** EOLWD/MDCS consistently upgrades its IT resources including hardware and software to ensure that staff is kept up to date with innovations in technology that assist them in providing high-quality services to jobseekers and employers. Specific training is conducted on the statewide database, the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES), consistently as software and programming upgrades are made. Internal training sessions as well as online programs, webinars and video conferencing are used to keep staff, and subsequently customers, aware of advances in relevant technology resources and tools.

**Social Media:** Another important aspect of staff training, and development continues to be to enhance their skills in the effective use of technology in the job search. Staff must be able to assist job seekers in utilizing technological tools such as using email, social media, and online job applications to communicate and to market their skills to employers. Understanding that many employers will review an applicant's Internet profile as a part of a background check is important. Mastering the use of electronic communication via email and other online applications (for example, LinkedIn) is essential to ensuring that staff can communicate with job seekers for the purposes of doing outreach for targeted recruitment and connecting those job seekers to appropriate employers.

The Commonwealth is committed to providing consistent and current professional development activities and training to all staff within the Massachusetts Workforce System including the State Board, Local CEOs, Local Boards, Career Center Staff, including Core Partner staff and external Partners as well.

### ***Training to identify Unemployment Insurance Eligibility Issues***

Describe strategies developed to support training and awareness across core programs and the Unemployment Insurance program and the training provided for Employment Services and WIOA staff on identification of Unemployment Insurance (UI) eligibility issues and referral to UI staff for adjudication.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is a fully integrated and interconnected workforce development system. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's (EOLWD) Departments of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) and Career Services (MDCS) are responsible for the direct oversight of all the Massachusetts Workforce Development programs, including Unemployment Insurance (UI), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and Wagner Peyser/Employment Services (ES) funded through the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). MDCS/DUA continuously works to improve communication and integration internally and externally through the Massachusetts Workforce System. Internally, MDCS and DUA continue to support in each agency an integration and coordination liaison that tackles a number of cross agency issues and assists in the training and development of all career center and call center staff. MDCS/DUA will continue to provide training across the Commonwealth to MassHire career center staff, including partner staff, regarding the identification of potential UI eligibility issues. MassHire Career Center staff have been trained when conducting face to face interviews on how to utilize open ended questions regarding ongoing work search strategies which are utilized across all job seeker customers. DUA/MDCS have put protocols in place on how to report potential UI eligibility issues for adjudication. If career center staff become aware of a potential UI eligibility issues that are outside the Reemployment Service Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) process (notification of potential UI eligibility issues on RESEA claimants is conducted through a database system interface) DUA is notified immediately.

### ***Assisting individuals filing claims at MassHire Career Centers***

Explain how the State will provide information and meaningful assistance to individuals requesting assistance in filing a claim for unemployment compensation through MassHire Career Centers, as required by WIOA as a career service.

The Commonwealth has ensured that there has been on-site assistance at MassHire Career Centers to assist individuals who are filing a UI claim since 2000 with the inception of Career Centers. Since the launch of UI Online in 2013, DUA/MDCS have collaborated to better streamline and improve on that service delivery within the career center system.

Career centers have a dedicated bank of computers and telephone lines available which are accessible to any career center customer that needs assistance filing a claim for unemployment compensation. Along with the telephone banks, DUA instituted a MDCS consultation line. This line is a direct connection from the career centers to DUA call center staff for additional assistance relating to all UI issues.

Specialized training continues to be conducted to ensure that staff can confidently assist individuals filing UI claims. Please see issuance for example:

### **Unemployment Insurance (UI) Online Navigation Trainings**

#### ***Strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants***

Describe the State's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals.

The Commonwealth revitalized its reemployment efforts to assist UI claimants and other unemployed individuals in 2009 to ensure a "holistic" approach to reemployment services that included designing a solid program that would be viable across all funding sources; flexibility in the design and implementation to allow each career center the ability to customize the re-design to meet the needs of their local customer population; and on-going partner and customer feedback to continually improve programs and services offered to our customers.

The revitalization was focused in two areas: Re-designing our Career Center Seminar - Orientation (CCS); and also a re-designed customer flow. This has assisted the Commonwealth in quickly adapting this approach to meeting the reemployment service needs to shared/common customers across all core partner programs, services and activities.

The premise is that the CCS is the main portal into the career center. This orientation provides customers information on, and access to, the full array of services, programs, and activities available at or accessible from the career center. As part of the orientation the customer will complete a self-assessment of their work search strategies, complete a job profile, and with a career counselor review their approach to work search, their work search efforts, all their assessment results and establish the next appropriate step in their career plan. In short, the career center can assist all customers to prepare to find their next job; explore options to upgrade their skills; access specialized services including core partner services; and/or connect to other community resources. As stated above, it is essential to include flexibility within the design to allow for customization at the local level that would directly meet the needs of local job seekers and employers.

Attendance at a CCS is mandated, as well as participation in all these reemployment service activities for UI claimants who have been deemed permanently separated (not work attached and most likely to exhaust) however, it is not mandated for all career center customers. Although all customers may not attend this specifically designed CCS, it is the regular practice of the career center to schedule all customers for a similar

orientation that leads to the rest of the services, activities and programs offered by the career centers.

***W-P funds to support UI claimants***

Describe how the State will use W-P funds to support UI claimants, and the communication between W-P and UI, as appropriate including the following:

Described below.

***Labor exchange for UI claimants***

Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act:

Described below.

***Registration of UI claimants***

Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;

Described below.

***Administration of the work test***

Administration of the work test work test for the State unemployment compensation system, including making eligibility assessments (for referral to UI adjudication, if needed), and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants; and

Described below.

***Referrals and applications for education and training***

Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources.

This section includes a response to items number 1, 2, and 3, above. MDCS/DUA have been joint managing a successful Reemployment Service and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program since 2009. The Massachusetts model has always required all Permanently Separated (not work attached) UI Claimants to participate in upfront delivery of Reemployment Services (RES) which was followed by a reemployment eligibility assessment determination upon another visit to the career center.

The Commonwealth was well positioned with the inception of Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) to expand and improve upon its model to provide an even more robust delivery of Reemployment Services for UI claimants.

UI claimants who are selected for this program must attend a CCS, receive defined reemployment services, and attend a follow up review. If they fail to do so, they will be indefinitely disqualified for UI benefits.

All permanently separated UI claimants (not work attached and most likely to exhaust) are enrolled in the RESEA program. The RESEA claimant is mandated to attend a CCS. As stated above, the CCS is the main point of entry into the career center where the claimant is introduced to the full array of services available to them through the Massachusetts workforce system. The goal is to immediately engage the job seeker and provide a “value added” experience for the UI customer. During the CCS, UI claimants complete a job search inventory, a skills assessment, and a Career Action Plan (CAP) with a job counselor.

A career center staff member then reviews work search activity, individually with the UI claimant. They discuss the number of jobs, types of jobs, industry of choice, labor market trends impacting the job market and the customer’s methods of follow-up. Prior to leaving on this first visit, the RESEA customer is scheduled for additional career center services, as well as a follow-up RESEA review.

The follow-up RESEA is another work test point where again career center staff ensure that the customer is on the right track in their work search efforts. Throughout RESEA participation the counselor provides guidance, (i.e., if the claimant is only applying to one industry the counselor will work with the claimant and prepare a job profile through the TORQ program to demonstrate to the claimant how his/her skills may be more broadly applicable).

All career center customers, including UI claimants are introduced to the myriad of labor market, career awareness and assessment tools available to assist them in their work search efforts, including but not limited to TORQ, Mass CIS, and WorkKeys.

After reviewing the customers’ assessment, the determination is made by the customer and counselor that the customer is in need of additional education and/or training to upgrade skills to meet the knowledge, skills and abilities that are in demand to improve the prospect for employment, they will begin that process together.

As stated above, if at any time during a UI claimant’s journey through the Massachusetts workforce system it becomes evident that the claimant has a potential UI eligibility issue, DUA is notified immediately. If a RESEA customer does not attend or fully participate in required services, the Career Center staff record the non-attainment within the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) database and that the information is electronically transferred to UI Online database and triggers a disqualification for benefits until the customer fully participates.

UI Online and the MOSES database have several points of automated integration. As examples, information regarding profiled claimants and RESEA participants is seamlessly passed between the agencies. Upon successfully filing a claim, claimants receive a link to the Massachusetts job bank system known as JobQuest. This webpage also provides a number of resources, such as a listing of the career centers around Massachusetts and a link to start an assessment of their skills through TORQ. DUA and MDCS are committed

to continuously improve on creating linkages both through technology and programming to connect the claimant to reemployment services.

### **Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP)**

Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP). Each State agency must develop an AOP every four years as part of the Unified or Combined State Plan required under sections 102 or 103 of WIOA. The AOP must include—

#### **(1) Assessment of Need**

Provide an assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers in the area based on past and projected agricultural and farmworker activity in the State. Such needs may include but are not limited to employment, training, and housing. The assessment of need must include: an assessment of the agriculture activity in the State: 1) identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity; 2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e. are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and 3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State.

An assessment of the unique needs of farmworkers means summarizing MSFW characteristics (including if they are predominantly from certain counties, what language(s) they speak, the approximate number of MSFWs in the State during peak season and during low season, and whether they tend to be migrant, seasonal, or year-round farmworkers). This information must take into account data supplied by WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees, other MSFW organizations, employer organizations, and State and/or Federal agency data sources such as the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Labor (US DOL) Employment and Training Administration.

For Assessment of Need - Please refer to the Plan (Section 1) below.

#### **(2) Outreach Activities**

- *Outreach Activities*. The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of the MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through, normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:
  - Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices.
  - Providing technical assistance to outreach workers. Technical assistance must include trainings, conferences, additional resources, and increased collaboration with other organizations on topics such as MassHire Career Center services (i.e., availability of referrals to training, supportive services, and career services. as well as specific employment

opportunities), the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System (“Complaint System” described at 20 CFR 658 Subpart E), information on the other organizations serving MSFWs in the area, and a basic summary of farmworker rights, including their rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment.

- Increasing outreach worker training and awareness across core programs including the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues.
- Providing State merit staff outreach workers professional development activities to ensure they are able to provide high-quality services to both job seekers and employers.
- Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups. If an NFJP grantee is the State Workforce Agency’s (SWA) subrecipient conducting outreach, provide: (i) a description of that relationship; (ii) A description of any other MSFW service providers the NFJP is coordinating with; and (iii) the NFJP grantee’s outreach plan to be included in the State Plan.

For Outreach Activities - Please see Section 2 in Plan below.

### ***The plan***

The plan for the proposed outreach activities must include:

- The goals for the number of farmworkers who will be contacted each program year by W-P staff.
- The number of farmworkers who will be contacted each program year by other agencies under cooperative arrangements. These numerical goals must be based on the number of farmworkers estimated to be in the State in the coming year, taking into account the varying concentration of farmworkers during the seasons in each geographic area, the range of services needed in each area and the number of W-P and/or cooperating agency staff who will conduct outreach.<sup>7</sup>
- The State’s plans to conduct outreach to as many farm workers as possible.
- The number of outreach workers dedicated to outreach to farmworkers by service areas.

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<sup>7</sup> The numerical goals that must be included in the agricultural outreach plan are in reference only to the proposed outreach activities and are not negotiated performance targets.



# 2019 Agricultural Outreach Plan

## INTRODUCTION

The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) is responsible under the Wagner-Peyser grant to prepare an annual Agricultural Outreach Plan (AOP) as required by U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) regulations. This plan aligns with questions established by U.S. DOL for MDCS and extends to the MassHire Career Centers system in the provision of employment and training services to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW).

The plan covers Federal Program Year 2020 (July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2024) and will remain in effect until updated. The plan was prepared in large part with the active participation of the State MSFW Outreach Specialist.

- **ASSESSMENT OF NEED**

According to the USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture, Massachusetts has 7,241 farms on 491,653 acres. The agricultural industry directly provides employment to 25,920 individuals and produces an annual market value of over \$475 million in agricultural goods. The average farm produces \$65,624 worth of agricultural products on 68 acres.

Direct market sales are a key feature of Massachusetts agriculture. Massachusetts ranks 5th in the nation for direct market sales with over \$100 million and ranks 3rd in the nation for direct market sales per farm at \$55,384. Direct market sales account for 21.1% of the state's total sales of agricultural products; that is the highest proportion in the country. Additionally, Massachusetts ranks 8th in the nation for direct sales per capita.

Small and family orientated farm culture is prevalent in Massachusetts agriculture. The USDA defines small farms as farms with agricultural sales below \$250,000. Small farms account for 94.2% of farms in Massachusetts while family or individually owned farms account for 79.7% of Massachusetts farms.

The average age of a Massachusetts principal operator is 59.1 years old. Female farmers represent 38.5% of all principal operators. For the state's agricultural profile see Appendix I.

Massachusetts principal crops include Greenhouse (potted plants, herbs, vegetables, etc.); Nursery operations are another sector of agricultural activity that continues to thrive, mainly for the production of ornamental shrubs and trees. There are approximately 900 Greenhouse and Nursery operators in the state. Massachusetts ranks 2nd nationwide in the production of Cranberry, the production output represents +/- 20% of the total agricultural production in the state. The production of vegetables and fruits accounts for a significant account of total agricultural output

with 102 million. There are approximately 1,402 vegetable growers and +/- 500 fruit growers across the state. Poultry with 1,264 farms has seen an increase in the state share of agricultural production. Finally, there are other smaller sectors of agriculture that contribute to the vitality of the industry in the state; these are: dairy, livestock, aquaculture, etc. See Appendix II for full details about the agricultural economy in the state.

According to the USDA 2017 Census of Agriculture there were 2367 agricultural operations that reported the hiring of 13,142 agricultural workers. However, the reports show that the farm labor workforce declined by approximately 13% between 2012 and 2017. Based on the most recent statistics available (2018 projections) it is projected that there will be a slight increase of about 500 to 800 jobs in the coming years.

The Agricultural Outreach Plan for July 2020 through June 2024 lays out the strategy MDCS will follow for conducting outreach to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers and employers, offering to them the full range of services as required by 20 CFR Subpart B, Part 653.

- **Review of Previous Year's Agricultural Activity**

Major crop activities in the state for PY 2018-19 were: Greenhouse/Nursery, Cranberries, Apples, Vegetables, and poultry and to a lesser extent tobacco. According to the most recent publication from the National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA, NASS)

In Massachusetts, some growers reported above average yields due to good pollination, excellent weather, and very little rot. Other growers reported lower production due to factors such as heat stress. Cranberry production went slightly down from previous year's production levels, Apple activities occur from late July to mid-October for the harvest and early in the year for the pruning crews. Most of the apple activities are concentrated in the northern part of the state in the following counties: Middlesex, Worcester, and Franklin. However, NASS reports indicate that Massachusetts's production went up 9 percent from the previous year. Vegetable production continues to be an important part of agriculture in Massachusetts. Vegetable activities occur from late May/early June through November and are concentrated mostly in the following counties: Hampshire, Worcester, Middlesex, Hampden, Bristol, and Essex. Vegetable production estimates remains unchanged for 2019.

While the last few years have been tough, due to a severe drought (2016 - 17), the number of farms and acreage utilized for farming has dropped and increasing expenses, agriculture in the state continues to be an important part of the state economy.

- **Review of Previous Year's MSFW Activity**

According to the USDA Farm Labor report, for the November 2018 reference period, there were 34,000 workers hired directly by farms during the week of July 8-14, 2018. All hired workers worked an average of 39.2 hours during the survey week. The average wage rate for all hired workers was \$13.74 per hour. Field workers earned an average of \$13.14 per hour and livestock workers averaged \$12.92 per hour, and field and livestock workers combined earned an average of \$13.05 per hour.

There were 36,000 workers hired directly by farms during the week of October 7-13, 2018. All hired workers worked an average of 41.8 hours during the survey week. The average wage rate for all hired workers was \$13.95 per hour. Field workers averaged \$13.58 per hour, livestock workers averaged \$12.81, and field and livestock combined earned an average of \$13.30 per hour.

Source: National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), November 27, 2018

Figure 62: Estimate of Workers Employed in All Crop Activities by County

County	Agricultural Workers 2012	Agricultural Workers 2017	% Change	Labor Shortage
Barnstable	773	512	-33.77	Yes
Berkshire	661	582	-12.00%	Yes
Bristol	1133	928	-16.77	Yes
Dukes	243	263	7.61%	Yes
Essex	1438	1187	-17.46	Yes
Franklin	1893	1457	-23.04	Yes
Hampden	1040	902	-13.27	Yes
Hampshire	1370	1267	-7.2	Yes
Middlesex	2324	1873	-19.41	Yes
Nantucket	30	51	41.2	No
Norfolk	626	368	-41.3	Yes
Plymouth	1612	1467	-9	Yes
Suffolk	39	23	-41.03	No
Worcester	2407	2262	-6.03	Yes

Source: USDA, NASS 2012/2017 Census of Agriculture

The table above represents the best estimate MDCS can provide with the limited data available from sources such as 2012 and 2017 Census of Agriculture, Agricultural Review (USDA, NASS Publications), statistical data from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and our historical data records. The determination regarding labor shortage is based on the best estimate of workers reported by employers and the total number of requests filed for H-2A workers during 2019.

- **Projected Level of Agricultural Activity PY'2020**

Massachusetts agricultural employers face many challenges, among them, the lack of a reliable pool of workers, competition from abroad (trade), cost of doing business and the impact of regulatory changes (enhanced E-Verify/Food Safety, public and business demands for food safety, H-2A Program, etc.). With the pressure from overseas production where labor and regulatory impact are significantly lower and the options for mechanization are impractical or expensive the diversification of crop activities at local farms continues. To remain a viable agricultural operation in the state many growers are harvesting crops activities that keep the farm in operation for longer periods of time than in the past. In fact, many operators remain open year-round providing all sorts of local produce or imports from other states to satisfy consumers' demands.

Massachusetts employers continue to pursue alternative ways to compete and to stay in business. Many employers have diversified their operations to include non-traditional crop activities, direct sales, mechanization, the development of new strategies for marketing their products (CSA shares) and the use of the internet. In addition, the new economic model includes agro-tourism, wineries, etc.

The implementation of new technologies and expanding immigrant population has opened up market conditions to sustain a viable agricultural sector. However, many other external factors continue to affect agriculture in Massachusetts, such as market fluctuations, consumer demands, immigration policies, outdated recruitment methods, lack of training programs to enhance the skills of existing or new agricultural workers, etc. As a result, we are estimating that agricultural activities in the state will show minimal gains increase.

The only exception anticipated is the harvesting of tobacco; although reports indicate that production shifted down from levels our records show significant drops in the number of employers seeking foreign labor to tend their crops. In fact, there are currently only 3 employers seeking workers for this crop activity, this represents 100% of activity for a second consecutive year.

## **1.4 Projected Number of MSFWs in the State PY'2020**

The number of Migrant or Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) in the state continues to be a moving target. There are no concrete numbers quantifying the number of workers engaged in agriculture other than the Census of Agriculture. Conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [National Agricultural Statistics Service](#) (NASS), the Census collects data on every aspect of U.S. agriculture. The most recent data from the Census places the number of workers employed in crop activities at 13,142 which represents a drop of 16.03% from the 2012 survey. While the Massachusetts DAR statistical data list between +/- 60,000 direct or indirect jobs created as a result of the agriculture activity in the State. So, our best MSFW estimate will be based on data collected from the 2017 Census of Agriculture. Factors such as the transient nature of the MSFW population, the legal status and the underground economy make it difficult to enumerate this sector of the workforce. Taking into consideration all the factors affecting our ability to properly account for the MSFW population in the state, we estimate that the number MSFWs in the state will remain at current levels or increase at a slower pace than the rest of the U.S. over the next few years.

According to recent statistical data from the USDA and Massachusetts DAR, it is projected that at least 5,000 MSFWs and an additional 5,000 uncommitted MSFWs will be traveling to or through the Commonwealth over the plan period. As in the past, crop activities, geographical areas, time frames, weather conditions and level of wages will dictate how up or down our estimate will be. However, regardless of all considerations the projected numbers of farmworkers are expected to increase slightly over the next few years.

- **OUTREACH TO MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKERS**

The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) will conduct outreach activities to locate, register and to inform migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFW) about the basic, individualized and follow-up services available through the MassHire Career Center system (MCCs).

### **2.1 Goals and Proposed Outreach Activities**

MDCS goal is to contact a significant number of MSFWs during the peak of the agricultural activity in the State. Our initial goal for PY 2020 is to make a minimum of 304 initial contacts in 38 days. For the following years MDCS intends to increase the number of contacts and days outreach is conducted by 10%.

Local offices that have MSFW activity in their service areas will be required to conduct outreach to agricultural employers and market the services available at the local MassHire Career Center in the service area. They will also be asked to assist MDCS obtain and update the employer's labor force projections for the upcoming season.

In addition to the above-mentioned goals, the State Outreach Specialist will be coordinating efforts with each local area that shows a significant number of agricultural workers as reported by the 2017 Census of Agriculture. This new approach should significantly increase MDCS outreach efforts to agricultural employers and may also lead to an increase in the number of agricultural workers receiving services at the Career Centers. More importantly, by combining efforts, agricultural employers and farm workers will benefit alike.

We plan to continue coordinating our efforts with MSFW partners to meet our outreach goals.

MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) outreach staff will make an estimated 304 MSFW outreach contacts during PY 2020. We estimate that 15 to 25 of those contacts will be made by local office staff with the remaining 284 contacts made by MDCS outreach staff.

The total number of staff days to be used by MDCS outreach staff will be +/- 38 days. This represents an increase of 82% from the level of staff days devoted to outreach during the last program year.

The number of MSFWs contacts and staff days devoted to outreach activities by the NFJP WIOA Sec. 167 Grantee (New England Farm Workers' Council NEFWC) will be determined once they have filed their report. Based on historical data, it is expected that they will be identifying approximately 250 workers and that they will cumulatively spend 50 days conducting outreach activities.

Figure 63: Outreach Numerical Goals for 2020

Agency/Organization	Contacts	Days Spent
MassHire Career Centers/American Job Centers	20	0
MDCS Central Office	304	38
WIOA NFJP Grantee (3 outreach staff)	420	28 (3)
<b>Totals</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>66</b>

The MDCS will make an estimated 100 outreach contacts during PY 2020. We estimate that at least 50 contacts will be made by the SMA with the remaining contacts made by outreach staff and the cooperating agency. The total number of staff days to be expended by MDCS outreach staff will be 15. This will represent 100% increase in the number of staff days devoted to outreach during the last program year.

## **2.2 Assessment of Available Resources**

The MassHire Department of Career Services has designated one full-time outreach position for Program Year 2020-2024. The number of staff positions assigned to outreach activities represents a 100% increase from last year. Staff providing outreach services consist of one (1) bilingual Central Office employee. The geographic area covered by the outreach staff is much larger than the jurisdiction of the local offices that they assist. To ensure equity of service, the efforts of the Central Office outreach worker may be supplemented by local office Business Service Representatives (BSRs), in areas of the state where significant migrant outreach workloads warrant additional assistance. BSRs are based at local MassHire Career Center sites and bring to the customer the full array of WIOA basic/individualized and training services, as well as MassHire Career Center service information relevant to the needs of the agricultural employer community to include, but not be limited to Title I, WIOA 167 and other appropriate program services. This is accomplished in large part through conducting employer-coordinated visits to fields and food processing facilities to meet with migrant workers and employers and provide service information at minimum, at the beginning and close of the agricultural employment seasons. The same information will be shared with the Workforce Development Boards. In-office services are continuously available, with evening hours at several locations.

We are continuing to have conversations with the New England Farm Workers Council (NEFW WIOA Grantee) to update the cooperative agreement and we are looking forward to establishing new connections with other organizations that serve the MSFW population. Most recently, we have coordinated efforts with Migrant Education, Migrant Health and the U.S. DOL, WHD Community Outreach and Resource Planning Specialist to start targeting employers and other organizations that could help improve our chances of reaching our goals.

## **2.3 Tools and Resources**

Self-service registration is available electronically; via the internet and the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) our current database system. These instruments will be the primary tools or methods of registration, in office or during outreach. MOSES provides web-based, self-service and staff managed intake and case management to support a virtual workforce center environment. Individual applications may be taken during outreach, when necessary or appropriate. Where necessary, an explanation of the purpose and completion of the process shall be given preceding the actual registration. Applicants who visit the MassHire Career Centers for services can register and self-refer themselves to job opportunities and other needed services in an electronic supported environment. The Outreach and office staff may also assist MSFWs who are unable to complete the process.

Other tools to be used are:

- Previous year outreach planning documents and employer estimates of the number of MSFWs needed during the upcoming session;
- Joint outreach planned visits with NEFWC staff;
- Provide presentations at agricultural meeting, to other state agencies or community organizations;
- Printed pamphlets in English/Spanish (or other languages as needed) which will be distributed to MSFWs and/or posted in gathering areas; and
- Packets of informational materials, in English/Spanish, will be provided to MSFW households and individuals, that explain services such as the range of supportive services available to them, community-based organizations that can assist them, filing/utilizing the complaint system, information about Massachusetts Laws, UI information, farmworker rights, and Federal Wage and Hour laws.

○ **Assessment of Available Resources**

The Massachusetts Department of Career Services has designated one full-time outreach position for Program Year 2020-2024. The number of staff positions assigned to outreach activities represents a 100% increase from last year. Staff providing outreach services consist of one (1) bilingual Central Office employee. The geographic area covered by the outreach staff is much larger than the jurisdiction of the local offices that he will be assisting. To ensure equity of service, the efforts of the Central Office outreach workers may be supplemented by local office Business Service Representatives (BSRs), in areas of the state where significant migrant outreach workloads warrant additional assistance. BSRs are based at local MassHire Career Centers sites and bring to the customer the full array of core, intensive, and training services, as well as MassHire service information relevant to the needs of the agricultural employer community to include, but not limited to Title I, WIOA 167 and other appropriate program services. This is accomplished in large part through conducting employer-coordinated visits to fields and food processing facilities to meet with migrant workers and employers and provide service information at minimum, at the beginning and close of the agricultural employment seasons. The same information will be shared with the MassHire Workforce Boards. In-office services are continuously available, with evening hours at several locations.

We are continuing to have conversations with the New England Farm Workers Council (NFJP WIOA Grantee) to finalize the cooperative agreement and we are looking forward to establishing new connections with other organizations that serve the MSFW population. Most recently, we have coordinated efforts with (Migrant Education, Migrant Health) the U.S. DOL, WHD Community Outreach and Resource Planning Specialist to start targeting employers and other organizations that could help improve our chances of reaching our goals.



## ○ **Tools and Resources**

Self-service registrations are available electronically; via the internet and the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) our current database system. These instruments will be the primary tools or methods of registration, in office or during outreach. MOSES provides web-based self-service and staff managed intake and case management to support a virtual workforce center environment. Individual applications may be taken during outreach, when necessary or appropriate. Where necessary, an explanation of the purpose and completion of the process shall be given preceding the actual registration. Applicants who visit the MassHire Career Centers for services can register and self-refer themselves to job opportunities and other needed services in an electronic supported environment. The outreach and office staff may also assist MSFWs who are unable to complete the process.

Other tools to be used are:

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- Joint outreach planned visits with NEFWC staff and other organizations;
- Provide presentations at agricultural meeting, to other state agencies or community organizations:
- Printed pamphlets in English/Spanish (or other languages as needed) which will be distributed to MSFWs and/or posted in gathering areas; and
- Packets of informational materials, in English/Spanish, will be provided to MSFW households and individuals, that explain services such as the range of supportive services available to them, community-based organizations that can assist them, filing/utilizing the complaint system, information about Massachusetts Laws, UI information, farmworker rights, and Federal Wage and Hour laws.

## ○ **SERVICES PROVIDED TO MSFWs THROUGH THE MASSHIRE CAREER CENTERS**

### **a) Overview**

An extraordinary variety of employment-related services for job seekers and businesses are available at the Commonwealth's network of MassHire Career Centers (MCCs).

Services for job seekers include:

- Job search assistance and access to online job listings
- Career counseling
- Coaching on job search skills
- Workshops on a variety of job search strategies

- Access to resources including PCs, reference materials, resume building software, and economic data
- Networking groups
- Unemployment insurance walk-in services

Always, job seekers can access career planning assistance services, including working with experienced career counselors, attending workshops and short-term training, develop your resume, write cover letters, and more.

In many MCCs, services are available in languages in addition to English. Depending on location, these languages may include Spanish, Chinese, Portuguese, Russian, Vietnamese, etc.

## **b) SERVICES PROVIDED TO EMPLOYERS THROUGH MASSHIRE CAREER CENTERS**

### **a) Overview**

Employers can take advantage of employment and training resources such as assistance with recruitment and hiring, job matching with potential hires, workforce training grants, and tax credit programs, etc.

Services for employers include:

1. Access to qualified applicants
2. Applicant pre-screening
3. Posting of jobs
4. Assistance with small and large-scale recruitment activities
5. Help planning job fairs
6. Testing and assessment of job candidates
7. Targeted mailings
8. Rental of conference rooms
9. Labor market information
10. Information on training grants and tax credits

Some Career Centers provide training—PC, word processing, for example—on-site at the center. Not all services are available at all career centers.

## **c) REVIEW AND COMMENTS**

### **a) Public Comments**

In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107(d)(1), (2), and (3), MDCS has given the opportunity to the New England Farm Workers' Council (NEFWC), WIOA Section 167 grantee, to comment on the State Agricultural Outreach Plan. Any comments received after the submission date will be forwarded to the region, under separate cover.

#### d) APPENDICES

Facts and Statistics

See Attachment I

Figure 64: Principal Agricultural Products by County

Principal Agricultural-Products by County *	
County	Products
Norfolk	Nursery and Greenhouse
Plymouth	Fruits, Nuts, and Berries
Middlesex	Nursery and Greenhouse
Essex	Nursery and Greenhouse
Dukes	Nursery and Greenhouse
Bristol	Nursery and Greenhouse
Berkshire	Livestock and Vegetables
Hampden	Nursery and Greenhouse
Barnstable	Aquaculture and Livestock
Worcester	Nursery and Greenhouse
Franklin	Nursery, Greenhouse and Livestock
Hampshire	Vegetables and Livestock

\* Information based on the USDA, NASS, 2007 Census of Agriculture  
Information obtained from the USDA NASS New England Agricultural Statistics - 2011 Report

Figure 65: Major Agricultural Products in Each County

Major Agricultural Products by County*	
Barnstable	Hampden
1. Livestock, poultry, and their products	1. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture
2. Aquaculture	2. Tobacco
3. Fruits, tree nuts, berries	3. Livestock, poultry, and their products
4. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture	4. Vegetables, melons, potatoes
5. Vegetables, melons, potatoes	5. Dairy
Berkshire	Hampshire
1. Livestock, poultry, and their products	1. Vegetables, melons, potatoes
2. Dairy	2. Livestock, poultry, and their products
3. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture	3. Dairy
4. Vegetables, melons, potatoes	4. Tobacco

<b>5. Cattle and calves</b>	5. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture
<b>Bristol</b>	<b>Middlesex</b>
1. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture	1. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture
2. Livestock, poultry, and their products	2. Livestock, poultry, and their products
3. Fruits, tree nuts, berries	3. Other animals and other animal products
4. Vegetables, melons, potatoes	4. Vegetables, melons, potatoes
5. Dairy	5. Fruits, tree nuts, berries
<b>Dukes</b>	<b>Norfolk</b>
1. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture	1. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture
2. Livestock, poultry, and their products	2. Livestock, poultry, and their products
3. Vegetables, melons, potatoes	3. Horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys
4. Cattle and calves	4. Other crops and hay
5. Poultry and eggs	5. Sheep, goats, and their products
<b>Essex</b>	<b>Plymouth</b>
1. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture	1. Fruits, tree nuts, berries
2. Livestock, poultry, and their products	2. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture
3. Vegetables, melons, potatoes	3. Livestock, poultry, and their products
4. Fruits, tree nuts, berries	4. Aquaculture
5. Dairy	5. Vegetables, melons, potatoes
<b>Franklin</b>	<b>Worcester</b>
1. Livestock, poultry, and their products	1. Livestock, poultry, and their products
2. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture	2. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture
3. Dairy	3. Fruits, tree nuts, berries
4. Vegetables, melons, potatoes	4. Dairy
5. Aquaculture	5. Poultry and eggs

\* Information based on the USDA, NASS, 2007 Census of Agriculture,  
Information obtained from the UMASS Extension Service and NASS 2011 Report.

Figure 66: Massachusetts-Grown Produce Availability Calendar \*



\* Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

## **State strategy**

### **(3) Services provided through MassHire Career Center system**

*Services provided to farmworkers and agricultural employers through the MassHire delivery system.* Describe the activities planned for providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the MassHire delivery system. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

- a. Providing the full range of employment and training services to the agricultural community, both farmworkers and agricultural employers, through the MassHire delivery system. This includes:
  - How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the MassHire Career Centers;
  - ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.
- (B) Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other farmworker advocacy groups.
- (C) Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

For Services provided - Please see Section 3 in the Plan above.

### **Other Requirements.**

#### **State Monitor Advocate.**

State Monitor Advocate. The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107 and as prescribed by Region I, the State Monitor Advocate participated in the preparation of the agricultural outreach plan and has been afforded the opportunity to approve and comment on the plan. Such review indicates that the plan has been prepared properly, omitting none of the prescribed requirements and properly describing the activities planned for providing services to both agricultural employers and migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs).

#### **Review and Public Comment**

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in formulating its final

proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received and responses to those comments.

For Review and Public Comment - Please see Section 5 in the Plan above.

**Collaboration.** Describe any collaborative agreements the SWA has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

The MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) will continue to coordinate activities and services with the WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee, the New England Farm Workers Council (NEFWC), to identify MSFW needs, and to facilitate or provide intensive and training services. This will be facilitated by a Memorandum of Understanding. Currently, MDCS and NEFWC are in the process of updating the existing MOU. Other cooperative agreements with the Mass Migrant Education Program and the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program (CRVHP) are anticipated to be in place within the next year. MDCS welcomes engagement among other community based and/or private groups for the purpose of identifying, servicing, and assisting MSFWs.

MassHire Career Centers offer integrated and universally accessible employment services that efficiently meet the needs of all customers including Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) and Limited English Proficient (LEP) customers. Through existing partnerships in the MassHire Career Centers, MSFWs have access to the following services through a single service delivery system: labor exchange services such as career counseling, vocational testing, Veteran's employment and training services, resume writing, job search assistance workshops, reemployment workshops, referrals to ESL classes and job referrals. Other MassHire services include adult, dislocated worker and youth services under WIOA, adult education, apprenticeship training, Unemployment Insurance and referral to supportive services. This approach facilitates access to core services and reduces the number of barriers otherwise faced by MSFWs and LEP customers and individuals with disabilities. Some of the partners working under the MassHire Workforce System are co-located or have access to information through existing MOUs.

Currently MassHire Career Center (MCC) staff encourage MSFWs and LEP customers to take advantage of the free ESL classes offered through Massachusetts Adult Literacy Hotline, Migrant Education (EDCO) or through the WIOA Section 167 Grantee. This is a critical component for developing the basic skills needed to secure sustainable employment and pursue career growth. Building on the existing infrastructure and with the development of new collaborative efforts we expect to reduce the barriers to accessing services by this targeted population.

The SMA will continue to reinforce positive relationships with farm workers, farmers, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Legal Services and other non-profit organizations while conducting outreach activities. During the next four years, Massachusetts' MDCS will strive to continue to build new and better relationships with MSFW/LEP service providers and plans to continue outreach to local farms to contract local workers and employers and promote the full range of services offered through the MassHire Career Center system.

Other activities being developed to attract new partners and retain existing service providers, include:

- Develop and implement strategies which incorporate goals and objectives consistent with the WIOA requirements.
- Establish and maintain communication through meetings and social media with stakeholders to keep them informed of the work and progress made.
- Advocate for the inclusion of the WIOA 167 grantee at MCCs locations across the state, per the direction established by the WIOA statutory requirements.
- Continue to foster good working relationships and collaborative efforts with stakeholders to help achieve the MDCS and AOP goals.

In addition, the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) is committed to building stronger partnerships and collaborations to better align services available at local workforce areas to the needs of MSFWs and agricultural employers. As part of this effort, the State Monitor Advocate links with the Connecticut River Valley Farmworker Health Program (CRVFHP) and became a member of the CRVFHP Advisory Council. The CRVFHP Advisory Council provides insight and guidance on issues affecting the accessibility of healthcare for agricultural workers and their dependents, along with identifying population shifts, changes to the regulatory framework, and other concerns affecting the agricultural community.

MDCS and the SMA will continue to promote stronger collaborative efforts with other State Agencies, such as the Massachusetts Department of Education, ORI, Agriculture, Public Health, USDA Rural Development and not-for-profit organizations such as CRVFHP, Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, etc. to address and discuss issues regarding employment, literacy, health, and wellbeing of Massachusetts agricultural workers.



**Assessment of progress.** The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

Please see Sections 1.1 - 1.4 in the Plan above.

**Data Assessment.** Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

Please see Sections 1.1 - 1.4 in the Plan above.

Please see the 2017 Census of Agriculture State Profile for Massachusetts (Attachment K)

Figure 67: Wagner-Peyser Assurances

**WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES**

<b>ASSURANCES</b>	
1.	The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with MassHire Career Centers, or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3)); The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Wagner Peyser Employment Service has been co-located within a MassHire Career Center since the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 effective July 1, 2000.
2.	If the state has significant MSFW MassHire centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW MassHire centers. MSFW activity in the Commonwealth accounts for less than 20% nationally, Therefore, Massachusetts is not subject to the requirements at 20 CFR 653.111. However, the Outreach Specialist and the State Monitor Advocate are from a background representative of the MSFW population in the state.
3.	If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and The Commonwealth assures that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, which administer State Laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities have cooperated in full and are a Core Partner with the MassHire Department of Career Service who is responsible for the administration of

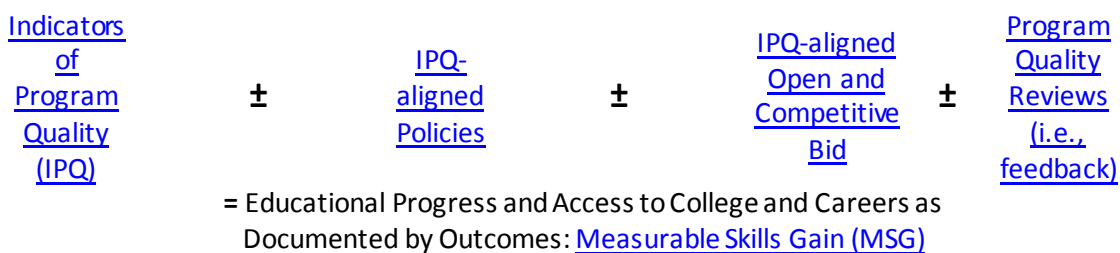
	Wagner Peyser and WIOA Title I Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker Programs.
4.	<p>If a state chooses to provide certain ES activities without merit staff, it remains incumbent upon SWA officials to carry out the following activities, if they arise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Initiate the discontinuation of service;</li> <li>B. Make the determination that services need to be discontinued;</li> <li>C. Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued;</li> <li>D. Approve corrective action plans;</li> <li>E. Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days;</li> <li>F. Enter into agreements with state and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWA's behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and</li> <li>G. Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing, wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.</li> </ul> <p>The Commonwealth agrees.</p>

The State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to Adult Education and Literacy programs under title II, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

## Adult Education and Family Literacy Act

The activities described in this Massachusetts Adult Education (AE) State Plan Modification take place in the context of overarching themes and “big ticket” initiatives that drive our decisions and actions going forward. These include but are not limited to the following:

- ACLS is revising the Massachusetts AE mission as shown on the [ACLS website](#), adopted under the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. The revision will reflect WIOA priorities, integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and add a vision statement that reflects our shared commitment to the education and workforce success of adult learners in Massachusetts.
- ACLS is offering a statewide professional learning series on [ANTI-RACISM, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION \(ADEI\)](#) to ACLS staff, advising and instructional staff, program leaders, and contracted PD providers across all AE organizations and programs starting in February 2022. For more information, see Section V of this document.
- Following up the [AE evaluation](#) done by the [UMass Donahue Institute \(UMDI\)](#), ACLS is developing a logic model to map future direction. ACLS has embarked on an intensive process under the guidance of the [DESE Office of Planning and Research](#) that will expand and deepen the theory of action at the heart of the last open and competitive bidding process and current funding cycle:



The output of this work will be a detailed document featuring a limited number of high-impact activities to focus on during the next open and competitive bidding process and funding cycle. During weekly sessions, the team discusses ACLS successes (e.g., MassSTEP branding, growing portfolio of programming) and challenges (e.g., turbulence in the educator workforce, limited technology skills of teachers and students) and zeros in on “big ideas” to adopt as priorities going forward. This process will conclude by the June 30, 2022 with periodic follow-up during the next five-year cycle.

- An ACLS guiding priority for the coming years is to expand virtual options and access for AE students in Massachusetts. There are many aspects to this work but the most comprehensive is a [virtual learning school system](#) to be known MassLinks. All services will complement the services of traditional [Community Adult Learning Centers](#) (CALCs) and be delivered virtually. For more information, see Section II of this document.
- In celebration of the achievement of Massachusetts AE students and programs and support of the activities described in this document, ACLS is updating the [Changing Lives](#) video. This video

features former students Martha Escobar, Gemini Walter, and Hongfang Li<sup>8</sup> who graciously shared their stories and explained how participation in AE made a difference in their lives. This video will continue to be used by ACLS, programs, and career centers in marketing efforts at the state and local levels.

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<sup>8</sup> These students studied at Berkshire Community College, Mount Wachusett Community College, and Asian American Civic Association respectively.

# A. Aligning of Content Standards

## Curriculum and Instruction

- Since October 2013, programs offering ABE instruction in mathematics and English Language Arts/Literacy (ELA), including approved forms of distance education, are required to implement curriculum aligned to the [CCRSAE](#). ABE curriculum and instruction are required to reflect the instructional shifts and align at all levels with the [CCRSAE](#) levels A through D-E.
- Since February 2019, programs offering ESOL instruction, including approved forms of distance education, are required to implement curriculum aligned to the [Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education](#)<sup>9</sup> (MA ELPS). These standards incorporate the [CCRSAE](#) for ELA/Literacy and the instructional shifts for ELA and context them within the lens of English language learning.

## Indicators of Program Quality (IPQ), Program Quality Reviews (PQR), and Site Visits (SV)

- Revised IPQ Standard 4 provides clear guidance around ACLS expectation for curriculum and instruction.
- Indicator 4: Curriculum: Curriculum is standards-based, vertically and horizontally aligned<sup>10</sup> in all content areas and levels, contextualized and relevant, and supports the diverse needs of all learners.
- Standard 4.1: The program's documented ESOL curriculum and instruction are aligned to the Massachusetts English Language Proficiency Standards (MA ELPS). The program's documented ABE curriculum and instruction are aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCRSAE).
- Standard 4.2: The program's curriculum is vertically and horizontally aligned in all content areas and levels, informed by qualitative and quantitative assessment data, revised regularly with staff, and implemented in all classrooms.
- Standard 4.3 The program's curriculum is responsive to and inclusive of diverse identities<sup>11</sup> and cultures.
- In PY20-21, ACLS completed its planned total of 35 PQRs, including the six that were cancelled the previous program year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike in previous years, all PQRs in PY20-21 were conducted remotely due to pandemic restrictions. Interviews with program staff and observations of classrooms were facilitated using online meeting platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. As in previous years, at

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<sup>9</sup> The Massachusetts ELPS combine college and career readiness skills and language skills into a single set of standards in one document. ACLS developed these new standards based on three principal sources: [The 2005 Massachusetts Adult Basic Education Curriculum Framework for English for Speakers of Other Languages](#); The College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (CCRSAE); and [The English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education](#).

<sup>10</sup> Vertical alignment: What students learn in one level builds on what they learned in the previous level and prepares them for what they learn the next. Connections from one level's curriculum to another are explicit and understood by students themselves. Horizontal alignment: What students learn across different content areas of the same level is coordinated and the curriculum supports connections across subject areas.

<sup>11</sup> Race, ethnicity, sex, gender, ability, culture, language, socio-economic status, immigration status.

the conclusion of PY20-21, ACLS released a summary and analysis of all the PQR data from the written reports for the year. The summative report identified several promising practices observed during PQRs as well as broad areas for improvement across all programs.

- ACLS also revised its SV protocol to address conditions occasioned by the pandemic. As part of that revision, no formal SVs were required in PY20-21. Instead, program specialists conducted two to three informal check-ins with all the programs in their caseloads. These check-ins were held remotely and focused primarily on the review of data from LACES (i.e., desk reviews as described in Section VI), enrollment and pre- and post-test data in particular, two indicators especially sensitive to the unstable environment brought on by COVID. ACLS will return to its more formal, in-person site visit protocol when conditions allow.
- Programs can use both PQR and SV reports to drive continuous improvement and as the basis for requesting SABES support including the Planning for Continuous Improvement offering.

#### System for Adult Basic Education Support<sup>12</sup> (i.e., SABES<sup>13</sup>)

- The AE Professional Development (PD) System, historically known as SABES, consists of five centers<sup>14</sup> that collaborate with each other and ACLS to develop and provide high quality PD and support to increase educator effectiveness and strengthen programs.
- The SABES centers adroitly made a sudden and successful shift to support remote instruction (e.g., tech skills for students and teachers), a focus that will continue over the next two years.
- Equally important, the SABES centers are generating new offerings based on the emerging needs of programs. To address a vexing shortage of teachers with adult education experience, they are developing new offerings (e.g., Foundations for New Staff) and refreshing current offerings (e.g., Professional Adult Educator, Art of Advising). The former is a general overview of staff responsibilities (e.g., lesson plans, learning objectives) while the latter is provided in separate offerings for teachers and advisors. These sessions help prepare new staff for teaching but can also serve as refreshers for veteran staff.

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<sup>12</sup> ACLS will issue an open and competitive Request for Responses (RFR) to rebid all five centers of the SABES system for a five-year funding cycle based on satisfactory performance. A total of \$2,506,651 per year will be invested in this activity.

<sup>13</sup> SABES stands for the System for Adult Basic Education Support.

<sup>14</sup> Three Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) PD Centers provide PD and support in such areas as implementation of college and career readiness standards, effective instructional strategies including the essential components of reading, addressing the needs of adults including those with learning disabilities, integration of workforce preparation and digital literacy, formative assessment, contextualized curriculum, and being a reflective practitioner. The three C&I PD centers are [Mathematics and Adult Numeracy](#), [English Language Arts](#), and [English to Speakers of Other Languages](#). The [Program Support PD Center](#) (PSPDC) is focused on program management and educational leadership, career pathways and advising, digital literacy and distance education, professional licensure support, and ADA resources and training. The [PD System Communication Center](#) is responsible for the statewide SABES website, calendar, and registration system as well as promoting SABES PD and maximizing adult educator participation in SABES PD.

- All five SABES centers have DEI plans and will actively participate in the ADEI trainings. ACLS is rolling out this year.
- The PD centers convened five virtual SABES staff meetings during PY20-21. Two standing agenda items for all SABES team meetings this year included ACLS updates, which convey news on current and pending ACLS priorities, and DEI.
- For more information on SABES, see Section V.

### **Teaching Skills That Matter (TSTM)**

- This year ACLS launched a statewide TSTM initiative with the intention of sustaining the initiative over time in partnership with SABES. Four Massachusetts AE teachers and the ACLS curriculum and instruction policy coordinator participated in the TSTM training with the American Institutes for Research (AIR). This team of five learned about the components of TSTM (i.e., nine skills, five focus areas, three instructional approaches), participated in the TSTM community of practice via LINCS, taught some of the TSTM Toolkit lessons, and were supported by an AIR-designated coach. This team also developed the Massachusetts TSTM implementation and sustainability plan for PY21-22 aligned with the state's curriculum and instruction priorities and specific practitioner needs.
- The plan features two strands, a TSTM Academy (i.e., Customized Support) that provides intensive onsite coaching and support and a TSTM Train-the-Trainer Academy. Both strands include a robust online community of practice. Next year, ACLS will recruit a new cohort of programs for the customized support and train-the-trainer strands as well as provide continued support to the programs that are participating this year. ACLS is planning to form an additional TSTM cohort for teachers of AE in correctional facilities. This cohort will be a hybrid of the customized strand, customized for the specific instructional needs of teachers working with incarcerated students and the Train-the-Trainer strand as cohort completers will be expected to train colleagues at their facility in TSTM the following year.
- Although space in the TSTM Academy is limited, the TSTM Toolkit is available free-of-charge to all ABE and ESOL practitioners [here](#). ACLS encourages ABE and ESOL practitioners to explore the toolkit on their own and watch the SABES calendar for PD related to the three instructional approaches central to TSTM: integrated and contextualized learning, problem-based learning, and project-based learning.
- To learn more about TSTM and the participating programs, visit the new [ACLS TSTM webpage](#).

### **Educator Growth and Effectiveness (EGE)**

- The EGE System, modeled after the [Massachusetts K-12 Educator Evaluation Framework](#), is aligned to two sets of professional standards for AE: the [Massachusetts Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult Basic Education](#) and the [Massachusetts](#)

[Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult ESOL<sup>15</sup>](#) and enhanced by two [Proficiency Guides](#), one for Math teachers and one for ELA teachers. The proficiency guides identify the knowledge and skills needed to be an effective teacher in these content areas, including specific language around the knowledge, skills, and classroom practices needed for CCRSAE-aligned curriculum and instruction, and focus on the needs of English learners, both those in ESOL classes and those in ABE classes.

- The 2014 ESOL Professional Standards for Teachers were revised to reflect three state priorities for ESOL teacher effectiveness as outlined in the Massachusetts state plan: integration of workforce preparation and digital literacy; integration of culturally responsive and sustaining practice; and support for instructional leadership, in particular teacher coaching and classroom observation. This updated version of the standards was released in February 2021.
  - The EGE has been streamlined. Dedicated modules for teachers, program directors, and coaches are completed after they participate in a “common module,” thus increasing the focus on the roles of each and reducing the total time required to participate in this PD offering.

### **Good to Know Assessment Guides (GTK Assessment Guides)**

- ACLS and the [UMass Center for Educational Assessment](#) released the [GTK Assessment Guides](#), designed to facilitate conversations between students, teachers, and program directors so that students have a better understanding of standardized (NRS) assessment and meaningful assessment experiences.
  - The GTK Assessment Guides:
    - Provide basic information (e.g., what, why, when) on each NRS test approved for use in Massachusetts
    - Make the testing transparent for both teachers *and* students
    - Situate the testing in a comfortable context
    - Support implementation of the Massachusetts Professional Standards, in particular, [ESOL Professional Standard 5](#) and [ABE Professional Standards-Assessment Indicators \(P2.1, P2.2, P2.3\)](#)
- Teachers can use the GTK Assessment Guides to teach test-taking skills and familiarize students with the NRS test they take for pre/post. ACLS recommends that teachers modify and scaffold the content of the guides further for lower level ESOL. The guides are now available in English only but will also be made available in Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese.

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<sup>15</sup> The Massachusetts Professional Standards for Teachers of Adult ESOL includes a proficiency guide that is the ESOL equivalent of proficiency guides for ELA and Math teachers.



## B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

### STATE AS PARTNER

THESE FORUMS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE STATE DIRECTOR TO UPDATE STAKEHOLDERS, HEAR THEIR CONCERNS, AND ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS, THUS PROVIDING CRITICAL TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION. FORUMS ARE HELD ON A QUARTERLY BASIS STARTING IN SEPTEMBER. PAST MEETING CONTENT AND DOWNLOADABLE DOCUMENTS ARE STORED ON A [STATE AS A PARTNER WEBSITE](#) FOR EASY ACCESS.

#### [Adult Education Advisory Council](#)

This council advises the Board and the Commissioner on matters pertinent to the development of adult education services in the Commonwealth. The PY20-21 charge for the Council was to advise ACLS on 1) navigating AE through COVID-19 pandemic; 2) supporting AE students and programs; 3) deepening integration of diversity, equity, and inclusion concepts in all aspects of AE; and 4) advising on open and competitive bid plans for PY22-23. This year, the council is recruiting additional student members to collect a broader range of diverse perspectives.

#### Needs of the Field and Equitable Access for Students

Programs received funding increases to address pandemic related issues. Thus, ACLS was able to address inequitable access to devices and the Internet across the state as programs used the funding to support enrollment/retention activities and technology needs, and to purchase technology including hot spots, tablets, and laptops for students and staff.

Instructional designers at the three SABES C&I centers worked furiously to develop and deliver online PD. This required multiple email, phone, and Zoom exchanges regarding logistics, refinements to content, guidance on instructional design and creating an online presence, and support in modifying previously in-person sessions for remote delivery.

- ACLS increased the number of programs using state funded online resources (e.g., Newsela, Aztec, Voxy, KET FastForward) by more than 40% over the previous year.
- Additional seats were provided for programs assisting refugees from Afghanistan that are being resettled in Massachusetts. Programs were given the option of requesting seats for this year alone or for this year and next if seats will be maintained next year.
- See chart below for PY20-21 counts for students served.

Category	Number of Students
ESOL / ABE (GED/HiSet)	11,282 / 5,060
Men / Women	4,962 / 11,380
Employed / Unemployed	8,570 / 5,445
Out-of-School Youth	2,306
In correctional institutions	897
Receiving public assistance	6,234
Parents with dependents <18	845

### **Digital Literacy and Distance Education**

SABES is responsible for supporting the digital literacy needs of the field with the SABES PSPDC taking the lead on PD and support to practitioners and programs that enables them to:

- use technology for their own professional purposes whether for in person or remote online services (e.g., for participating in PD, networking, and communities of practice)
- assist students in acquiring the digital literacy knowledge and skills necessary for achieving college and career readiness and success in the workforce
- offer rigorous online and/or remote learning opportunities to students
- Responsibility for helping practitioners address the digital literacy and distance education needs of students belongs to the SABES C&I centers.

### **Adult Education Virtual Learning**

\$1,000,000 per year is available to fund an [Adult Education Virtual School \(AEVS\)](#) system to be branded as MassLinks. Grants may be conditionally renewable for two additional years subject to satisfactory performance and the appropriation of state AE funds. This system will:

- manage educational operations and deliver all services virtually to adult students across the state of Massachusetts
- deliver a program design which includes synchronous instruction and asynchronous instruction
- serve ASE students (NRS Levels ABE 5 and 6i) with additional NRS levels to be proposed by the applicant
- serve a minimum of 50 participants on a monthly basis

### **Continuation Grants**

Continuation grant funding included increases and decreases based on meeting enrollment targets.

- Beginning in PY19-20 programs were given incentive funding based on enrollment and program enrollment targets and funding was adjusted accordingly, for underperforming programs. In addition, additional funds were made available as part of the continuation application for programs to advance curriculum and digital literacy development. A similar methodology was also applied in PY20-21 with adjustments made in methodology due to the impact of COVID. PY21-22 eligible programs were given an 8% increase to their base funding (cost for providing AE instruction only). The increase in funding could be used to support direct instruction and supportive student services, data collection, data entry and analysis. Programs have the flexibility to use these funds for a wide range of costs, such as new devices, technology, and software or staff hours to attend training or collect and enter data. These funds can be used for increased salary rates, fringe benefits, or increased staff hours.

- Due to the pandemic, expectations of hitting enrollment targets were relaxed. See chart below.

Enrollment Methodology	Expectation	Result	Funding Methodology (FY20/21)	FY22 Funding methodology
	90% of ESOL funded seats	Starting point (Table 1)	base funding for FY	FY21 base funding
	75% of funded ABE seats			
	ABE/ESOL	>100%	3% increase to base funding	3% increase/Increase eligible
		>100%		
	90% of ESOL funded seats	100 -90%	Level funded	increase/Increase eligible
	75% of funded ABE seats	100 – 75%	(FY19 base funding amount)	
	Enrollment expectations during COVID 50% minimum ABE & ESOL	<90-70%	1% -3% (% range applied to determine the decrease of seats)	No change/Increase eligible
		<75 – 60%		
		<70-50%	4% -5% (% range applied to determine the decrease of seats)	No change/Increase eligible
		<60-50%		
	ABE/ESOL 75% and higher meets target during COVID	49%-40%	10% minimum decrease to base	No change/CIP and not eligible for increase funding
		49%-40%	FY20 and 21 Corrective Action (data prior to COVID shutdown)	
		39% and below		Negotiated \$ change/CAP and not eligible for increase funding

## Planning Grants

With the availability of significant additional federal and state funding intended to support the education and training of adult learners, ACLS will award planning grants to eligible organizations interested in providing such services through these grant programs: new [Community Adult Learning Center \(CALC\) or Corrections Education Programs](#); significantly expanded [CALC or Corrections Education Programs](#) (e.g., new site, newly offering ABE or ESOL services, increases in program size of 50 seats or more annually); [MassSTEP](#) (formerly known as IET and IELCE); [Workplace Education](#); [Transition to College](#); [Career and Technical Education \(Perkins V\) in Correctional Institutions](#); and [Pay-for-Performance](#). The purpose of this grant program is to support capacity building and planning that prepare organizations to provide new and/or expanded services in PY22-23 and beyond.

## Open and Competitive Request for Proposals

ACLS will issue an open and competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) and Request for Responses (RFR) in FY23 for the implementation of Title II services in FY24. Massachusetts will distribute AEFLA funds to provide adult education and literacy services in all 16 workforce regions of the Commonwealth.

The projected timeline for implementing the FY23 Open and Competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) follows:

### Step

Post RFP Announcement  
Draft RFP  
Final Draft

### Timeframe

March 2022  
April 2022  
May 2022 – June 2022

Post RFP	July 2022
Bidders Conference	August – September 2021
Proposals Submitted	October 2022 – November 2022
Announce Awards/Letters	December 2022

1st year FY24-5th year FY28 funding July 2023 – June 2028

The Open and Competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process will consist of two separate competitive processes.

**A *regional*** competition will make funding available for Community Adult Learning Centers (CALCs) offering ABE and/or ESOL services, which may also include Adult Career Pathways or bridge programs, Integrated Education and Training, and Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education grant programs, etc. The *regional* allocations will be determined using a formula that considers data from the American Community Survey. Successful applicants will be awarded funding based on the quality of their responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA. They will also be awarded points based on past performance. The regional competition will be reviewed for alignment with local plans by local boards.

**A *statewide*** competition will make funding available for programs that may include Adult Education in Correctional Institutions (AECI), Transition to Community College, Primary Instruction by Volunteers, Workplace Education, MassSTEP and a Virtual learning school, etc. Applicants will compete for funds based on a statewide allocation and be awarded funding based on the quality of their responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA without regard to the workforce regions in which they are located. The statewide competition will also be reviewed for alignment with local plans by local boards.

## C. Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals<sup>16</sup>

ACLS will intensify curriculum, instruction, and assessment activities to support students' successful reentry upon release from corrections.

- Due to changes in sentencing guidelines, ACLS is making a course correction with the intention of better integrating pretrial detainees into the services currently provided to individuals serving sentences.
- ACLS is promoting collaborations between CALCs and corrections whereby students in correctional institutions would receive AE services provided by external agencies. The benefits of such collaborations are twofold: continuity of services for students upon reentry and increased service delivery capacity for corrections.
- ACLS is proposing to dedicate a customized TSTM academy to corrections for the purpose of improving curriculum and instruction in correctional institutions.

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<sup>16</sup> The 2020 state plan incorrectly stated the number of County Houses of Correction (CHC) and facilities in Department of Corrections sites. The correct numbers are seven and four respectively. Also, CHC sentences are 2.5 years or less.

- Not a single correctional institution applied for the most recent IET open and competitive funding opportunity. These institutions are eligible to apply under a recently released planning grant with the intention of helping them plan for and build capacity to apply in the next round of funding.
- While progress is being made on corrections activities as stated in the 2020 state plan, ACLS is redoubling its efforts as indicated below.
  - More correctional institutions are shifting from using the TABE for assessment to using the online [MAPT-CCR](#). ACLS will continue this work with the goal of bringing 100% of these institutions on board with this shift.
  - More correctional institutions are shifting from paper-based HSE testing to computer-based HSE testing. The ACLS program specialists for HSE and corrections will work intensely to bring the remaining facilities on board with this shift.
  - More correctional institutions are using tech tools and instructional software such as Edovo. Edovo, a tablet with significant educational programming designed for corrections, is currently available in two facilities and is in discussion with Securus<sup>17</sup> at several facilities regarding the use of Securus as an add-on. The companies are willing to work together to reduce costs for users.

## D. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program

### Challenges

During the first year of the pandemic, most programs had to pause their IELCE programs because it was not possible to do the workforce training component. In addition, testing for advanced manufacturing and health care was also suspended. Some programs were able to continue with the adult education and workforce preparation components and resumed the workforce training component when it was safe to do so.

### Branding

Branding of the IELCE program (and its sibling program, IET) with the intent of raising the profile of these services among Massachusetts residents and businesses began in PY21-22. After an extensive collaborative process with the field, these programs were renamed the Massachusetts Skills Training and Education Programs (MassSTEP), a name well aligned with the state's workforce system, MassHire. In 2020, ACLS held focus groups for program directors to gain input on the state brand. The information gathered from the focus groups informed the creation of the brand name, logo, and charter including mission, vision, and values statements. In 2021, the [MassSTEP brand](#) that unified the state's IET and IELCE programs under a single name and purpose was launched. MassSTEP grantees must follow all of the brand's specifications stipulated in the [MassSTEP Brand Standards and Implementation Guide](#), and were provided with professional development on the brand standards and implementation.

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<sup>17</sup> Securus is a phone/commissary tablet with an education feature called KA Lite which students must pay to access.

MassSTEP envisions a statewide network of pathways that prepare adult learners for promising careers with dynamic Massachusetts businesses. It leverages collaborations among education, job training, and employers to build innovative concurrent education and workforce development opportunities for adult learners. MassSTEP partners work together to create a stronger and more equitable workforce development system for the Commonwealth.

### **Planning Grants**

In January 2022, the state released a planning grant for multiple strands of AE services, including MassSTEP programs. The planning grant will fund research and development into viable long-term IELCE programming from March 2022 to June 2022. The state will hold two bidders' conferences in late January to present information to interested applications and answer questions. The state will also have a written question and answer period where the answers will be published on the ACLS website. The MassSTEP grant will be released for services to begin in PY22-23. Moving forward, the state is considering more frequent funding entry points to expand IELCE services annually.

## E. State Leadership

- As explained in the introduction to this document, ACLS conducted a multi-year evaluation that yielded findings and recommendations to support the upcoming AE open and competitive bid. The theory of action that guided last open and competitive AE bid and the findings and recommendations from the evaluation are being used as the starting point for a logic model being developed with guidance from the DESE Office of Planning and Research.
  - In partnership with [UPD Consulting](#), the ACLS Team is excited to offer an [Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(ADEI\)](#) professional learning series to instructional staff, program team members, and leaders across all Adult Education organizations and programs starting in February 2022. This five-part series will consist of opportunities to explore current manifestations and historical root causes of racial inequities in the adult education system and in the communities in which they are located. We look forward to growing our connection, curiosity, compassion, and courage as we embark on this ADEI journey. Together, we can have a greater impact on the students we serve by better understanding their lived experiences and intentionally creating spaces of inclusion and belonging.
  - Responding to the pandemic, ACLS and the SABES Curriculum and Instruction PD Centers worked tirelessly to ensure that remote instructional techniques and technology tools were incorporated into all PD, and PD facilitators modelled how to use digital tools in presentations of ELA, ESOL, and math instructional strategies. For example, in sessions focused on teaching vocabulary at the ASE level, presenters used web-based tools to show how one could effectively and engagingly teach vocabulary in an online class. Other sessions focused entirely on remote instruction (e.g., Remote Administration of Diagnostic Assessment, Teaching STAR Online, Zooming in on Learner Engagement in ELA, and Nearpod in the ELA Classroom). This focus will continue and increase over the coming years as explained elsewhere in this document.
  - ACLS offered its annual four-part New Directors' Orientation (NDO) via Zoom during September and October 2021. Staff presented key policy information to new directors as well as current directors that were interested in a refresher. Participants benefited from key ACLS staff presentations which included the State Director and Assistant Director. Topics included an overview of the ACLS system, key ACLS initiatives, NRS reporting, WIOA legislation, the ACLS Policy manual, Massachusetts Indicators of Program Quality, curriculum, assessment, and digital literacy instruction. On the culminating day, program directors met with their assigned program specialists in breakout rooms to discuss specific program needs. The NDO has been virtual for several years because of the distance and time folks had to drive and be away from their programs (as communicated to ACLS in participant evaluations) and the pandemic. If conditions permit, the NDO may become a hybrid offering.

- A one-day summer Directors Institute, in which 275 local, PD, and state staff participated, addressed issues related to remote services, including recruitment, intake, assessment, and orientation. The delivery methods modeled interactive activities (e.g., breakout rooms, annotation, report-outs) to keep participants engaged throughout this full-day event. While remote instruction is no longer new to program staff, teaching effectively and engagingly in order to retain students continues to be a high priority focus area for PD. The SABES centers began developing videos on teaching remotely, the first of which are featured in a [video gallery on the SABES website](#). Additional videos from the ELA and ESOL videos will be forthcoming.
- ACLS is intensifying efforts to build internal capacity in order to better support the field.
- The Role of the PS is a project that started as a binder for new staff and blossomed into a comprehensive resource for onboarding new staff.
- Annual summative PQR reports are posted on the [ACLS website](#). These reports yield information about program TA needs and point to topics which ACLS program specialists can address in their ongoing interactions with programs. To support the program specialists in this work, the ACLS Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (CIA) specialist recently launched a series of internal CIA trainings. These well-received sessions included sessions on evidence based reading instruction, improving math instruction by building conceptual understanding, and instructional approaches that work (i.e., project-based, problem-based, and contextualized instruction).

## F. Assessing Quality

- ACLS revised its IPQ in anticipation of the new open and competitive cycle and in response to two primary needs: the need to sharpen the field's focus on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and the need to take into account more flexible modes of service delivery, especially in light of the ongoing pandemic. Two of the more notable changes in the new IPQ include:
  - Adding a new standard to Indicator 1 – Program Design, which reads, “The program is designed to deliver services in a variety of modalities (e.g., in person, virtual face-to-face, remote) with options for synchronous and asynchronous instruction, including co-enrollment).”
  - Adding a new standard to Indicator 2 – Equitable Access, which reads, “The program intentionally seeks to remedy disparities in students’ educational experiences and outcomes by analyzing quantitative and qualitative data through a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens.”
- ACLS recently released its PY20-21 Program Quality Review (PQR) Summative Report. Among its many findings, the report notes that of the 35 programs that received a review in PY21-21, 71 percent were rated either Limited (20 percent) or Developing (51 percent), while only 29 percent were rated either Proficient (20 percent) or



Exemplary (9 percent). Based in part on this data, ACLS is revising its PQR process for the next competitive cycle to narrow its focus of review to one indicator (i.e., Indicator 9 – Educational Leadership) instead of four. The goal is to maximize impact by providing more attention and TA in this essential area.

- In addition to student outcomes, program quality, and compliance, ACLS added a fourth component to its accountability system: enrollment. Each program has an average monthly enrollment target that is weighted according to the type of service the program provides: ABE, ESOL, or both. Programs in good standing that meet or exceed their target(s) are eligible to receive increased funding if/when funds become available. Programs that do not meet their target(s) may have their base funding decreased.
- ACLS has several processes in place to ensure programs comply with federal and state requirements and deliver high quality services that result in student outcomes. These processes, or tools of accountability, will continue to be refined and include:
  - [Grant approval process](#)
  - [Desk review](#)
  - [Data quality checklist](#)
  - [Risk analysis](#)
  - [MSG reports](#)
  - [Site visits \(SV\)](#)
- As part of this refining process, ACLS revised its SV protocol for program specialists to bring greater emphasis to two key principles:
  - Narrow the focus to increase the impact
  - Approach each visit with an inquiry-based mindset grounded in humility and mutual respect

In FY20 ACLS launched a “pay for performance” grants initiative. Unlike typical grants which award all the funding up front, “pay for performance” grants award programs based on how well grantees deliver on proposed outcomes. In this model, service delivery comes first, and payment comes later, or not at all. Two programs are operating in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year of the current contract. ACLS plans to continue funding these types of services as bridge to provide unique opportunities currently not provided by other adult education services.

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## **ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMS CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES**

Massachusetts has designated the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to administer the funds designated for Adult Basic Education and Literacy Programs, WIOA Title II, AEFLA. DESE agrees to administer the State Plan in accordance with applicable federal laws and regulations, including the following certifications and assurances:

Figure 70: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education  
Assurances

<b>States must provide written and signed certifications that:</b>	
1.	The plan is submitted on behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the State agency eligible to submit the plan;
2.	DESE has authority under Massachusetts law to perform the functions of the State under the program;
3.	Massachusetts may legally carry out each provision of the plan;
4.	All provisions of the plan are consistent with Massachusetts State law;
5.	A State officer, the Massachusetts Commissioner of ESE, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;
6.	Massachusetts Governor has authority to submit the plan;
7.	The Massachusetts Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) Unit at DESE was part of the writing team. The plan has been approved by the Massachusetts DESE; and
8.	The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;
<b>The State Plan must include assurances that:</b>	
1.	DESE will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding supplement and not supplant provisions);
2.	DESE will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;
3.	DESE will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not “eligible individuals” within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;
4.	The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out activities of the program;
5.	The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be delivered in combination with integrated education and training activities; and
6.	Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, DESE will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

- SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs:  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

- Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying:  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)
- SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable):  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>)

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## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

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### VR PORTION OF WIOA STATE PLAN FOR MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION FY-2020

#### *Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (General)*

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan\* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

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\* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

#### ***a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council***

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

1. input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has an active and productive State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) through the monthly SRC committee meetings, quarterly meetings, and] Executive Committee meetings. With MRC, the SRC has conducted satisfaction and needs assessments surveys that have gathered consumer input to more effectively address the needs of individuals seeking the support of MRC to find employment.

The SRC, through the SRC State Plan and Executive committees, made the following recommendations to the Commission:

**Recommendation FY22-1: The SRC seeks MRC's support in developing a strategic vision, goals, and leadership competencies for the SRC that integrates and infuses Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Racial Equity principles and values. The work of the SRC specific to DEI/RE would inform and advise how best to reach, serve, and support unserved/underserved consumers and potential consumers.**

The SRC will evaluate its own work and review what MRC is doing for DEI work. The SRC requests that MRC provide the SRC with updated reports and other related DEI information on a quarterly basis. This information will be used by the SRC for:

- a. Refining the Council's definitions and vision/mission, including a focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- b. Recruiting diverse voting Statewide Rehabilitation Council members.
- c. Developing structured processes for governing all activities of the SRC, ensuring a DEI lens.
- d. Training on how to recognize disparate impact within organizational structures (e.g., policies and procedures) on Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC)

#### SRC Update on Recommendation FY22-1:

The Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) with the support of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) engaged a consultant to help the Council be intentional about applying Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles and to increase the competency of the Council's leaders and members around the federal mandates of the SRC. In May 2021, the consultants began to assess the Council's strengths and weaknesses, revise our mission and vision to reflect a commitment to DEI, and compile and train us on DEI centric tools to assist the SRC with leadership and operational capacity building. As the SRC infuses DEI principles into its leadership and operational structure, we will be better equipped to support MRC as it performs vocational rehabilitation outreach and service delivery to unserved/underserved individuals with disabilities eligible for and receiving vocational rehabilitation, especially in communities of Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC).

The consultancy wrapped up in December 2021 with the presentation of *The SRC Five-Year Roadmap to Practice and Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI): 2021-2025*. The final version of the roadmap is on target for completion in February 2022 and will be discussed with the MRC Commissioner in March 2022. Three key initiatives that are aligned with the Roadmap include:

#### **1) the diverse recruitment of members from a BIPOC, disability type and geographic standpoint;**

The SRC's goal to recruit diverse membership aims at aligning SRC member demographics with that of VR consumers. In December 2021, the consultants gathered demographic data on SRC members to compare it to VR consumer demographics which will allow for target recruitment. The DEI Roadmap sets forth strategies and timelines for diversifying the SRC membership.

**2) the development of a new consumer experience survey tool that would capture diverse voices in a culturally sensitive manner; and**

The Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment Committee is representing the SRC in MRC's effort to revamp the surveys used to assess satisfaction and needs of VR consumers. The Committee chair and its members are participating in the working group to assist with setting priorities for the new survey tool, offering guidance on cultural sensitivity in the development and implementation of the tool, and providing consumer feedback at different phases of the work. The work is currently in the bid submission and review stage of the Request for Response, hoping to award the contract by early March.

**3) Implementing practices that foster inclusive and diverse engagement**

The DEI trainings from the consultant have taught the SRC ways to practice equity in meetings. We agreed to forgo rigid practices except when required for official votes. Practices such as consensus decision making, round-robin techniques for gathering feedback, and written feedback as an alternative to verbal comments foster inclusion and promote equitable agendas and decisions.

**Recommendation FY22-2: Support employment of individuals with disabilities in the Commonwealth through developing a baseline understanding of current data and trends, which can inform a high-level strategy to increase the numbers of state employees with disabilities. Include the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion lens in this work, and work with MRC to ensure the robustness of this effort.**

SRC Update on Recommendation FY22-2:

**Update:**

The committee learned that the state agencies tasked with addressing the equity of numbers for people with disabilities in commonwealth jobs has been organized and will provide an update about changes to the makeup and goals of the group; it continues to be a priority at MRC to facilitate this process at high personnel levels within participating agencies.

**Recommendation FY22-3 (formerly FY21-2): Increase availability and accessibility of SRC materials online and develop a robust communications, marketing, and branding strategy for SRC. Make materials available to SRC for review related to accessibility to all including from a DEI lens.**

SRC Update on Recommendation FY22-3:

The committee has been able to connect with MRC's Communications Department. There was discussion within the committee that the committee's work must extend beyond review of SRC materials to MRC materials, as the role for the SRC is primarily about advisory guidance to the MRC. Committee members have advised that the

Business and Employment Committee (BEO) focus upon reviewing VR materials that are specifically geared toward employers as opposed to just reviewing MRC's overall rebranding strategy for VR or reviewing all of their materials, in order to capture the attention of employers and make them understand that there is a great pool of qualified people with disabilities with whom they can connect via VR.

**Recommendation FY22-4 (formerly FY21-3): Increase number of available vendors to better support consumer informed choice. Areas of focus should include the cultural and linguistic needs of diverse populations, as well as increasing vendors in geographic areas with historically limited choice. Additionally, there should be a transparent procedure in place to purchase services with limited delay when there is no contract in place.**

**SRC Update on Recommendation FY22-4:**

The Policy Committee's action plan for this recommendation is to continue to monitor MRC's improvements to the procurement process, to explore whether there are ways in which goods and services can be procured without delay when a service is not on contract, and to explore the potential for engaging with more vendors in underserved areas in the state and vendors that can meet the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of consumers.

During FY22 the Policy Committee has continued to learn about procurement so that it can be better informed about the barriers MRC faces when attempting to make improvements to the process. Additionally, the committee seeks to become better informed of systemic issues that consumers face relative to procurement, and if applicable, make additional recommendations about improving the process.

More recently the committee has identified four areas on which it will focus relative to the recommendation and has identified MRC staff that can offer more specific information and guidance in these areas.

- Is there a way to increase the number of CIES vendors that can adequately address linguistic and cultural needs of consumers?
- Is it possible to obtain feedback from VR counselors through a survey or forum on common issues in procurement that delay services for consumers?
- Is it possible to create a mechanism for purchasing higher cost services/items via a third party in instances in which there is not relevant state contract in place?
- Are there other resources available for finding tutors that could be placed on contract?

When the committee has completed its work on this goal it intends to offer some specific feedback to MRC on potential areas of improvement in the area of procurement.

**Recommendation FY22-5 (formerly FY21-5): Develop a baseline understanding of self-employment, including but not limited to assessing needs (consumer and counselor), data trends (state and national), and identified best-practices and partners, to inform a strategy for self-employment services within MRC.**

**SRC Update on Recommendation FY22-5:**

MRC is appointing an operational leader to work with the committee to better understand the opportunities and constraints and has pledged to assign this to an Area Director as a lead Manager to liaison with the Business and Employment Committee (BEO) and the SRC. MRC reports that it has had some staff experts over the years who could do internal consultation on Self-employment plans but have lost institutional knowledge due to retirement of staff with that expertise, etc. It is reported that this manager-appointee will have the role of pulling other staff and consumers who have worked with MRC on self-employment plans to advise and guide the process with the BEO.

2. the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has responded to the Statewide Rehabilitation Council's input and recommendations as follows:

**MRC Response to FY22-1**

MRC agrees on highlighting DEI work within the SRC – this maps on to a similar emphasis within MRC, as evidenced by DEI and Racial Equity focused work being one of five active Roadmap priority areas for the agency, our recent agency racial equity SWOT, etc. Our shared commitment is also demonstrated by the SRC's current DEI consultation with HMA. MRC proposes to amend the recommendation as such:

- a. Edit recommendation to read, "Develop a strategic vision, goals, and leadership competencies for the SRC that integrate and infuse Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Racial Equity principles and values." – **the SRC State Plan Committee (SPC) accepted this recommendation and has made the edit.**
- b. The "goals" statement above (paragraph 2) appears to be missing. MRC assumes that defining concrete "goals" specific to DEI/RE will be part of the work with HMA, so perhaps it is premature to define goals at this point in time. **The SRC SPC accepts this recommendation and has deleted this paragraph.**
- c. Edit language that discusses, "SRC will evaluate its own work and what MRC is doing for DEI work." MRC is happy to share with the SRC, on a quarterly basis, ongoing DEI activities within the agency, but would like to exclude language specific to SRC evaluating MRC DEI efforts. **The SRC SPC has revised the language and used the word "review" instead of "evaluate". It is**

**assumed that SRC would offer feedback on any VR activity or policy as per the SRC's role.**

- d. MRC would like the SRC to consider adding focus or a goal re: the work of the SRC specific to DEI/RE would inform and advise how best to reach, serve, and support unserved/underserved consumers and potential consumers (so adding a focus on consumers to this work). **The SRC SPC accepts this recommendation and has inserted this goal in the first paragraph.**

#### **MRC Response to FY22-2**

MRC continues to support and align with a high-level goal of supporting individuals with disabilities with employment via the Commonwealth. MRC is able to share data and trends of EHS agencies specific to rates of employment among those with self-identified disabilities. MRC would like to note that movement on this goal will require high-level engagement and strategy development across agencies (e.g., MOD, DMH, DDS, etc.) and partnership with other Directors and Commissioners. MRC is happy to partner with the SRC in that work. MRC has no modifications to this recommendation.

#### **MRC Response to FY22-3**

MRC continues to agree there is more work to be done in increasing the virtual visibility and accessibility of SRC materials. SRC materials are included within the current rebranding work ongoing with MRC with consultant Think Argus. MRC is also partnering with MCB to develop a more systematic and agency-wide approach to ensuring accessibility of our materials, resources, and processes. MRC proposes to amend the recommendation as such:

- Edit recommendation to read, "Increase availability and accessibility of SRC materials online, as part of a robust communications, marketing, and branding strategy that is inclusive of and integrates DEI and Racial Equity best practices." **The SRC SPC accepted this revision and has made the change.**
- MRC would like to work with the SRC to best determine which points of MRC communication would best inform the SRC. **The SRC SPC is interpreting that MRC is asking the SRC to provide MRC with more specific feedback on what the issues are with the SRC materials online.**

#### **MRC Response to FY22-4:**

MRC agrees with the importance of needing to have sufficient numbers and quality of vendors to meet consumers' needs, with particular understanding of the reality of an insufficient vendor pool to provide culturally and linguistically competent services and supports. We assert that "ensuring sufficient vendors" is a laudable goal, albeit a long-term one that will take more than one year to achieve. We propose some initial steps that include focusing on increasing our list of available vendors. Marketing will be key in these efforts. MRC proposes to amend the recommendation as such:

- Edit recommendation to read, "Increase number of available vendors to better support consumer informed choice. Areas of focus should include the cultural and linguistic needs of diverse populations, as well as increasing vendors in



geographic areas with historically limited choice.” **The SRC SPC accepts this revision to replace the first two sentences.**

- MRC will need to better understand this component of the recommendation – “Additionally, there should be a transparent procedure in place to purchase services with limited delay when there is no contract in place.” MRC is bound by Commonwealth procurement practices, so there would need to be conversation to better understand the goals and intent of this statement. **The SRC SPC understands the limitations of the procurement system and the Policy Committee has been consulting with MRC about potential ways that services can be purchased when there is no relationship with the state. The committee will continue to research the matter and continue to offer feedback on potential solutions.**
- MRC’s Office of Fiscal Management and Budget can work with the SRC to both support understanding of procurement parameters as well as identify pathways and opportunities available. **The SRC Policy Committee has met with this department and others to learn about procurement process.**

**MRC Response to FY22-5:** MRC recognizes that interest in self-employment has increased during FY21 as a result of Covid-19 and individuals needing to pivot regarding employment. We also acknowledge that self-employment has traditionally accounted for a small number of goals (FY20=98) and placements (FY19=7; FY20=18) within VR. We propose that the focus of this goal is first to identify what is happening re: self-employment within other VR agencies – how are they responding, what resources are they using, etc. Additionally, counselors may need additional resources and tools to support to assist consumers with self-employment goals. MRC would like the focus more to be on considering how self-employment fits into a larger array of employment supports offered by the agency, as well as partner with other entities (e.g., DOL, ICI) who have a track record of focus on self-employment. As such, we propose to do some bigger picture thinking, with the SRC, before jumping into developing resources. MRC proposes to amend the recommendation as such:

- Edit recommendation to read, “Develop a baseline understanding of self-employment, including but not limited to assessing needs (consumer and counselor), data trends (state and national), and identified best-practices and partners, to inform a strategy for self-employment services within MRC.” **The SRC BEO accepts this revision.**
- We propose not focusing on developing targeted resources and/or translation of these resources until the above referenced baseline understanding and priority areas are fully formed. **The SRC BEO recommends finding ways for MRC to support people already involved with a Self-Employment Goal in an Individual Plan of Employment to be able to access the resources that are available in the community now.**

3. the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission reviewed and responded to all recommendations provided by the Statewide Rehabilitation Council.

***b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness***

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

- a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;
- Not Applicable - MRC has not requested a waiver of Statewideness.
- the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and
- Not Applicable - MRC has not requested a waiver of Statewideness.
- All State plan requirements will apply requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.

Not Applicable - MRC has not requested a waiver of Statewideness.

***c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.***

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs;

MRC does not have any formal cooperative agreements in place with State and Federal agencies outside of the statewide workforce development system.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission considers cooperation and collaboration with other agencies to be essential and beneficial to most effectively serve people with disabilities and to assist individuals with opportunities for employment based on their choices, needs, interests, and preferences. Other agencies provide critical supports, necessary resources, and dedicated human service professionals all of which amplify and enhance the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. For many years, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has worked closely and cooperatively with the staff of other agencies in serving mutual consumers. Collaboration often extends well beyond services to particular individuals. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission works with other agencies to:

1. Affect system change
2. Increase resources, funding, and service options
3. Improve communication and mutual understanding among staff
4. Change public attitude toward issues of disability
5. Achieve common goals on behalf of those whom the agencies serve
6. Enhance services for mutually served consumers to assist them in achieving their employment and independent-living goals.

Agencies with which such collaboration has occurred and has remained active locally and at the Statewide level include, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the Department of Mental Health, the Department of Developmental Services, the Social Security Administration, the Massachusetts Autism Commission, Medicaid/Mass Health, Department of Public Health, the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, Adult and Community Learning Services, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, as well as the Department of Correction and Department of Youth Services through MRC's Supported Employment Programs.

With the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), MRC and DTA operate a program called Empower to Employ. The goal of this program is to establish an integrated employment model for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF benefits. This joint partnership provides resources to assist shared participants living with disabilities to be independent through employment. The partner agencies use a jointly-funded model of client engagement and intensive co-case management to provide individualized and meaningful services. Through this collaborative effort, DTA and MRC are utilizing an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach to facilitate recruitment (pre-engagement), engagement, service delivery, and placement. The IRT informed approach includes:

- Individual and group outreach to recruit and refer participants who are a strong match for Empower to Employ and MRC VR services;
- Client-centered assessments that identify goals that are most meaningful to the participant, focus on the whole family, and tap into what motivates participants to achieve their goals;
- Flexibility to meet participants where they are and creativity in addressing challenges as they arise;
- Enrollment into specified training or vocational rehabilitation services to support the goals set with the participant during assessment; and

- Continuous co-case management between MRC and DTA teams that bolsters participant engagement and re-engagement, when necessary, and empowers them to navigate their pathway to economic stability.

## 2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is the state operator of the programs funded under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act. The MRC VR program and MRC area offices have excellent relationships with these programs operated by the agency. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology, the Assistive Technology Program, and the Assistive Technology Loan Program that provides low-interest loans to consumers when other resources are not available to purchase needed adaptive technology. These programs are available to and are used by MRC VR consumers.

## 3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;

There are no programs in Massachusetts carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## 4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and

MRC does not have any formal cooperative agreements in place with noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission further collaborates with organizations that provide services, in whole or in part, to specific constituencies, including out of school youth. Among such organizations are the Massachusetts Association of Financial Aid Administrators, the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council, the Arthritis Foundation, the Massachusetts Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Massachusetts Easter Seals, United Cerebral Palsy, the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts, the Epilepsy Association, and the Asperger/Autism Network (AANE). These collaborations may be informal or may include service contracts. The purpose, goals, and actions established in these contracts are very similar to the agendas set forth in interagency collaboration.

## 5. State use contracting programs.

The Commonwealth operates a Supplier Diversity Program including the following categories: Minority (MBE), Women (WBE), Service—Disabled Veteran (SDVOBE), Veteran (VBE), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Business Enterprises (LGBTBE); and Disability—Owned Business Enterprises (DOBE). MRC participates in this program as part of statewide contracting as an equal opportunity initiative.

### ***d. Coordination with Education Officials***

Describe:

## 1. DSU's plans

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has established interagency cooperation between public education and public vocational rehabilitation agency regarding vocational rehabilitation services pursuant to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) to provide individualized transition services for students with disabilities that lead to successful post-school outcomes in competitive integrated employment, postsecondary education and training, independent living and community participation.

MRC continues to work to increase collaboration with educational officials, and has worked with DESE to outline interagency cooperation in a formal agreement entitled "Administrative Advisory on Pre-Employment Transition Services and Transition Services". MRC has a procedure to review this agreement with DESE and make changes as required. MRC maintains updated Pre-ETS policies and procedures and will make further edits to its policies and procedures as needed going forward.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) have developed this advisory to Local Educational Authorities (LEAs) as described below and in other sections of this document to:

1. Define and describe Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) offered through MRC for students with disabilities, including which students may be appropriate for these services
2. Establish collaborative practices between MRC vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors and Local Educational Agency (LEA) personnel for the provision of Pre-ETS.

MRC provides two types of services for students with disabilities, Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), and transition services through an Individualized Plan for Employment. Services may be provided directly by MRC or through a contracted service provider.

- All students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday) may receive Pre-ETS, including but not limited to those receiving services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 plan, and are either eligible for MRC VR services or potentially eligible for MRC VR services. Pre-ETS are provided as generalized services to groups of students, or as individualized services.

MRC provides the five Pre-ETS services required under WIOA:

- a. Job exploration counseling.
- b. Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school, after-school, or community-based opportunities such as internships. Work-based learning experiences must be provided in an integrated setting in the community to the maximum extent possible.
- c. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs.
- d. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living.
- e. Instruction in self-advocacy, including peer mentoring.

MRC makes Pre-ETS available to all students with disabilities statewide who are eligible or potentially eligible for MRC services. MRC will make every effort to provide or coordinate Pre-ETS services to ensure statewide availability.

MRC has counselors assigned to secondary institutions across the state. These counselors will review and discuss Pre-ETS service options with students and their families (if needed) to determine which services are most appropriate to meet to meet the student's transition needs. MRC will provide and coordinate Pre-ETS services in collaboration with local educational agencies. MRCs contracted Pre-ETS service providers also work with MRC and schools across the state to obtain referrals for MRC Pre-ETS services.

1. Students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday) who are determined eligible for MRC Vocational Rehabilitation services can receive additional transition services that are not considered Pre-ETS (beyond the scope of the five Pre-ETS services) through an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) while they are still in high school and receiving special education services, and also afterwards when seeking employment, in employment, or in postsecondary education or training. Transition services delivered through an IPE might consist of vocational guidance, work evaluation, skills training at a college or community rehabilitation program, assistive technology, adaptive equipment, and/or benefits counseling.
2. The IPE must be developed within 90 days or with an extension that is documented in MRC's case management system and approved by the MRC counselor and the student or Parent/Guardian. The IPE goal and appropriate services should be coordinated with a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 plan and include the provision of Pre-ETS. High school attendance and completion should be listed as a service on the IPE. The IPE should be completed prior to high school exit for a student determined eligible for MRC services and not under an order of selection wait list.

The Administrative Advisory outlines the procedures in which MRC partners with LEAs to provide Pre-ETS as follows:

- MRC and LEAs are expected to maintain open and frequent communication between each other. High schools designate staff to facilitate sharing of information between MRC and the LEA.
- LEAs seek consultation and technical assistance from MRC VR counselors for LEA staff, students, and families. Consultation and assistance may be provided in-person or by using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conferences and conference calls).
- LEAs will provide MRC staff with resources necessary for MRC's work, such as access to meeting space, workspace, and Internet connection as needed.
- LEAs will collaborate with VR counselors to identify students with IEPs or 504 plans who may be appropriate for Pre-ETS. MRC will cooperate with LEAs to reach out to identified students as early as possible during the transition planning process and will provide the student and family with information about MRC Pre-ETS services, the purpose of the VR program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided.
- LEAs will inform the student, parent/guardian, and other IEP Team members of the availability of Pre-ETS provided by MRC and connect the student and family with the VR counselor.
- LEAs will invite VR counselors to participate in IEP and 504 planning meetings, as appropriate, and with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority. When invited to participate in these planning meetings, MRC counselors will make every effort to participate.
- LEAs will share information e.g., student and family contact and information, student assessment data, Transition Planning Forms, IEPs, and 504 plans, with MRC counselor, with the prior consent of the family or student who has reached the age of majority, and as consistent with applicable student records laws.
- LEAs and MRC are expected to collaborate to plan Pre-ETS for students with IEPs that are coordinated with each student's individualized secondary transition services provided by the LEA. IEP teams are asked to document any agreed-upon VR services in the Action Plan of the Transition Planning Form and may also document VR services in the Additional Information section of the IEP. LEAs and MRCs will collaborate to coordinate and deliver training activities and opportunities for students and families, where needed and appropriate. IEP documentation practices may vary among LEAs. See 34 CFR 300.154 and 34 CFR 300.324 regarding

the relative responsibilities of LEAs and VR agencies to provide transition services.

2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:

*A. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;*

The Administrative Advisory outlines ongoing communication and collaboration and technical assistance between the DESE and the MRC at the state and local level. Designated staff from the DESE and the MRC will communicate on a regular basis, to share information about legislative and regulatory changes and to review agency policy initiatives, resources, and other issues related to transition.

The following initiatives will foster local collaboration between the MRC's staff and LEAs:

Training and Guidance:

DESE and MRC staff will collaborate on transition training activities for students, families, educators, rehabilitation counselors, and other involved staff, where needed and appropriate. DESE and MRC staff at the state level will collaborate, as needed and appropriate, to produce joint guidance on WIOA, and local collaboration.

MRC and DESE have encouraged LEAs through the administrative advisory to provide MRC staff with resources necessary for MRC's work, such as access to meeting space, workspace, and Internet connection as needed.

LEAs are asked to collaborate with VR counselors and contracted MRC Pre-ETS providers to identify all students with disabilities, including but not limited to those with IEPs or 504 plans who may be appropriate for Pre-ETS. MRC will cooperate with LEAs to identify students as early as possible during the transition planning process and will provide the student and family with information about MRC Pre-ETS services, the VR program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided.

LEAs are asked to inform the student, parent/guardian, and other IEP Team members of the availability of Pre-ETS provided by MRC and connect the student and family with the VR counselor.

LEAs are asked to invite VR counselors to participate in IEP and 504 planning meetings, and with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority. When invited to participate in these planning meetings, MRC counselors will make every effort to participate.



LEAs are asked to share information e.g., student and family contact and information, student assessment data, Transition Planning Forms, IEPs, and 504 plans, with MRC counselor, with the prior consent of the family or student who has reached the age of majority, and as consistent with applicable student records laws.

LEAs and MRC are expected to collaborate to plan Pre-ETS for students with IEPs that are coordinated with each student's individualized secondary transition services provided by the LEA. IEP Teams are asked to document any agreed-upon VR services in the Action Plan of the Transition Planning Form and may also document VR services in the Additional Information section of the IEP. LEAs and MRCs will collaborate to coordinate and deliver training activities and opportunities for students and families, where needed and appropriate. IEP documentation practices may vary among LEAs. Any conversation regarding MRC Pre-ETS at the IEP meeting needs to be individualized to meet the student's needs.

The MRC has designated staff in Area Offices to work cooperatively with LEAs to coordinate Pre-ETS and transition planning and services, and to disseminate information to parents/legal guardians and students about the MRC transition process as early as the student's 14th birthday.

The MRC will provide consultation and technical assistance to LEAs, which may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation (such as video conference and conference calls), to assist LEAs in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities and to coordinate Pre-ETS and other transition services. Pre-ETS can be provided to students who are eligible or potentially eligible for MRC VR services. If a student is determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, this consultation and technical assistance should result in the MRC's development of an Individualized Plan for Employment ("IPE") before the student leaves the school setting.

This consultation and technical assistance might include but is not limited to informational sessions with students, families/legal guardians, and school personnel regarding MRC Pre-ETS and VR services, including referral and eligibility information; and assigning a counselor point of contact for each high school to provide information, receive referrals for Pre-ETS and VR services, and develop IPEs with students who are determined eligible for VR services.

*B. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;*

The administrative agreement covers compliance with state and federal laws and regulation for transition planning at the local level.

Under the agreement:

The DESE will provide ongoing guidance to LEAs regarding the responsibility to provide a free and appropriate public education ("FAPE") to students eligible for special education and Section 504 accommodation plans, as mandated by federal and state law. Guidance will include the requirements that IEPs specify needed transition services; that special education transition services be provided for each eligible student beginning at age 14; that representatives of participating agencies be invited to the IEP team meeting with the prior consent of the parent/legal guardian or student who has reached the age of majority; and that IEP Teams discuss the transfer of parental rights to the student at least one year before the student turns 18. The DESE will also provide guidance to LEAs to facilitate referrals to the appropriate agency for eligible students who will require ongoing supports and services from the adult service system.

On a regular basis, the DESE will monitor LEAs' development and use of policies and procedures, including those regarding Section 504 and the transition requirements of IDEA. All monitoring reports will be made publicly available on the DESE's web site. The DESE has provided guidance to LEAs, in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, entitled "Administrative Advisory SPED 2017-1: Guidance Regarding the WIOA Prohibition on Contracting with Entities for the Purpose of Operating a Program Under Which a Youth with a Disability is Engaged in Subminimum Wage Employment" to inform LEAs that WIOA prohibits LEAs from entering into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in subminimum wage employment. The DESE assures that it will not enter such a contract or other arrangement.

*C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;*

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) are mutually committed to promoting individualized transition services for students with disabilities that lead to successful post-school outcomes in competitive integrated employment, postsecondary education and training, independent living, and community participation.

MRC will contribute at least 15% of its financial resources towards providing Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday). The high schools will provide in-kind contributions of staff time, space, and transition services/resources. MRC will continue to work closely with DESE to ensure adequate financial resources are available in the schools for high school students.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), schools are responsible to provide secondary transition services in the areas of Postsecondary Education/Training, Competitive Employment, Independent Living, and Community Participation, as appropriate to the unique needs of each student. In many cases, schools provide employment skills development as part of secondary transition services. The goal of Pre-ETS is to prepare students with disabilities for successful competitive, integrated employment.

Pre-ETS planning does not relieve LEAs or MRC of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that LEAs or MRC would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who are appropriate for Pre-ETS. For example, if the LEA ordinarily provides job exploration counseling to its students, that does not mean that the school should cease providing the service.

In cases where a question arises as to financial responsibility for services, MRC and the LEAs will work together to establish financial responsibilities and have established a process for resolving disputes and for the coordination and timely delivery of services. MRC and LEAs will refer to state and federal laws, related regulations, and state and federal guidance to assist in resolving such issues in the best interest of the student.

In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA, nothing in this agreement will be construed to reduce the obligation under the IDEA (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) of a local educational agency (LEA) or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities. In accordance with IDEA, nothing in this agreement relieves the MRC of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet the MRC's eligibility criteria.

MRC has assigned qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors to every public high school in the Commonwealth to coordinate the delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services for potentially eligible or eligible students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday) and transition services for students determined eligible for VR services delivered through an Individualized Plan for Employment. The LEAs assign qualified education staff to coordinate communication with MRC and to provide transition services under IDEA and 504. Applicable administrative staff are also involved in this process. MRC contracted Pre-ETS providers also work closely with schools and MRC staff as part of this process.

MRC and DESE have coordinated efforts with LEAs to address documentation requirements for students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment (in accordance with 34 CFR Part 397). MRC has developed documentation forms and has coordinated with DESE to develop and implement a process to ensure these forms are provided to MRC by LEAs in

accordance with these requirements, and subsequently documented in MRC's Section 511 database.

*D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.*

The MRC Area Offices provide outreach to high schools to assist in informing all students with disabilities aged 14-21 (up to their 22nd birthday) of the availability of MRC Pre-ETS and Vocational Rehabilitation services. Outreach to these students occurs as early as possible in the transition process. MRC outreach information includes a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, applicable eligibility requirements, referral and application procedures, and the scope of services that may be provided to eligible and potentially eligible individuals. Contracted MRC Pre-ETS providers will also participate in this outreach process to identify students for MRC Pre-ETS services.

LEAs also collaborate with VR counselors to identify all students with disabilities who may be appropriate for Pre-ETS. MRC will cooperate with LEAs to identify students as early as possible during the transition planning process and will provide the student and family with information about the purpose of the VR and Pre-ETS programs, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided.

***e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations***

Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission does not have any formal cooperative agreements with private non-profit organizations. MRC does work closely with nonprofits across the Commonwealth.

MRC has for many years worked in partnership with private nonprofit Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) to develop a wide array of programs and services to assist people with disabilities to achieve suitable employment outcomes. The MRC and CRPs have collaborated to develop programs including Vocational Services; Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES), contracted Pre-Employment Transition Service programs (Pre-ETS), and a wide array of support services essential in vocational rehabilitation.

MRC's collaborative relationship with its CRP partners have been achieved through open communication, sharing of ideas and resources, mutual support and understanding and inclusiveness of all partners in the development of and implementation of service design.

The MRC develops programs and services with the participation of providers in several forums as described below:

1. Statewide Rehabilitation Council that meets quarterly.
2. Meetings with representatives of the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers.
3. Periodic district wide meetings with community rehabilitation programs.
4. Interagency and cross—disability agency councils.
5. Task specific work teams.

MRC contracts with Qualified Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) as part of the Competitive Integrated Employment Service (CIES) program. The CIES program is a procurement of a set of contracted services available for all individuals with disabilities served by the MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Program. Qualified CRPs provide the services to MRC consumers.

The MRC/CIES procurement program provides employment services for VR participants, and additionally through State funding the availability for extended ongoing supports after closure. CIES comprises six service components, each associated with a specific service outcome. Specific service components are provided to consumers based on their individualized needs. Through the component-based service delivery system, consumers are able to receive the comprehensive individualized services and supports they need to achieve and maintain successful employment. CIES services may carry over from year to year depending on the needs of the individual consumer and consumers may receive any number of components based on their needs and interests. CIES is often used to assist individuals with complex disabilities or situations into integrated employment opportunities with competitive wages paid by an employer.

CIES procurement service components include Career Exploration and Engagement; Employment-Based Skills Training/Work Experiences; Job Development and Placement; Initial Employment Support services, Interim Flexible Supports (including peer support and job coaching), and Ongoing Employment Support services.

Providers are paid on a performance basis during the initiation and completion phases of services. Using a data management and billing system called EIM (Enterprise Invoice Management), and internal tracking, the MRC Business Improvement Partners, track program enrollment, expenditure, and outcomes.

MRC has made adjustments to the CIES model based on lessons learned and input from its staff, CRP partners, and other stakeholders, such as adding Business Improvement Partners to assist with managing performance and provide assistance to MRC staff and providers to ensure the program is best meeting the needs of MRC and its consumers. These adjustments are designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CIES services for MRC consumers. MRC also incorporated peer support and flexible supports into the CIES procurement and has developed key performance indicators for CIES and CIES-ACCS. The CIES procurement is set to be a rolling RFR

which opens four times a year to allow recruitment of additional vendors providing flexibility and maximum access for services.

MRC continues to work closely with CRPs on a collaborative effort with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to provide contracted employment services as a part of the CIES procurement program for consumers participating in the Department of Mental Health's Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) model. As part of MRC ACCS services through the CIES procurement program, MRC has entered into Business Associate Agreements (BAAs) with CIES ACCS providers to assist with facilitating and coordinating services between MRC, DMH, and providers for participating consumers.

MRC also works with CRPs and other nonprofits such as the Independent Living Centers through its Pre-Employment Transition Service (Pre-ETS) contracts. These contracts provide work-based learning experiences, workplace readiness training, job exploration counseling, instruction in self-advocacy/peer mentoring, and counseling on enrollment in post-secondary education. MRC's Pre-ETS procurement is designed to allow MRC to provide students with exposure to the world of work. This approach focuses on:

1. increasing the student's awareness of the world of work and their own employment interests, skills, and needs;
2. providing exploration and exposure opportunities related to work experiences; and
3. better preparing students for employment and postsecondary success. This approach is tiered to ensure that students of all abilities can access and engage in Pre-ETS services based on their interests and needs.

***f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services***

Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

The MRC Supported Employment Program provides Supported Employment Services to consumers statewide through its Area Offices and through a network of qualified community rehabilitation providers. MRC has developed links with the local school system for transitioning youth, and other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health (DMH), through its clubhouse programs and through collaboration with DMH on Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS).

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission continues to promote the collaboration with stakeholders regarding supported employment services and extended services.

This is also evidenced in the number of joint funded programs that have been established. Some examples of these collaborative programs are joint funding of services for individuals with intellectual disabilities between the MRC and the Developmental Disability Services (DDS); for individuals with mental health needs between MRC and the Department of Mental Health (DMH); for individuals who have traumatic brain injuries between the Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP) of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission; and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

MRC has Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with DDS and the Department of Mental Health (DMH). These MOUs are designed to improve collaboration, coordination, and utilization of joint agency resources in ensuring quality service delivery and long term supports that result in competitive/supported employment outcomes for mutual consumers. This collaboration is at the Regional and local levels. Through developing a process for conducting joint-service planning, local liaisons/training and joint service planning, all consumers and specifically transition aged individuals be better served and able to achieve successful employment outcomes.

Evidence of Collaboration regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services:

MRC provides supported employment services through its Area Offices across the commonwealth. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has developed a process to provide extended support services to assist individuals with disabilities in maintaining and advancing in their careers utilizing state funding, comparable benefits, and natural supports for long-term extended support services after federal funds can no longer be used. Paid extended supports are provided through a network of qualified community rehabilitation providers as well as partnering with other state agencies such as the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Developmental services.

Funding for extended long term support services is available from several sources depending on the nature of the consumer's disability and the resources available. Sources include:

1. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission State Ongoing Support Funding
2. IRS Section 44
3. Department of Mental Health
4. Department of Developmental Services
5. Private Sector Business Natural Supports
6. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Statewide Head Injury Program
7. Social Security Work Incentives/PASS Plan

8. Impairment-Related Work Expenses
9. Natural Supports or supports from an employer
10. Other Comparable Benefits
11. Medicaid Waiver Supported Employment Services
12. Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

***g. Coordination with Employers***

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

(a) VR services; and

MRC's Job Placement Unit operates a robust account management system that is designed for MRC to hear first from employers regarding their specific labor market needs. This gives MRC staff access to job openings that we can assist individuals with disabilities in meeting their employment goals as well as assisting our employer partners by providing them with access to qualified individuals to help fulfill their staffing needs. As part of this system, MRC has several employer advisory boards strategically located across the Commonwealth through which we receive labor market information and to collaborate on strategies for hiring of people with disabilities. MRC's account management system involves numerous employers across the Commonwealth in a variety of different sectors. There are statewide employer partners as well as local employer partners we work with, including those in STEM occupations such as Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, MassGeneral-Brigham, and Red River Technologies, among others. Many of these partners participate in MRC's employer advisory board meetings. Additionally, as part of MRC's Empower to Employ Program in partnership with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), MRC has hired dedicated Employment Service Specialist staff for this project. The Job Placement unit also works with numerous smaller employers across the Commonwealth to assist with direct job placement of MRC consumers.

MRC produces a labor market summary for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and analyzes placement and employment trends on an annual basis by Standard Occupational Code. MRC also tracks information on labor force participation and unemployment for people with disabilities in comparison to those without disabilities. MRC continues its efforts to strengthen agency use of labor market information and continues to strive to reduce the gap in labor force participation between people with and without disabilities. Going forward, MRC plans to continue working with its workforce partners, including the MassHire Career Centers and Local Workforce Investment Boards to analyze labor market trends and statistics to identify job sectors to focus outreach efforts on. MRC also uses its Employer Advisory Board network and other marketing efforts to promote MRC's employer services and the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.



Employer feedback has led MRC to operate an annual statewide hiring event to help connect a talent pool with the needs of our employer partners. MRC also holds regular local office briefings with employers on local labor needs. All of these enhance the agency's knowledge on local and statewide labor market needs. MRC utilizes a new application developed with Symplicity to assist with job matching efforts, resume development, and other related areas to accommodate the needs of our consumers and employer partners.

MRC participates in a business strategy workgroup between key workforce partners as part of the Commonwealth's effort to coordinate services to employers amongst partner agencies. MRC subscribes to the established key principles to guide business services amongst key partner agencies and will continue to work closely with WIOA core partners to expand services to employers.

MRC is continuing to target new employers and expand its employer account management system. Examples include job driven training programs with multiple employers, such as the MRC Pharmacy Technician Training Program in direct partnership with CVS Health, and a job driven training program with Red River Technologies among others. MRC also is an active member of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)'s National Employment Team network, which strives to create a coordinated approach to serving business customers through a national VR team that specialized in employer development, business consulting and corporate relations. The National Employment Network team also comprises the Talent Acquisition Portal providing access to jobs across the country and connects with national employers. MRC works with Cisco to obtain advice and support for employment of individuals with disabilities in the Cybersecurity and technology industries.

MRC's Placement Team also has a very active and vibrant partnership with the Mass PCA Program. This program also offers CNA training and other career options and trainings. These trainings are free to consumers. MRC also works with registered Apprenticeship Programs in the state to secure apprenticeships for consumers. MRC is also working to assist consumers with obtaining career ladder employment in the field of addiction recovery and human services.

MRC's Job Placement Unit operates an annual Federal Hiring Event in partnership with MCB, and other workforce partners, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) in their Boston and Hartford offices to assist consumers with securing competitive employment comparable with their interests and abilities. MRC prepares consumers to interview for available jobs with employers participating in the event. This is a hiring event that focuses on direct job placement with participating employers. It differs from a career fair because consumers must apply for at least one job for which they are qualified to be eligible to participate. Employers are motivated to hire because they are presented with a set of diverse, qualified individuals from whom they can select to fill vacancies. In 2022, MRC will be completing its 10th annual

Hiring Event. Since 2013, Over 575 individuals have been successfully employed across the Commonwealth through participating in this annual one-day event. The aggregate annual wages of all successfully employed consumers through the hiring event since 2013 is approximately \$12.7 million. Consumers have been employed in a variety of occupations ranging from office and administrative support, health care, protective service, human services, and management occupations, amongst others.

#### Job-Driven Trainings:

MRC is committed to the use of industry-based training to assist its consumers in finding competitive employment opportunities through employer engagement. Over the past 8 years, MRC has conducted over 1,000 OJTs with employers and approximately 500 consumers have completed Job-Driven trainings with MRC employer partners. MRC continues to develop and utilize Job-Driven Trainings (JDT) and on-the-job (OJT) training and evaluations. MRC has created job driven training programs to date with the CVS Health, multiple human services organizations including customized JDT's for Substance Use Disorders amongst other employers. In addition, MRC holds job-driven trainings for human service and IT jobs. MRC continues its cyber security job-driven training program partnership with CISCO Academy and is working on developing new job-driven training programs with BJ's Wholesale Club and is developing a partnership with Amazon. MRC has found that many consumers who participate in an OJT or Job-Driven training obtain employment with the OJT or JDT. Other participants are able to obtain employment elsewhere as a result of their participation in the OJT or JDT because they gained a recent work experience and/or developed job-specific skills.

MRC also holds annual employer trainings to strengthen relationships with existing employers and to develop new ones. The intent of these trainings include promoting MRC's employment services to employers, encouraging employer partners of MRC to promote the hiring of people with disabilities to other employers and reducing stigmas related to employment of people with disabilities. All of the activities mentioned in this section provide guidance for the delivery of best practices for the employment of individuals with disabilities with employers of various sizes across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

- (b) Transition services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services, for students and youth with disabilities.

MRC continues to work with employers to coordinate transition services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students and youths with disabilities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in partnership with its contracted Pre-ETS vendors.

Through its Pre-ETS vendors, MRC offers internship opportunities for high school students with disabilities in partnership with employers across the Commonwealth as part of its Pre-ETS programming.

In addition, MRC staff coordinate with MRC Pre-ETS providers and with employers to provide work experiences such as internships and job tours for students and youths with disabilities receiving VR and/or Pre-Employment Transition Services through MRC. These services provide work-based learning experiences and workplace readiness training. It also provides valuable work experience and mentorship opportunities for participants.

MRC recently completed a 5-year federal demonstration grant entitled Transition Pathway Services to promote best practices for Pre-ETS and Work-Based learning. MRC will use lessons from this grant to incorporate best practices for coordinating Pre-Employment Transition Services and transition services to students and youths with disabilities going forward.

#### ***h. Interagency Cooperation***

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

- a. the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;

MRC and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Office of Medicaid, the state agency responsible for administering the state's Medicaid program have a well-established and long-standing relationship. MRC and the EOHHS' Office of Medicaid are committed to the promotion of independence and self-sufficiency through access to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) services for individuals with disabilities.

MRC and the Office of Medicaid have developed and signed a Cooperative Agreement to work collaboratively to promote the provision of services and long-term supports for individuals with disabilities who require such services to obtain and maintain competitive employment in accordance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA). The Cooperative Agreement will be revised as needed in the future.

This Cooperative Agreement is in accordance with Section 412(a)(7)(H) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, which requires a state's VR agency to have a formal cooperative agreement with the state's Medicaid agency with respect to the delivery of VR services for individuals who have been determined to be eligible for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) under a Medicaid HCBS waiver.

MRC and EOHHS' Office of Medicaid, through joint planning and sharing of information, will collaborate to promote access to competitive integrated employment and will work to increase the number of successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities needing, and eligible to receive, long-term supports in order to find and keep a job.

MRC provides the following services to individuals who apply for and are determined eligible for VR services, based on individual needs:

- vocational assessment
- vocational counseling and guidance
- funds for training/education, job placement
- follow-up supports after training.

EOHHS through its Office of Medicaid administers, and MRC serves as the Operating Agency for, certain HCBS Waivers through which individuals with disabilities may receive long term services and supports in the community. The availability of such supports works to enable individuals with disabilities to achieve independence and economic self-sufficiency in the community. Many individuals receiving VR services from MRC are also enrolled in Mass Health (the state Medicaid program) and through Mass Health are supported in their efforts to live and work as independently as possible in the community.

Through participation in one of MassHealth's HCBS waivers and/or utilization of MassHealth State Plan services, disabled MassHealth members may receive services that support their efforts to obtain competitive integrated employment. These services may include, as appropriate:

1. Community Living Supports: A range of MassHealth state plan and HCBS waiver services that enable an individual to live in the community as an alternative to institutional care and which may include such services as home health aide, homemaker services, individualized home supports, independent living supports, home/environmental accessibility modifications, and personal care.
2. Pre-vocational Services: A range of learning and experiential type activities that prepare an individual for paid or unpaid employment in an integrated, community setting. Services may include teaching such concepts as attendance, task completion, problem solving and safety as well as social skills training, improving attention span and developing or improving motor skills.

Additionally, the following services may be available to eligible individuals receiving VR services from MRC or who are enrolled in a MassHealth HCBS waiver, subject to the rules and regulations governing each program:

1. Vehicle Modification
2. Transportation
3. Home/environmental accessibility modification
4. Supported Employment Services

Designated MRC and EOHHS Office of Medicaid staff will communicate on an ongoing basis to share information about legislative and regulatory changes and to review

agency policy initiatives, resources, and other issues related to long term supports for mutual consumers under a MassHealth HCBS waiver program.

2. the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and

MRC and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) work collaboratively to assist individuals with developmental disabilities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MRC and DDS have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to work collaboratively through joint planning and sharing of resources to expand access to integrated employment services to increase the number of successful job placements for individuals with intellectual disabilities, especially those of transition age who have a goal of competitive employment. The MOA will be reviewed annually by the leadership of both agencies to identify areas for clarification, improvement, or additions to further promote collaboration and successful employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities eligible for services from both agencies.

MRC and DDS are in the process of finalizing a new updated MOA which will be signed by the Commissioners of both agencies and implemented later in 2022.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Department of Developmental Services through joint planning, and sharing of resources, are working to expand access to integrated employment services and increase the number of successful job placements for individuals with intellectual disabilities, in particular those individuals of transition age, who have a goal of competitive employment and are eligible for services from both agencies.

MRC and DDS are working to achieve the following outcomes through collaboration:

- Increase the number of transition age individuals with intellectual disabilities who obtain and maintain competitive employment.
- Improved collaboration, coordination, and utilization of joint agency resources in ensuring quality service delivery and long term supports that result in competitive employment outcomes for our mutual consumers. This will include funding from MRC for the up-front employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long-term, ongoing employment support services to help individuals successfully maintain competitive job placements.
- Adherence to the DDS Home and Community Based Waiver Program requirements for the delivery of supported employment services.
- Improved outreach, communication and coordination with local schools, individuals with developmental disabilities, families, employers, and other stake holders in serving our mutual consumers.
- Enhanced communication between DDS and MRC.

#### Criteria for mutual MRC/DDS consumers:

- Individuals who have been determined eligible for MRC Vocational Rehabilitation services by an MRC counselor who are also receiving services from the Department of Developmental Services.
- Individuals who have a goal of employment in an individual, competitive, integrated job working full-time or part-time. (Individuals would be hired by the business/employer, earning at least minimum wage and eligible for the benefits other employees in similar positions receive.)
- Individuals who can benefit from the employment services provided by MRC to reach their employment goal. This includes individuals who may need long-term, ongoing job supports from DDS to enable them to successfully maintain employment.

MRC and DDS are targeting individuals aged 18 to 22 who are moving from school to adult life, and individuals up to age 24. With a particular focus on assisting students/young adults who have had work experience while in school, MRC and DDS assists them in directly entering a job upon completion of school and/or to maintain a job obtained during their last year of school. With adults who are over the age of 24, who are eligible for services from both DDS and MRC and have a goal of working in competitive employment, the agencies provide similar services.

#### Referral Process from DDS to MRC:

1. For students, the DDS Area Office/Transition Coordinator will make a referral to the local MRC office at least one year before the student is scheduled to leave school.
2. MRC counselors may also identify individuals who have been referred to their agency for services to determine if they are also DDS eligible and will contact the local DDS Area Office to confirm eligibility.

#### Services Provided:

- a. Both the DDS Transition/Service Coordinator and MRC Counselor will be participating members of relevant individual planning team processes, (including IEP—Individual Education Plan; ITP—Individual Transition Plan; IPE—Individual Plan for Employment; ISP—Individual Support Plan).
- b. Individuals may be eligible for the full array of services available through MRC based on MRC policy and their needs.
- c. Based on an individual's needs, it is expected that MRC will fund the upfront employment services which may include assessment, skills training, job placement, and initial job coaching and on-the-job supports.

- d. For individuals who will require ongoing job coaching and employment supports to successfully maintain employment, DDS will provide funding for these long-term, ongoing employment services. These services will be provided by DDS after the individuals exit MRC services, which will not occur before the 90-day job retention period.

#### Communication and Coordination of Services between Agencies:

- There will be regular communication between MRC and DDS local area staff to facilitate collaboration, joint planning for service delivery, cross-agency information sharing and training to ensure all parties have current information about agency policies and practices including those related to referrals, eligibility requirements, and other pertinent information.
- Area Directors and/or other lead designated staff will identify a process for identifying referrals and for regular communication to monitor services and other collaborative initiatives.
- MRC and DDS have worked to clarify the expected responsibilities and roles of staff in each agency to support local service planning and service delivery. This will be determined by DDS and MRC managers at the local level. It is expected that both the MRC counselor and DDS Service Coordinator will work closely together with individuals when joint services are being provided, communicating regularly, participating in planning meetings, etc., to ensure an integrated and responsive approach when working with individuals and their families/guardians. This will promote a strong partnership to assist in addressing problems or concerns that might arise both on-the-job and outside of work that may have an impact on performance, as well as facilitate planning for ongoing employment support.
- MRC counselors and DDS staff will abide by agency practices regarding regular communication, participation in planning meetings and collaboration in ensuring an integrated and responsive approach to working with consumers, their families/guardians and other community resources.

#### Reporting/Data Collection:

A system for tracking the services provided to individuals jointly eligible for MRC and DDS services has been developed and implemented in order to assess the referrals, outcomes, impact, and effectiveness of services provided to individuals who receive services as part of the MOA. Each MRC and DDS Area Office will be required to provide documentation on a regular basis.

- (c) the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) both recognize that employment is essential to the independence, dignity, and recovery of persons with serious mental illness and continue to work

collaboratively to increase employment opportunities and positive employment outcomes for the individuals they mutually serve. Through enhanced interagency communications throughout their organizational structure, engaging in joint service planning at the individual and program levels, and formalizing a plan for ongoing collaboration, MRC and DMH are working collaboratively to coordinate and improve services to shared consumers to assist them in their efforts to obtain employment and live independently in the community.

MRC and DMH have developed a Memorandum of Understanding to guide efforts to work collaboratively to identify the individuals that they mutually serve through implementing an ongoing data collection system, to foster joint service planning and interagency training to increase employment opportunities and positive employment outcomes for individuals with severe mental illness. The MOU will be revised as needed. In addition, MRC coordinates employment services for individuals with mental health needs served by the Department of Mental Health's Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) program in collaboration with DMH and its vendors. MRC entered an Interagency Service Agreement (ISA) and a Business Associate Agreement (BAA) with DMH to provide funding for MRC ACCS services.

The MRC/DMH Employment Initiative is designed to build an integrated employment framework that inspires and engages innovation to ensure full employment for people with mental health needs at the same rate of employment as the general population. The focus of this initiative is on individuals served by DMH through Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS). These individuals are being referred to MRC for Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services. To serve these individuals, MRC is using an Integrated Resource Team approach, where partner agencies and supports come together to craft and jointly own a job seeker's employment goal, to coordinate wrap-around services and ongoing collaboration and communication. MRC has hired dedicated staff with funding through the ISA to work with ACCS referrals. These counselors will have smaller caseloads and will work with CIES providers, DMH providers, DMH, and other MRC staff to rapidly engage with consumers, develop a plan for employment, and coordinate services designed to assist these consumers in achieving successful employment outcomes.

To date, MRC has seen much success with this program, including decreased timeframe to complete eligibility and IPEs, improved rates for successful employment outcomes, and reduction in unsuccessful closures, both prior to eligibility and after service delivery. MRC will continue to closely evaluate program performance going forward.

The MOU and ISA outline collaboration between MRC and DMH as follows:

- Through the MOU and through the ACCS initiative, MRC and DMH have developed a system for ongoing collaboration and communication at the local and state level.



- MRC and DMH continue to work on ways to enhance systems to regularly identify the individuals they mutually serve, in general and for the ACCS initiative.
- MRC and DMH continue to implement processes that will facilitate DMH and MRC timely referring to each other individuals who could benefit from receiving both MRC and DMH services, including consumers to be referred to MRC for MRC ACCS services.
- MRC and DMH continue to develop and implement a process for conducting joint-service planning for individuals mutually served by both agencies to enhance the individuals' employment opportunities. For consumers participating in the ACCS initiative, the Integrated Resource Team approach is used to develop and coordinate services, including wrap around services.
- To promote referrals, consultations regarding referrals and joint-service planning when appropriate, MRC and DMH will continue to ensure that all staff at both agencies and service provider staff are informed and trained on the services the respective agencies provide.
- MRC and DMH have implemented an ongoing data sharing agreement to track employment service delivery and the outcomes associated with mutually served individuals and to help the Agencies assess the effectiveness of their collaboration. Additionally, the ISA for the ACCS initiative outlines key performance indicators and data collection areas for track services and outcomes for the new MRC-DMH Employment Initiative. These indicators are used to track outcomes and improve services and are reported out on a monthly basis and broken down to the MRC Office and DMH site level.
- Continue to explore, develop, and implement further joint initiatives beneficial to the individuals mutually served by the Agencies, including but not limited to the pursuit of new resources.
- Consumer Input. MRC and DMH acknowledge the importance of consumer input and will incorporate such input in the evaluation of their collaborative efforts.

#### Local Liaisons/Training/Joint Service Planning:

- Each DMH Site Office, DMH facility, and MRC Area Office will designate a liaison(s) to serve as a central point of contact and resource for the other Agency.

The liaison will:

- Provide their counterparts with information about and answer questions regarding their Agency's eligibility or referral process and the services they provide.

- Provide guidance to and/or confer with their counterparts, or designees, about the appropriateness of referring a specific individual served by one of the Agencies to the other for additional services; and when appropriate, helping to facilitate the filing and processing of the required application or referral forms.

#### Referrals between agencies:

MRC and DMH have agreed:

Referrals to MRC from DMH shall be made in good faith with the reasonable expectation that the person referred is interested in competitive, integrated employment, has the potential to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services, including supported employment services, in order to achieve competitive employment.

Referrals to DMH from MRC shall be made in good faith with the reasonable expectation that the person referred is interested in, and in need of the services DMH offers, and is likely to meet criteria for DMH services.

MRC and DMH have agreed to mutually facilitate the coordination of employment related services provided by DMH, MRC or contracted providers to individuals mutually served by the Agencies; assist in resolving issues that may arise regarding an application for services, a referral for services and/or the coordination of care; notify or ensure notification to their counterpart/and/or the referral source as to the outcome of an application or referral filed on behalf of an individual being served by the other agency; and ensure that the agencies MOU contact persons have updated contact information for them.

#### Training:

As part of the partnership, MRC and DMH continue to conduct ongoing training on best practices, collaborative efforts, and ACCS employment initiative.

#### Joint Service Planning:

At the State Level: DMH and MRC operate a workgroup staffed by both agencies and contracted providers, as applicable, to establish protocols for the Agencies that will ensure that the care of mutually served individuals in need of enhanced support to obtain or retain competitive employment will be coordinated to the extent practical and feasible. MRC and DMH also work closely together on the state level on the MRC-DMH ACCS Employment Initiative. At the Regional Level, each DMH Area Director and MRC District Director or their designee, meet with their counterparts regularly to discuss the new MRC-DMH Employment Initiative, any communication or collaboration issues, and to address opportunities for additional collaborations.

At the Local Level: DMH Site Directors and MRC Area Directors, Supervisors, and MRC ACCS counselors ensure that regular and as needed communications occur between MRC and DMH to facilitate collaboration on the MRC-DMH Employment Initiative and other efforts, joint planning for service delivery, and cross agency information sharing.

***i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development***

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

**1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development**

***A. Qualified Personnel Needs.***

**Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:**

**i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;**

The MRC tracks and maintains staffing information by classification, vacancy rate and information to determine its staffing level based on the distribution of new referrals and active clients. This information is updated regularly.

The Commission currently employs 322 individuals in the VR Program. Of this number, 209 are VR counselors and first line supervisors, 25 are managers and 88 are program, technical, or administrative staff. All numbers represent full and part-time staff, not FTE. 31.9% of MRC staff are from minority backgrounds, 74% are women, 12.5% are persons with disabilities, and 3% are Veterans.

Most counselors carry “general caseloads” consisting of consumers representing all disability populations; a smaller number of counselors carry “specialty” caseloads consisting primarily of consumers with the same/similar disabilities (i.e., psychiatric disabilities), including dedicated counselors for the deaf and hard of hearing and for particular language groups. MRC actively served 21,357 consumers in SFY2021/PY2020. The average caseload size per VR counselor was 88 as of the end of SFY2021/PY2020.

**ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and**

MRC monitors the number of active consumers and its available resources on an ongoing basis and sets its staffing pattern based on these factors. The MRC will act as

needed to ensure sufficient staff to serve the caseload based on the projected number of consumers with active individualized employment plans (IPEs) based on available resources and review from the leadership team.

MRC projects it will need to maintain a staffing level of 380 individuals (379.5 FTEs) in the VR Program. Of this number, 252 (251.5 FTEs) are VR counselor, first line supervisors and placement unit staff, 30 (30 FTEs) are managers and 95 (95 FTEs) are program, technical, or administrative staff, and 3 benefits specialists funded through VR.

**iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.**

Over the next 5 years, MRC will continue to monitor the number of active consumers and its available resources and will set its staffing pattern based on these factors. The MRC will act as needed to ensure sufficient staff to serve the caseload based on the projected number of consumers with active individualized employment plans (IPEs) based on available resources and review from the leadership team.

MRC continues to experience turnover as a result of retirements of counselors, supervisors, and managers. It appears this trend will begin to decrease as we move into the mid-2020s. MRC is expecting approximately 40-50 counselors, supervisors, and administrative staff in the VR program to retire or leave the agency over the next five years. MRC has developed strategies to backfill critical positions across the VR program and is working on strategies to develop a more mobile workforce with new technology to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our staff and the employment experience of consumers.

MRC projects it will need to maintain a staffing level of 380 individuals (379.5 FTEs) in the VR Program. Of this number, 252 (251.5 FTEs) are VR counselor, first line supervisors and placement unit staff, 30 (30 FTEs) are managers and 95 (95 FTEs) are program, technical, or administrative.

#### *B. Personnel Development*

**Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:**

**i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;**

Universities in Massachusetts that have Rehabilitation Counseling programs at the bachelor and masters' level are University of Massachusetts at Boston, Springfield College and Assumption College. Salve Regina is in Rhode Island. Through these

institutions, MRC has access to a pipeline of qualified individuals to meet the agency's recruitment needs.

**ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and**

In a given academic year, upwards of 100 undergraduate students and 125 graduate students are enrolled in degree programs either full-time or part-time as rehabilitation "majors" at the colleges and universities referenced.

A breakdown of the students per institution enrolled and majoring rehabilitation counseling programs is as follows:

Undergraduate

Assumption College: 40

University of Massachusetts - Boston: 30

Springfield College: 25

Salve Regina University: 5

Graduate

Assumption College: 50

University of Massachusetts - Boston: 35

Springfield College: 30

Salve Regina University: 10

**iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.**

Each year, upwards of 50 undergraduate students are awarded the Bachelor's degree and upwards of 60 graduate-level students graduate with credentials to qualify for certification by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification and/or licensure by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts broken down by institution as follows:

**2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel**

**Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.**

MRC operates with a learning and participatory performance culture with an emphasis on high performance teams, individual performance/contribution/impact, and engaging in activities to promote and support a program/division/agency. In addition, MRC is an agency committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial equity, as well as innovation and transformation and change, and creating a culture of agility, excellence, and belonging. These principles are built into MRC's plan for recruitment and retention of staff. MRC continues to develop new initiatives such as a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Council to focus on efforts related to equity and inclusion, including staff recruitment.

The MRC's plan for recruitment includes meeting with representatives from the Commission's Learning and Development Team. MRC communicates with officials of the CORE accredited rehabilitation departments and officials responsible for minority outreach at Assumption College, Springfield College, Salve Regina, and the University of Massachusetts at Boston regarding pertinent information on the preparation of rehabilitation professionals and for the specific purpose of recruiting graduates for employment in the federal/state VR Program. Special emphasis will be given to students with disabilities and students from minority backgrounds. Additionally, MRC staff also are available to address rehabilitation students providing them with an overview of the agency and the public rehabilitation program. Internal job postings are automatically sent to these institutions informing them of job openings and procedures to apply. A number of rehabilitation students have completed their field placement and practicum experience within MRC affording them a realistic view of work at MRC.

MRC also maintains relationships with nearly 40 minority referral sources and routinely forwards all job postings to them thereby encouraging application for employment at all job levels from persons from minority backgrounds. MRC has developed a program to reach out to educational organizations to recruit professionals reflective of our communities with a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA). Position openings can be advertised in newspapers (i.e., Boston Globe, Boston Herald, Worcester Telegram and Gazette) and posted internally and externally on the Internet in a variety of locations (MASSCareers, Indeed, Monster, SimplyHired, and LinkedIn).

### 3. Personnel Standards

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

- *standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and*

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is utilizing a state approved certified Human Resources Division classification standard, to recruit and employ qualified counseling staff as required by WIOA. There are three levels of classifications in the Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (QVRC) series. Incumbents of classifications in this series administer functional, skills analysis and other vocational assessment tests; review and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews, and observations; develop, implement and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs); and provide job placement assistance and job development skills.

The basic purpose of this work is to evaluate individuals with physical, emotional, or other impairments or multi-impairments to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act. QVRC-I is an entry-level position. QVRC-II is the fully competent level classification in the series, and QVRC-III is a supervisory level position. The following is the state certified Human Resource Division classification standard to recruit and employ qualified counseling staff as required by WIOA. MRC also has slightly different postings for QVRC IIs for Job Placement Specialists and for Mental Health Specialty QVRC for the MRC-DMH Employment Initiative. MRC also has 3 levels of Employment Service Specialist (ESS) positions: ESS-I who assists with outreach to employers to identify job opportunities for MRC consumers, ESS-II which focuses on job placement services to be provided to MRC consumers, and ESS-III which are supervisory level positions for MRC's Job Placement unit.

- **QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR I:**

Distinguishing Characteristics: This is the entry-level classification in this series. Employees in this series evaluate individuals including transition age students with physical, emotional, or other impairments or multi-impairments to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014; administer residual functional capacities assessments, interest tests, aptitude tests, transferable skills analysis and other vocational assessment tests; review and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews, and observations; develop, implement, and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment through onsite visits and conferences in a manner that allows the eligible consumer the opportunity to exercise Informed Choice in employment outcomes; recommend the purchase of equipment and materials including Assistive Technology for program and/or service use; provide service and skills training in individual and group settings; provide job placement assistance and job development; and confer with public and private organizations including other professionals, specialists, agency staff, employers, and others to promote and market agency programs and to review the suitability of client services, and related work as required.

MRC is a learning and participatory performance culture with an emphasis on high performance teams, individual performance/contribution/impact, and engaging in

activities to promote and support a program/division/agency (e.g., committee membership, Roadmap workgroup membership, presenting at Town Halls, achieving learning and performance goals). In addition, MRC is an agency committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial equity, as well as innovation, transformation, and change, and creating a culture of agility, excellence, and belonging.

**Supervision Received:** Employees of positions at this level receive direct supervision from a Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor III or other employees of a higher grade, who provides training and guidance on procedures and policy, assigns work and reviews performance through conferences and reports for effectiveness and conformance with agency policy.

Incumbents may receive general direction from other work units to ensure accuracy and compliance with funding requirements.

**Supervision Exercised:** Incumbents may provide functional guidance to new employees. **Functions Performed:** At this level, Incumbents are expected to perform one or more of the following:

1. Employees meet with consumers who have physical, emotional, psychiatric, or other disability, on a regular basis to conduct intake interviews and vocational counseling and guidance sessions, work collaboratively developing the IPE, and provide assistance with securing competitive employment.
2. Employees determine eligibility within agency time standard for vocational rehabilitation services through the review and analysis of records, tests, observation, and interviews to determine occupational interests and abilities and the extent of disability and eligibility for agency services and programs to make recommendations to meet consumer needs. Complete standardized functional assessment to determine need and priority of service category.
3. Explain and answer inquiries of consumers and their families and other interested parties relating to agency rules and regulations, policies and procedures, objectives, and services.
4. Employees develop, implement, and monitor Individualized Plan for Employment with the consumer within the agency time standard to result in an employment outcome. The employee may recommend purchase of equipment and materials; provide service and skills training; provide job placement assistance and job development; and follow up services. Employees may serve as transition liaisons for potentially eligible and VR eligible transition students.
5. Represent the agency in dealing with community groups, public and private organizations, vendors, and other public agencies.



6. Employees provide outreach to high schools to provide pre-employment transition services; training and education for teachers. Employees typically deal with individuals who are in transition or have disabling physical, medical, or emotional disorders and may be exposed to physical or verbal threats and communicable diseases. Provide advocacy and referral to other agencies as needed, ensuring comparable benefits are explored.
7. Employees develop and maintain liaisons with public and private organizations, including employers, service providers, career centers, and community groups to exchange information, resolve problems, promote agency services, and to evaluate the suitability of educational programs, employment, and other consumer placement resources.
8. Employees perform related duties such as scheduling, attending meetings and conferences, maintaining records, preparing reports/case notes in a professional manner to be read by consumer, family member, supervisory staff, or an advocate.
9. Employees adhere to MRC rules and regulations regarding requests to attend training, vacation leave, personal leave, and sick leave requests.
10. Familiarity with and ability to create/develop resumes and cover letters.
11. Employees operate personal computers and other relevant technological devices.

Key Accountabilities: Incumbents at this level have the decision-making authority to: Knowledge, Education and Experience:

Applicants must have a (A) Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor or (B) the substitution listed below.

Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

I. A Master's degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and

guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

Incumbents are required to have the following at the time of hire:

- **Rehabilitation Counseling Knowledge:** Knowledge of the principles and practices of assisting people in coping with physical and/or mental disabilities to meet their vocational, social, and independent living needs, including evaluation, monitoring, testing, and training. Knowledge of the methods and techniques of determining individual interests, aptitudes, skills, and occupational preferences.
- **End User Applications:** The use of Microsoft Office computer applications and ability to adapt to MRC's client case management system.
- **Active Listening Skills:** Listening to what other people are saying and asking questions as appropriate.
- **Verbal and Written Comprehension:** Understanding information and ideas, reading, and understanding information and ideas presented in writing.
- **Verbal and Written Expression:** Communicating information and ideas in writing so that others will understand.
- **Complex Skills and Processes:** Evaluating information against a set of standards and verifying that it is correct.
- **Critical Thinking and Problem Solving:** Using logic and analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses of different approaches.
- **Interacting with Others, maintaining relationships, working with others:** Developing constructive and cooperative working relationships with others; ability to deal tactfully with others; actively looking for ways to help people; being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react the way they do; dealing directly with the public, including receiving clients or others doing business with the agency.
- **Work Style:** Being open to change (positive or negative) and to considerable variety in the workplace; being careful about detail and thorough in completing work tasks; being sensitive to others' needs and feelings, and being understanding and helpful on the job; being pleasant with others on the job and displaying a good-natured, cooperative attitude;
- **Work Style:** Being reliable, responsible, and dependable, and fulfilling obligations; being honest, avoiding unethical behavior, and maintaining confidentiality; persistence in the face of obstacles on the job; maintaining composure in very difficult situations; and dealing calmly and effectively with high-stress situations.

- Ability to work well with diverse populations in diverse settings in a manner that builds trust and supports increased collaboration.
  - Knowledge of the methods and techniques of determining individual interests, aptitudes, skills, and occupational preferences.
  - Ability to exercise discretion in handling confidential information.
- **QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR II:**

This is the mid-level position of this job series, known as the Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Employees in this series evaluate individuals, including transition age students, with physical, emotional, or other impairments or multi-impairments to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 ; administer residual functional capacities assessments, interest tests, aptitude tests, transferable skills analysis and other vocational assessment tests; review and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews, and observations; develop, implement, and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment through onsite visits and conferences in a manner that allows the eligible consumer the opportunity to exercise Informed Choice in employment outcomes; recommend the purchase of equipment and materials including Assistive Technology for program and/or service use; provide service and skills training in individual and group settings; provide job placement assistance and job development; and confer with public and private organizations including other professionals, specialists, agency staff, employers, and others to promote and market agency programs and to review the suitability of client services, and related work as required. Employees will have sign off authority for their caseload once there is a record of satisfactory compliance and will be assigned complex cases. Employees may be assigned special duties by the area director or supervisor.

MRC is a learning and participatory performance culture with an emphasis on high performance teams, individual performance/contribution/impact, and engaging in activities to promote and support a program/division/agency (e.g., committee membership, Roadmap workgroup membership, presenting at Town Halls, achieving learning and performance goals). In addition, MRC is an agency committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial equity, as well as innovation and transformation and change, and creating a culture of agility, excellence, and belonging.

**Distinguishing Characteristics:** This is the fully competent professional level classification in this series. Incumbents have thorough knowledge of policies, practices, and techniques and have mastered the technical job content, perform work of greater complexity, exercise greater independence in making decisions and receive less supervision and review. At this level incumbents have sign off authority for individual caseloads and handle complex cases or transferred cases requiring exceptional mastery.

Supervision Received: Employees of positions at this level receive direct supervision from a Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor III or other employees of a higher grade who provide training and guidance on procedures and policy assigns work and reviews performance through conferences and reports for effectiveness and conformance with agency policy.

Supervision Exercised: Incumbents may provide functional direction to Qualified Vocational Counselor Level I or other employees of a lower grade through advice, guidance and assistance with tasks and participate in the training and mentoring of new employees and interns.

Essential Functions Performed:

1. Employees meet with consumers who are physically, emotionally, mentally, or otherwise disabled, on a regular basis to conduct intake interviews and vocational counseling and guidance sessions, work collaboratively developing the IPE, and provide assistance with securing competitive employment.
2. Employees determine and approve consumer eligibility within agency time standard for vocational rehabilitation services through the review and analysis of records, tests, observation, and interviews to determine occupational interests and abilities and the extent of disability and eligibility for agency services and programs to make recommendations to meet consumer needs. Complete standardized functional assessment to determine need and priority of service category.
3. Explain and answer inquiries of consumers and their families and other interested parties relating to agency rules and regulations, policies and procedures, objectives, and services.
4. Employees develop, implement, authorize, and monitor Individualized Plan for Employment with the consumer within the agency time standard to result in an employment outcome. The employee may recommend purchase of equipment and materials; provide service and skills training; may authorize closure documents, and financial documents that result in the commitment of state and federal funds and authorize changes in the type and level of services offered to consumers; provide job placement assistance and job development; and follow up services. Employees may serve as transition liaisons for potentially eligible and VR eligible transition students.
5. Represent the agency in dealing with community groups, public and private organizations, vendors, and other public agencies.
6. Employees provide outreach to high schools to provide pre-employment transition services, training, and education for teachers; Employees typically deal with individuals who are in transition or have disabling physical, medical,

or emotional disorders and may be exposed to physical or verbal threats and communicable diseases. Provide advocacy and referral to other agencies as needed, ensuring comparable benefits are explored.

7. Employees develop and maintain liaisons with public and private organizations, including employers, service providers, career centers, and community groups to exchange information, resolve problems, promote agency services, and to evaluate the suitability of educational programs, employment and other consumer placement resources.
8. Employees perform related duties such as scheduling, attending meetings and conferences, maintaining records, preparing reports/case notes in a professional manner to be read by consumer, family member, supervisory staff, or an advocate.
9. Employees adhere to MRC rules and regulations regarding requests to attend training, vacation leave, personal leave, and sick leave request. Expectation is that employees will have the ability and tools to perform their role in a manner that supports mobility to meet the consumer, provider, employer, and other partners.
10. Familiarity with and ability to create/develop resumes and cover letters.
11. Employees operate personal computers, and other relevant technological devices including peripherals such as printers, and scanners; standard office equipment such as copiers, telephones, and fax machines; and other keyboard equipment such as calculators.
12. Employees may lead and organize office quality improvement projects as assigned by the Area Director.
13. Employees may provide supervision for QVRC I staff during the short-term absence of the Unit Supervisor.
14. Employees may provide at least one in-office training per year and serve as the office resource person in an area of exceptional mastery. (examples: Case management system, mobility impairment, substance abuse, mental health, ex-offender)
15. Employees may mentor new counselors and/or those engaged in specialized and advanced degree requirements.
16. Employees may supervise and mentor college/graduate level interns
17. Employees may be the office coordinator for medical, psychiatric, or labor market consultation. (Coordinate office meetings, assist with case presentations, coordinate trainings, and make recommendations for services or next action.)

18. Employees will be assigned complex cases or transfer cases requiring exceptional mastery.
19. Employees may take responsibility for development and/or planning of at least one statewide or regional training program in an area that builds knowledge and/or skill level and addresses relevant vocational rehabilitation issues.
20. Employees will have sign off authority for individual caseload once there is a record of satisfactory compliance.

Knowledge, Education, and Experience:

Applicants must have at least (A) Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) two (2) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers, or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff.

Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

I. A Master's degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

Incumbents are required to have the following at the time of hire:

1. Rehabilitation Counseling Knowledge: Knowledge of the principles and practices of assisting people in coping with physical and/or mental disabilities to meet their vocational, social, and independent living needs, including evaluation,

- monitoring, testing, and training. Knowledge of the methods and techniques of determining individual interests, aptitudes, skills, and occupational preferences
2. End User Applications: The use of computer applications such as Microsoft office suite, email, the internet, and MRCIS.
  3. Active Listening Skills: Listening to what other people are saying and asking questions as appropriate.
  4. Verbal and Written Comprehension: Understanding information and ideas, reading and understanding information and ideas presented in writing.
  5. Verbal and Written Expression: Communicating information and ideas in writing so that others will understand.
  6. Complex Skills and Processes: Evaluating information against a set of standards and verifying that it is correct.
  7. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving: Using logic and analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses of different approaches.
  8. Interacting with Others, maintaining relationships, working with others: Developing constructive and cooperative working relationships with others; ability to deal tactfully with others; actively looking for ways to help people; being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react the way they do; dealing directly with the public, including receiving clients or other doing business with the agency.
  9. Work Style: Being open to change (positive or negative) and to considerable variety in the workplace; being careful about detail and thorough in completing work tasks; being sensitive to others' needs and feelings, and being understanding and helpful on the job; being pleasant with others on the job and displaying a good-natured, cooperative attitude;
  10. Work Style: Being reliable, responsible, and dependable, and fulfilling obligations; being honest, avoiding unethical behavior, and maintaining confidentiality; persistence in the face of obstacles on the job; maintaining composure, in very difficult situations; and dealing calmly and effectively with high stress situations. Ability to exercise discretion in handling confidential information
  11. Ability to work well with diverse populations in diverse settings in a manner that builds trust and supports increased collaboration.
  12. Knowledge of the methods and techniques of determining individual interests, aptitudes, skills, and occupational preference.
  13. Ability to exercise discretion in handling confidential information.

14. Deductive and Inductive Reasoning Ability: To apply general rules to specific problems to come up with logical answers. It involves deciding if an answer makes sense. To combine separate pieces of information, or specific answers to problems to form general rules or conclusions. It includes coming up with logical explanation for why a series of seemingly unrelated events occurs together.
  15. Complex Skills and Processes: Apply knowledge of agency policies, procedures, and practices; observe, receive, and obtain information from all relevant sources; evaluate the likely success of an idea in relation to the demands of the situation; developing plans to accomplish work, and prioritize, and organize one's own work.
  16. Idea Evaluation. Evaluating the likely success of an idea in relation to the demands of the situation.
  17. Resolving Conflict and Negotiating with Others. Handling complaints, arbitrating disputes, resolving grievances, or otherwise negotiating with others.
  18. Ability to use technology required for the job, including technology critical for remote work (e.g., Zoom, Outlook calendar, Teams, etc.).
- **QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR II (MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALITY):**

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) are seeking to improve competitive employment outcomes for individuals who are shared consumers of DMH and MRC through the development of a robust vocational rehabilitation network of services, supports, counseling and guidance. The purpose of this program is for MRC to provide appropriate, individualized, vocational rehabilitation services and supports for DMH consumers enrolled in DMH's Adult Clinical Community Service (ACCS), with the ultimate goal of competitive, integrated employment.

MRC Mental Health Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) will work with job seekers to explore their interests, assess their needs, and determine the best pathway to ensure successful integrated competitive employment.

MRC will provide an array of comprehensive and coordinated employment supports, including procuring services from the provider community to assist job seekers with achieving their employment goals as part of an overall career pathway.

Employees in this position will lead and facilitate an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach to meet the needs of an individual job seeker. The IRT model utilizes a combined team approach, maximizing wrap around services to support the job seeker with ongoing partnerships and communication. The work of VRCs is community-based. VRCs will meet with job seekers in a variety of settings that could include, but are not limited to, community programs, DMH offices, MRC offices, and other community settings.



Duties and Responsibilities (these duties are a general summary and not all inclusive):

- Fosters an “informed choice” model of professional vocational counseling for individuals with persistent mental health/behavioral health conditions and/or co-occurring disorders who are receiving services from DMH.
- Incorporates ongoing engagement strategies within the VR system while providing on-going supports to facilitate completion of activities outlined in the Individualized Plan for Employment.
- Determines eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014.
- Administers functional capacity assessments, interest tests, aptitude tests, transferable skills analysis and other vocational assessments and shares information with job seeker and others as authorized by the job seeker.
- Reviews and analyzes diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews, and observations.
- Leads and facilitates the collaborated team to develop, implement, and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment in a manner that allows eligible job seekers the opportunity to exercise informed choice in employment outcomes.
- Recommends the purchase of services, equipment, and materials including Assistive Technology.
- Facilitates services and skills training in individual and group settings.
- Provides opportunities for job seekers to select service providers or MRC placement team to deliver job development, placement, and retention assistance.
- Partners with public and private organizations including, but not limited to, other agency staff, employers, community rehabilitation providers, state agencies, workforce partners, and schools to promote and market agency programs, collaborate, and coordinate in the delivery of consumer supports and services.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Knowledge of counseling and job placement of persons with vocational/occupational barriers, including physical, emotional, psychological, and intellectual disabilities;
- Familiarity with utilizing psychological tests and other evaluative techniques;
- Commitment to lifelong learning in relationship to their own professional development;
- Outstanding organizational, written. and oral communications skills; attention to detail;

- Capacity to gather, analyze, and evaluate significant case information pertinent to rehabilitation of an individual;
- Ability to serve as a mentor and provide guidance to others;
- Proficient usage of Microsoft Office products including Word, Excel, and Outlook; prior use of client database systems.

#### MINIMUM ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS:

Applicants must have at least (A) Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) two (2) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers, or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff. Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

#### Substitutions:

A Master's degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

#### • JOB PLACEMENT SPECIALIST:

The Job Placement Specialist (JPS) will consult with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to assess and evaluate the job readiness of consumers, analyze skills and abilities for correct employment matches. Make recommendations to proceed with

job referral process. Identify accommodations and training needed that may be required within the workplace.

Interpret residual functional capacities assessments, interest tests and aptitude tests. Assess transferable skills, review, and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews, and observations. Develop, implement, and monitor placement services included in Individualized Plans for Employment through onsite visits and conferences in a manner that allows the eligible consumer the opportunity to exercise Informed Choice in employment outcomes. Educate employers regarding skills, abilities, and limitations of consumers. Consult with employers to determine job expectations and market these employment expectations to Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. Make specific recommendations to employers for hiring consumers. Confers with agency staff, clients' families, employers, professional specialist, and others to exchange client information and determine appropriateness of employment opportunities and resources for education, training, job placement assistance and employment for clients. Conduct group workshops for clients in interviewing skills, resume writing, introduction, and assistance with using the area office's resource room, etc., to prepare them for job opportunities. Professionally explain and answer inquiries relating to rules, regulations, policies, and procedures to inform clients, their families and other interested parties about agency programs, objectives, and services.

Monitors and evaluates client progress through individual meetings with client, on-site visits, review of reports, etc., provide vocational counseling to assist client adjustment to new situations and determine whether services, programs or placement are meeting client needs. JPS may assist in maintaining a liaison with the local Career Centers for the purpose of providing consumers with information about employment opportunities, job seeking, and methods of applying for jobs.

Schedule: travel 25% of the time

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) promotes equality, empowerment, and independence of individuals with disabilities. These goals are achieved through enhancing and encouraging personal choice and the right to succeed or fail in the pursuit of independence and employment in the community. The MRC provides comprehensive services to people with disabilities that maximize their quality of life and economic self-sufficiency in the community.

Applicants must have at least (A) Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) two (2) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers,

or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff. Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

#### Substitutions

A Master's degree or higher in a related field such as Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Females, minorities, veterans, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

- **QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELOR III:**

Distinguishing Characteristics: This is the supervisory classification in this series. Incumbents provide supervision and guidance on complex or specialized casework to Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level I and II's within their work unit. At this level, incumbents may perform the duties for Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Levels I and II, but the primary focus is to provide formal and informal supervision and act as the liaison between Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and agency management. Supervise and monitor unit activities such as evaluation and case maintenance to ensure effective service delivery and compliance with agency policy and standards; coordinate administrative and clinical support for agency units and programs.

Supervise Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I and II by assigning and directing the activities of reporting staff and appraising their performance in evaluating individuals with physical, emotional, or other impairments or multi-impairments to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); participate in the hiring and promotional process; notify management when corrective action may be appropriate; and provide support to enhance employee performance. Determine service delivery hours and caseloads to staff consistent with agency policies and consumer needs.

Recommends contract and budget control actions by analyzing spending patterns and monthly and quarterly reports in order to maximize funds available for consumer services and to anticipate financial needs and assure appropriate transfer of funds. Review and sign off on case load for Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor I's and QVRC II's as appropriate; administer residual functional capacities assessments, interest tests, aptitude tests, transferable skills analysis and other vocational assessment tests; review and analyze diagnostic information through tests, records, interviews, and observations; develop, implement, and monitor Individualized Plans for Employment through onsite visits and conferences in a manner that allows the eligible consumer the opportunity to exercise Informed Choice in employment outcomes; recommend the purchase of equipment and materials including Assistive Technology for program and/or service use; provide service and skills training in individual and group settings; provide job placement assistance and job development; and confer with public and private organizations including other professionals, specialists, agency staff, employers, and others to promote and market agency programs and to review the suitability of client services.

MRC is a learning and participatory performance culture with an emphasis on high performance teams, individual performance/contribution/impact, and engaging in activities to promote and support a program/division/agency (e.g., committee membership, Roadmap workgroup membership, presenting at Town Halls, achieving learning and performance goals). In addition, MRC is an agency committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial equity, as well as innovation, transformation, and change, and creating a culture of agility, excellence, and belonging.

Supervision Received: Incumbents of positions at this level receive general supervision from an Administrator VI, who provides broad policy guidance, assigns work, and reviews performance through conferences and reports for effectiveness and conformance with agency policy.

Supervision Exercised: Incumbents may exercise direct supervision over, assign work to and review the performance of Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Level I and II or other employees of a lower grade.

Incumbents may provide functional direction to Qualified Vocational Counselor Level I and Level II or other employees of a lower grade through advice, guidance and delegation of tasks and participate in the training and mentoring of new employees.

Incumbents may participate in the interviewing process or may make recommendations for new hires.

Essential functions Performed:

1. Supervise and monitor unit activities such as client evaluation and case maintenance to ensure effective service delivery and compliance with agency

policy and standards; coordinate administrative and clinical support for agency units and programs.

2. Plan, develop and implement unit and agency programs; assist in developing and implementing client needs assessment programs; develop and implement policies and procedures for assigned units and programs in accordance with agency regulations and applicable laws; and determine service delivery hours and caseloads to staff consistent with agency policy and client needs.
3. Plan, develop and conduct orientation and training of agency and other staff in vocational and pre-vocational programs and services.
4. Establish and maintain program and unit information systems; prepare and monitor program/unit budget and allocation of funds.
5. Evaluate job performance of subordinates, participate in the hiring and promotional process; notify management when corrective action may be appropriate; and provide support to enhance employee performance. Monitoring and approving time and attendance.
6. Provide vocational rehabilitation counseling services to clients deemed to present particular difficult challenges, such as, persons with multiple disabilities; persons who have been unsuccessful with other rehabilitation counselors; persons who have an extended history with the agency, to insure provision of appropriate services.
7. Coordinate the marketing of Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission services office wide: by developing a marketing plan; coordinating the plan among office staff; monitoring the progress of the plan to ensure the community is aware of and understands how to appropriately utilize the agency.
8. Coordinate office wide job development in coordination with the marketing of the agency, by developing an office wide job development program; coordinating counselors' employer contacts for job leads; coordinating the office wide list of job ready clients to match up with job leads; monitor the progress of the plan to ensure that clients are assisted with their job search.
9. May act as liaison regarding specific disabilities or special populations within the district, by attending meetings with counselors from other offices to strategize to reach the specific populations or discussing current information on the target groups and may provide input to the development of policies and procedures with reference to the targeted groups so that the agency is reaching all individuals with disabilities that are in need of the agency's services.
10. Coordinate SSI/SSDI referrals by acting as office consultant on all matters related to SSI/SSDI clients receiving benefits from SSA Administration including liaison and consultant to the administration and utilization of the PASS Plan (Plan for Achievement of Self Support).

11. Coordinate the State and Federal Compliance Review Audits by gathering the sample studies; conducting in-house reviews of cases for compliance; providing the Administrative Office Program Evaluation staff with requested materials, information, and evaluations as requested to ensure the agency is complying with Federal, State and Agency's policies, procedures, and regulations regarding vocational rehabilitation.

#### Knowledge, Education, and Experience:

Applicants must have at least (A) Master's degree or higher in Rehabilitation Counseling from a Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accredited university program, or a certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) by the Commission of Rehabilitation Counselor Certification or licensure as a Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor and (B) three (3) years of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers, of which one (1) year must have been in a supervisory or leadership capacity or (C) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below.

Based on assignment, travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must have a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

Applicants working with deaf and hard of hearing consumers must be proficient in American Sign Language (ASL) and may be required to demonstrate ASL proficiency through assessment by agency staff.

#### Substitutions:

A Master's degree or higher in a related field such a Rehabilitation Administration/Services, Disability Studies, Vocational Assessment/Evaluation, Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Work, Human Services, Education, Special Education, Occupational Therapy, Counseling (Mental Health, Education, Psychology), or Substance Abuse Therapy and one (1) year of full-time or equivalent part-time experience in vocational counseling, job placement, career counseling and guidance, assessment and vocational evaluation, job development and services for employers may be substituted for the required (A) education. Relevant internship experience will be considered.

#### Qualifications Required at time of hire:

1. Ability to analyze information and using logic to address work or job issues and problems.
2. Ability to identify things that must be changed to achieve goals.
3. Ability to determine the long-term outcomes of a change in operations.

4. Ability to develop approaches for implementing ideas.
5. Ability to make decisions and solve problems by combining, evaluating, and reasoning with information and data to make decisions and solve problems. These processes involve making decisions about the relative importance of information and choosing best solutions.
6. Ability to teach others how to do something.
7. Ability to bring others together and trying to reconcile differences.
8. Ability to coach and develop others by identifying the developmental needs of others and coaching or otherwise helping others to improve their knowledge and skills.
9. Ability to coordinate the members of a work group to accomplish a task.
10. Ability to develop a team by encouraging and building mutual trust, respect, and cooperation among team members.
11. Ability to guide, direct, and motivate subordinates.

- **EMPLOYMENT SERVICE SPECIALIST I:**

The Employment Service Specialist Markets and promotes the services of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) to employers and other interested parties in the office's district; develops and implements promotional programs; gathers and disseminates labor market information; provides technical assistance concerning recruitment of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's Consumers; establishes and maintains working relationships with employers; plans and organizes job fairs and recruitments; establishes and maintains a data bank of information on local employers; assists Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's staff by soliciting employment opportunities for specific consumers with disabilities and performs related duties as required.

#### **SUPERVISION RECEIVED**

Receives general supervision from a Supervisor that plans, assigns, and oversees work. Supervisor provides guidance and instruction regarding laws and regulations as well as MRC policies, procedures, guidelines, and standards. Supervisor regularly reviews work to ensure compliance. Supervisor conducts qualitative and quantitative analysis of the incumbent's work performance. These managers may provide input to the MRC ESS supervisor regarding functional job performance.

#### **Essential Functions:**

1. Markets and promotes MRC services and programs to area employers and other interested parties by visiting businesses and other locations to explain



and describe MRC programs and services. Solicit employer participation and obtain employment opportunity listings (Job Orders) that meet established guidelines and standards with regard to content in order to adequately serve the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's job seeking customers.

2. Devise and implement strategies for the development of sector and employer-based training opportunities for persons with disabilities; identifies specific industries and employers to target and market employer-based training initiative.
3. Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with area employers by making personal visits to determine employer needs, communicate MRC services, and incentives available to employers who train and employ individuals with disabilities.
4. Develop and maintain employer relationships, as well as act as a problem-solving liaison for employers with unfilled employment opportunities by suggesting solutions such as restructuring job requirements, and training programs that result in replicable and sustainable employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.
5. Ensures that the MRC staff is aware of the employers' needs and job order specifications to facilitate the prompt and effective servicing of job orders that match the needs of MRC consumers/job seekers.
6. Assists with planning, organizing, and conducting job fairs, special events, and recruitments to provide large-scale labor exchange
7. opportunities for both employers and MRC job seekers.
8. Establishes and maintains a data bank of information on local area employers through on-site visits to facilitate the placement of MRC Consumers and the filling of employer needs; records and updates information on appropriate MRC forms and inputs data as necessary via computer to maintain various MRC computerized information systems.
9. Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with peers, supervisors, and MRC partners. Actively interfaces with the MRC Job Placement Specialists (JPS) and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) to convey information regarding employer training and employment requirements to ensure appropriate referral, screening, and selection of MRC Consumers for training and employment opportunities.
10. Work closely with employers and identifying position(s) that could readily adapt to an On-The-Job/employer or sector-based training model; assist employers with curriculum development and required staffing/community resources, as needed, for skills training and soft skills training.

11. Work closely with MRC Job Placement Specialist and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to identify, assess, screen, and recommend consumers for training; assist MRC Job Placement Specialist and or Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in preparing consumers to interview for training and employment opportunities.
12. Work closely with JPS and VRC to identify tutors and job coaches via vendor organizations to assist with training and employment skill and task development.
13. Ensure placement of MRC Consumers into sector based and On-The-Job training opportunities.
14. Assist employers in assessing need for and obtaining adaptive equipment and other resources
15. Proactively deliver follow-up support services to employers and consumers in collaboration with JPS, VRC, and community organizations, as needed, to ensure successful employment outcomes and employer satisfaction.
16. May conduct group presentations in conjunctions with JPS (in and out of the office) to explain programs and services to employers, training vendors, community organizations, job seekers, and the general public and to assist them in using such programs and services.
17. Participates in staff development and cross training opportunities that expand and support functional skills and promote professional growth.

Qualifications:

(A) at least three (3) years of full-time or equivalent part-time professional experience in: business management, business administration, public relations, marketing, personnel interviewing, recruitment, or job placement; employment, vocational, educational, psychological, sociological or rehabilitation counseling or guidance; job analysis or position classification work or any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below. Extensive travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must possess a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment.

Substitutions:

I. A Bachelor's degree or higher in marketing, business management, business administration, public relations or public administration may be substituted for two (2) years of the required experience.

#### LICENSE AND/OR CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

- A valid motor vehicle operators' license.
- Qualifications Required at Hire:
- Knowledge of a wide variety of occupations common to the area labor market.
- Knowledge of the principles, practices, and techniques of marketing and sales  
Knowledge of interviewing techniques.
- Ability to market and promote MRC services and job seekers/consumers.
- Ability to communicate effectively in oral and written expression.
- Ability to give written and oral instructions in a precise and understandable manner.
- Ability to establish rapport and working relationships with individuals from a wide variety of different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.
- Ability to stimulate interest in MRC programs, services, and consumers.
- Demonstrated knowledge of principles and techniques of human service interviewing.
- Ability to understand, explain and implement policies and procedures, standards, guidelines, laws, and regulations that govern Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission activities.
- Demonstrated knowledge of principles and practices of conducting workshops.
- Proven ability to interact in a team environment and to establish and maintain harmonious working relationships with peers, supervisors, other agency representatives, employers, and customers.
- Working knowledge of MS Windows and Word. Proven ability to accurately and concisely record information and maintain the integrity of the computerized database.

#### Employment Service Specialist II:

This is the mid-level job placement position of this job classification level. This position markets and promotes the services of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) to employers and other interested parties in the office's district; develops and implements promotional programs; gathers and disseminates labor market information; provides technical assistance concerning recruitment of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's Consumers; establishes and maintains working relationships with employers; plans and organizes job fairs/hiring events and recruitments; establishes and maintains a data bank of information on local employers; assists Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's staff by soliciting employment opportunities for specific consumers with disabilities and performs

related duties as required. Provides information and coordinates job-driven training programs in which Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Consumer's would be readily available to be trained and employed with open positions within various market sectors. Confers with job placement specialists and area directors for development of employment plans specific to demographics of the local area offices. Provides specific job placement services training to counselors and other staff. Provides guidance for less experienced employment services specialists.

MRC is a learning and participatory performance culture with an emphasis on high-performance teams, individual performance/contribution/impact, and engaging in activities to promote and support a program/division/agency (e.g., committee membership, Roadmap workgroup membership, presenting at Town Halls, achieving learning and performance goals). In addition, MRC is an agency committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial equity, as well as innovation, transformation, change, and creating a culture of agility, excellence, and belonging.

#### SUPERVISION RECEIVED:

Receives general supervision from a Supervisor that plans, assigns, and oversees work. Supervisor provides guidance and instruction regarding laws and regulations as well as MRC policies, procedures, guidelines, and standards. Supervisor regularly reviews work to ensure compliance. Supervisor conducts qualitative and quantitative analysis of the incumbent's work performance. These managers may provide input to the MRC ESS supervisor regarding functional job performance.

#### ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

- Markets and promotes MRC services and programs to area employers and other interested parties by visiting businesses and other locations to explain and describe MRC programs and services. Solicit employer participation and obtain employment opportunity listings (Job Orders) that meet established guidelines and standards with regard to content in order to adequately serve the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's job seeking customers.
- Devise and implement strategies for the development of sector and employer-based training opportunities for persons with disabilities; identifies specific industries and employers to target and market employer-based training initiative.
- Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with area employers by making personal visits to determine employer needs, communicate MRC services, and incentives available to employers who train and employ individuals with disabilities.
- Develop and maintain employer relationships, as well as act as a problem-solving liaison for employers with unfilled employment opportunities by

suggesting solutions such as restructuring job requirements, and training programs that result in replicable and sustainable employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

- Ensures that the MRC staff is aware of the employer's needs and job order specifications to facilitate the prompt and effective servicing of job orders that match the needs of MRC consumers/job seekers.
- Assists with planning, organizing, and conducting job fairs, special events, and recruitments to provide large scale labor exchange
- opportunities for both employers and MRC job seekers.
- Establishes and maintains a data bank of information on local area employers through on-site visits to facilitate the placement of MRC Consumers and the filling of employer needs; records and updates information on appropriate MRC forms and inputs data as necessary via computer to maintain various MRC computerized information systems.
- Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with peers, supervisors, and MRC partners. Actively interfaces with the MRC Job Placement Specialists (JPS) and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRC) to convey information regarding employer training and employment requirements to ensure appropriate referral, screening, and selection of MRC Consumers for training and employment opportunities.
- Identifies employers that are readily available and interested in providing Job-Driven Training Programs for MRC Consumers.
- Assists with coordinating and ensuring that Job-Driven Training programs provide competitive employment outcomes for MRC Consumers.
- Work closely with employers and identifying position(s) that could readily adapt to an On-The-Job/employer or sector-based training model; assist employers with curriculum development and required staffing /community resources, as needed, for skills training and soft skills training.
- Work closely with MRC Job Placement Specialist and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to identify, assess, screen, and recommend consumers for training; assist MRC Job Placement Specialist and or Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in preparing consumers to interview for training and employment opportunities.
- Work closely with JPS and VRC to identify tutors and job coaches via vendor organizations to assist with training and employment skill and task development.
- Ensure placement of MRC Consumers into sector based and On-The-Job training opportunities.

- Assist employers in assessing need for and obtaining adaptive equipment and other resources
- Proactively deliver follow-up support services to employers and consumers in collaboration with JPS, VRC, and community organizations, as needed, to ensure successful employment outcomes and employer satisfaction.
- May conduct group presentations in conjunctions with JPS (in and out of the office) to explain programs and services to employers, training vendors, community organizations, job seekers, and the general public and to assist them in using such programs and services.
- Participates in staff development and cross training opportunities that expand and support functional skills and promote professional growth.

#### Required Qualifications:

Applicants must have (A) a Bachelor's degree in marketing, business management, business administration, public relations, vocational rehabilitation, counseling, psychology, public administration, human resources or related field (B) at least two (2) years of full-time or equivalent part-time professional experience in: business management, business administration, public relations, marketing, personnel interviewing, recruitment or job placement; employment, vocational counseling, psychology, sociology, education or rehabilitation counseling or guidance; job analysis or position classification work, of which (C) at least one (1) year must have been working with individuals with disabilities, or (D) any equivalent combination of the required experience and the substitutions below. Page 6 of 9 Extensive travel is required; incumbents who elect to use a motor vehicle for travel must possess a current and valid motor vehicle driver's license at a class level specific to assignment. Substitutions: I. A Master's degree or higher in marketing, business management, business administration, vocational rehabilitation, public relations or public administration, counseling, psychology, human resources, or related field may be substituted for one (1) year of the required (B) experience.

#### Qualifications Required at Hire:

- Knowledge of a wide variety of occupations common to the area labor market.
- Knowledge of the principles, practices, and techniques of marketing and sales  
Knowledge of interviewing techniques.
- Ability to market and promote MRC services and job seekers/consumers.
- Ability to communicate effectively in oral and written expression.
- Ability to give written and oral instructions in a precise and understandable manner.

- Ability to establish rapport and working relationships with individuals from a wide variety of different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.
- Ability to stimulate interest in MRC programs, services, and consumers.
- Demonstrated knowledge of principles and techniques of human service interviewing.
- Ability to understand, explain and implement policies and procedures, standards, guidelines, laws, and regulations that govern Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission activities.
- Demonstrated knowledge of principles and practices of conducting workshops.
- Proven ability to interact in a team environment and to establish and maintain harmonious working relationships with peers, supervisors, other agency representatives, employers, and customers.
- Working knowledge of MS Windows and Word. Proven ability to accurately and concisely record information, and maintain the integrity of the computerized database.
- Two years of job placement services experience for individuals with disabilities.

### Employment Service Specialist III:

This is the supervisory level position of this classification series. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Job Placement Services Supervisor will function as the MRC District Supervisor for delivery of job placement services for the MRC Area Office within the district, and is responsible for planning, development, and monitoring of the employer outreach and employment plans for multiple area offices. Supervise a staff of 8-10 comprised of job placement services specialist and employment services specialist. The job placement services district director will implement employment plans in collaboration with the district and area directors. Analyze job placement services workflow and assigns employer engagement activities ensuring quality control for the MRC Employer Account System. Facilitate, coordinate, and monitor Job Driven Employer Training Programs for the district. Assists the Statewide Job Placement Services Director with the day-to-day functions of job placement services. Supervises the job placement services specialist and employment services specialists while ensuring compliance with agency guidelines and policies. The job placement unit supervisor works closely with both the job placement specialist, employment services specialist, vocational rehabilitation counselor, area office supervisor(s) and area director. Responsible for proper utilization of the MRC Job Placement Services Manual; while ensuring that each of the area office employment plans incorporate job driven training programs to meet the needs of the local and regional labor markets. Ability to work remotely while providing effective supervision of staff; ability to resolve conflicts and provide identifiable solutions to complex work-related issues.

#### Supervision Received:

Receives general supervision from a Supervisor/manager that plans, assigns, and oversees work. Supervisor provides guidance and instruction regarding laws and regulations as well as MRC policies, procedures, guidelines, and standards. Supervisor regularly reviews work to ensure compliance. Supervisor conducts qualitative and quantitative analysis of the incumbent's work performance. These managers may provide input to the MRC ESS supervisor regarding functional job performance.

#### Essential Functions:

1. Supervises subordinate employees by monitoring of assigned responsibilities and tasks, and to ensure compliance with agency rules, policies, procedures, and guidelines.
2. Review, monitor, and ensure that the production standards are met for the job placement services specialists and employment services specialists.
3. Responsible for accurate documentation of all job placement activities and production is reflected on MRCIS.
4. Ensure that MRC Consumers are being identified appropriately for job-driven training programs.
5. Ensure that that Job-Driven Training programs provide competitive employment outcomes for MRC Consumers.
6. Work closely with the job placement specialists and employment specialists in identifying employers that are interested in long term partnerships with MRC.
7. Work closely with MRC Job Placement Specialist, Employment Services Specialists and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor to identify, assess, screen, and recommend consumers for training; assist MRC Job Placement Specialist and or Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor in preparing consumers to interview for training and employment opportunities.
8. Ensure the MRC Job Placement Services Manual is being utilized and is consistent with best practices in the district.
9. Work closely with the MRC Business Improvement Partners to understand the role and scope of services being provided via vendor organizations to assist with training and employment skill and task development.
10. Ensure that district and area office job placement are occurring to the satisfaction of the area directors as provided by the employer outreach employment plan.
11. Ensure placement of MRC Consumers into sector based and on-the-job training opportunities.



12. Assist employers in assessing need for and obtaining adaptive equipment and other resources
13. Proactively deliver follow-up support services to employers and consumers in collaboration with JPS, VRC, and community organizations, as needed, to ensure successful employment outcomes and employer satisfaction.
14. May conduct group presentations in conjunctions with JPS (in and out of the office) to explain programs and services to employers, training vendors, community organizations, job seekers, and the general public and to assist them in using such programs and services.
15. Participates in staff development and cross training opportunities that expand and support functional skills and promote professional growth.

a. Qualifications:

5 years of experience (of which 3 must be supervisory) of full-time or equivalent part-time professional or technical experience in any of the following: (1) personnel interviewing, recruitment, or job placement; (2) employment, vocational, educational, psychological, sociological or rehabilitation counseling or guidance (3) credit or claims adjustment interviewing; (4) job analysis or position classification work.

Education required:

A Bachelor's Degree in marketing, business management, and or public administration, or a Master's Degree in marketing, business management, and or public administration (of which 2 must be in a supervisory capacity). Equivalent combination of such experience and allowable substitutions permitted. A Master's or higher degree in marketing, business management, public administration or a related field from a recognized college or university may be substituted for two years experience. Education toward such a degree will be prorated on the basis of the proportion of the requirement actually completed.

Qualifications required at hire:

- Knowledge of a wide variety of occupations common to the area labor market.
- Knowledge of the principles, practices, and techniques of marketing and sales Knowledge of interviewing techniques.
- Ability to market and promote MRC services and job seekers/consumers.
- Ability to communicate effectively in oral and written expression.
- Ability to give written and oral instructions in a precise and understandable manner.

- Ability to establish rapport and working relationships with individuals from a wide variety of different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.
- Ability to stimulate interest in MRC programs, services, and consumers.
- Demonstrated knowledge of principles and techniques of human service interviewing.
- Ability to understand, explain and implement policies and procedures, standards, guidelines, laws, and regulations that govern Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission activities.
- Demonstrated knowledge of principles and practices of conducting workshops.
- Proven ability to interact in a team environment and to establish and maintain harmonious working relationships with peers, supervisors, other agency representatives, employers, and customers.
- Working knowledge of MS Windows and Word. Proven ability to accurately and concisely record information and maintain the integrity of the computerized database.
- The establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.

All MRC vocational rehabilitation counselors are expected to meet at least the education and experience requirements of a Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Promotional opportunities in the series would require more experience and/or a higher educational level.

#### IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION:

MRC supports a wide variety of training and development programs for all staff through a comprehensive training program. MRC's trainings continue to focus on compliance with WIOA regulations and guidelines, and on working with our workforce partners and other disability agencies to provide coordinated services. MRC will continue to provide training to its staff to enhance their skills, professional development, and enhanced practices to best serve consumer needs.

A series of workshops and seminars have been and will continue to be planned in the following priority areas:

Vocational Rehabilitation best practices, trainings related to the agency's initiatives with the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Transitional Assistance, substance abuse training in partnership with the Department of Public Health, diversity and DEIA trainings through the Human Resources Division, trainings on

Measurable Skills Gains and other WIOA performance measures, Pre-Employment Transition Services, quality employment outcomes, leadership development and succession training, transportation options, transitional planning, serving consumers on the autism spectrum, and programs under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (operated by MRC), training on fiscal agility, and training on the agency's integrated eligibility project known as MRC Connect.

MRC also continues to offer ongoing professional development for VR counselors, managers, supervisors. These trainings address 21st century labor trends, high growth occupations and skills that are in demand, trainings on job accommodations and employment tax credits, amongst other topics. MRC also makes trainings available in cooperation with staff labor unions on professional development, including computer software training and online training via LinkedIn's Learning Online training site and the state's MassAcheive training site.

MRC has also worked with the state HR Division's Center for Staff Development to develop a certificate program for aspiring managers and supervisors where staff works to gain leadership and management skills guided by a supervisor or manager serving as a mentor. Also, project management and leadership certificates are available through this program. Finally, MRC operates a regular new staff orientation to assist with educating and retaining staff.

MRC acquires and routinely disseminates rehabilitation materials and research to staff such as the latest publications from the Institute on Rehabilitation on Issues, training materials from the Research and Training Centers, training guides and resource materials produced by recipients of RSA grants, and products from the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials, as well as information and knowledge from RSA VR Technical Assistance centers such as the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Training and Technical Assistance Center (AIVRTTAC), National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C), Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE), Vocational Rehabilitation Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM). MRC also disseminates materials and information from the National Rehabilitation Association, the Association of People Supporting Employment First, Explore VR, and other sources. These information and materials are also discussed and utilized in training and staff development meetings and webinars.

#### 4. Staff Development.

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

##### *A. System of staff development*

**a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training**

**implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and**

MRC has a system of staff development for its Vocational Rehabilitation Division. supports a wide variety of training and development programs for all staff through a comprehensive training program. MRC's trainings continue to focus on compliance with WIOA regulations and guidelines, and on working with our workforce partners and other disability agencies to provide coordinated services. MRC will continue to provide training to its staff to enhance their skills, professional development, and enhanced practices to best serve consumer needs.

A series of workshops and seminars have been and will continue to be planned in the following priority areas:

Vocational Rehabilitation best practices, trainings related to the agency's initiatives with the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Transitional Assistance, substance abuse training in partnership with the Department of Public Health, diversity trainings through the Human Resources Division, trainings on Measurable Skills Gains and other WIOA performance measures, Pre-Employment Transition Services, quality employment outcomes, leadership development and succession training, transportation options, transitional planning, serving consumers on the autism spectrum, and programs under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (operated by MRC), training on fiscal agility, and training on the agency's integrated eligibility project known as MRC Connect.

MRC also continues to offer ongoing professional development for VR counselors, managers, supervisors. These trainings address 21st century labor trends, high growth occupations and skills that are in demand, trainings on job accommodations and employment tax credits, amongst other topics. MRC also makes trainings available in cooperation with staff labor unions on professional development, including computer software training and online training via LinkedIn's Learning Online training site and the state's MassAcheive training site.

MRC has also worked with the state HR Division's Center for Staff Development to develop a certificate program for aspiring managers and supervisors where staff works to gain leadership and management skills guided by a supervisor or manager serving as a mentor. Also, project management and leadership certificates are available through this program. Finally, MRC operates a regular new staff orientation to assist with educating and retaining staff.

MRC acquires and routinely disseminates rehabilitation materials and research to staff such as the latest publications from the Institute on Rehabilitation on Issues, training materials from the Research and Training Centers, training guides and resource materials produced by recipients of RSA grants, and products from the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials, as well as information and knowledge from RSA VR Technical Assistance centers such as the American Indian

Vocational Rehabilitation Training and Technical Assistance Center (AIVRTTAC), National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C), Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE), Vocational Rehabilitation Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM). MRC also disseminates materials and information from the National Rehabilitation Association, the Association of People Supporting Employment First, Explore VR, and other sources. These information and materials are also discussed and utilized in training and staff development meetings and webinars.

*B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge*

**Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.**

MRC has the following procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

The Commission acquires and routinely disseminates rehabilitation materials and research to staff such as the latest publications from the Institute on Rehabilitation on Issues, training materials from the Research and Training Centers, training guides and resource materials produced by recipients of RSA grants, and products from the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials, as well as information and knowledge from RSA VR Technical Assistance centers such as the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Training and Technical Assistance Center (AIVRTTAC), National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C), Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE), Vocational Rehabilitation Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM). MRC also disseminates materials and information from the National Rehabilitation Association, the Association of People Supporting Employment First, Explore VR, and other sources. These information and materials are also discussed and utilized in training and staff development meetings and webinars. MRC has also coordinated and consulted with WINTAC and NTACT on training efforts.

**5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs**

**Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.**

MRC has dedicated VR counselors skilled in American Sign Language (ASL) and are qualified to work with consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing. In addition, MRC has counselors fluent in the following languages throughout the state: Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Khmer, French/Haitian Creole, Hindi and Tamil. Some area directors, head clerks and other clerical staff are fluent in American Sign Language, Spanish, Khmer, Cantonese, Mandarin, Haitian Creole, or Portuguese. Eleven full and part-time sign language interpreters are also on staff. MRC also works

with its contracted service providers for CIES and Pre-ETS to provide communication coordination for consumers referred by MRC to these contracts. MRC has a bilingual committee of staff which provide support in this area. MRC also works with Cross Cultural Community Services (CCCS) (<https://embracingculture.com/>) and other vendors on the statewide contract to facilitate communication needs for individuals served by MRC who speak languages other than English.

MRC also has a contract for foreign language translation and MRC has translated key agency documents and VR communication letters working closely with the Bilingual Committee. The Commission also maintains a statewide contract with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to secure additional ASL interpreters, CART reporters, and video relay translation as needed. Staff with specific language skills and interpreters are geographically placed to coincide with population and other demographics relating to target consumer groups. MRC also utilizes technology platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams to facilitate communication with consumers.

This strategy will continue to be applied and staff with specialized skills added, as appropriate, for the upcoming year and beyond. MRC continues to work on ways to work with staff to further improve coordination of communication needs for individuals served by MRC.

6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

**As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

The information in the State plan pertaining to the RSA requirements for a Comprehensive System of Personnel Development is coordinated and shared with the appropriate State Department of Education unit consistent with the Individual with Disabilities Education Act to assure compliance and coordination of efforts across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

***j. Statewide Assessment***

1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:

*A. with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;*

The most recent MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) report can be found on MRC's website: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2021-comprehensive-statewide-needs-assessment/download>.

- The FY2021 CSNA confirms that the majority of consumers served by the MRC are people with the most significant disabilities. The 2021 CSNA report again confirmed that the MRC consumer population is diverse, and that a majority of individuals being served possess the most significant disabilities. Many of these individuals require multiple Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services and supports in order to prepare for, search for, obtain, and maintain competitive employment in the community. There are still a significant number of consumers who report transportation as a barrier to employment. The need for multiple VR services was found to be slightly greater amongst individuals of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds (particularly African Americans and Hispanics) and for individuals with cognitive or psychological disabilities. The findings suggest that many consumers also require supported employment and ongoing and extended employment supports. The need for multiple CL services was greatest among individuals with physical or sensory disabilities.
- Overall, the majority of MRC consumers believe MRC services are addressing all or most of their needs and are satisfied with MRC services. A total of 82.9% of consumers report being either Always or Sometimes Satisfied with the effectiveness of VR services provided by MRC in meeting their needs (48.8% Always, 34.0% Sometimes). This increased by 9.9% from FY2020, which reversed a declining trend for this question's response pattern. The majority of VR consumers also remain satisfied with services delivered by MRC VR in the MRC Consumer Satisfaction Survey. Satisfaction with the VR service effectiveness is seen being higher in consumers who are further in the process, with those participating in job search and placement as reporting the highest levels of satisfaction. These individuals are in the action stages of their quest to obtain and maintain competitive employment, and are actively seeing results, report higher satisfaction.
- Many consumers provided open comment on the positive impact MRC VR services have, including the effectiveness of VR staff. Responses outlined helpful and caring staff who are knowledgeable about the area in which they work, who have strong community and employer connections, who work with consumers individually to accommodate each individual's unique needs. Comments also indicated that services related to education are incredibly helpful in allowing for individuals to obtain the education they need to progress in their career. A number of consumers report difficulties with communication with their counselor/caseworker. This has been observed in previous needs assessments and continued throughout the pandemic. Others feel they have not been provided consistent or adequate information on services or are struggling with the impact of COVID-19, health issues, financial issues, and other difficulties.

- A majority of consumers (89.0%) report being either Very or Somewhat Satisfied with the development of their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). Younger individuals displayed higher levels of satisfaction with this process. Satisfaction with the development of an individual's IPE was found to be strongly associated with a consumer's view on the effectiveness of VR service effectiveness.
- Consumers expressed high praise for MRC staff and their effectiveness in the development of each IPE. Consumers reported that staff were knowledgeable and helpful, guiding consumers through the process. These comments described an individualized process that established unique goals according to each person's needs. More consumers expressed their satisfaction and positive experiences with staff than any other subject. However, several consumers also commented on their lack of personal knowledge about the IPE process. This year there were many comments expressing difficulty utilizing services due to issues related to COVID-19.
- Some consumers reported needing services that are already provided by MRC as services that they think MRC should provide and would assist them in their vocational goals. This follows trends and patterns observed in previous years and suggests that consumers could require more information on the range of services available to them.
- All VR service areas were found to be important to a significant portion of MRC consumers. Job Placement Services (JPS) continues to be recognized as the most important VR service category (88%), followed by Career Counseling (84.9%), Supported Employment (83.2%), Benefits Planning (82.0%), Soft Skills Training (78.6%), Ongoing Supports (74.3%), On the Job Trainings/Job Driven Trainings (73.0%), and Vocational Skills Training (71.0%), and college disability office services or supports (66.6%).
- The most common occupational areas of interest listed by MRC consumers included Community/Social/Human Services (26%), Health Care (22%), Self-Employment (20%) Administrative (19%), Arts and Entertainment (18%), Computers/Information Technology (18%), Customer Service (16%), and Education/Childcare (12). All but Self-Employment are amongst the top 10 occupational goals by Standard Occupational Code (SOC) in consumer employment plans in the MRCIS Case Management System.
- Awareness of Independent Living Centers (ILC) increased among consumers for the second straight year. This continues to reverse a negative trend observed over three years of Needs Assessment analysis. 34.1% of consumers report being aware of their local ILC, with individuals residing in the West district reporting the highest likelihood of working with these ILCs.



- Transportation continues to be an area of need for some MRC consumers. Reported transportation use by consumers continues to shift under patterns observed in the past five years of Needs Assessments. The effect of the pandemic was found to have a profound effect on consumer's reported transportation use and needs. Levels of public transportation and Uber/Lyft/Ride Share use decrease significantly from previous years increase. Respondents view as transportation as a barrier to finding work also decreased, with pandemic-related restrictions being suspected of reducing the overall need for individuals to use transportation on a daily basis. Overall, 33% of respondents to the FY2021 survey reported that they view transportation as a barrier to employment. This represents a 3% decrease from 2020. As with 2020, cost is observed to be a differentiating factor in whether transportation poses a barrier to an individual obtaining employment. Open-ended responses show that many respondents need to obtain their driver's license as well as a vehicle. Many individuals point to the high cost of transportation/cost of maintaining a vehicle, using a car or ride share service, or regular public transportation, as their main deterrence from primarily relying on those forms of transportation.
- The most important and needed Community Living services indicated by responding consumers were Affordable Housing (62.1%), Assistive Technology (62.1%), Accessible Recreation (61.0%), and Devices (52.2%). Age was found to play a significant role in consumer's view of the importance of CL services. Younger respondents were found reporting Recreation Opportunities, Waiver Programs, and Supported Living Services as more important than older individuals. The perceived level of importance of these services decreased as age increased.
- 72.9% of consumers reported MRC services as being either Extremely or Somewhat Useful in supporting their ability to maintain independence in the community. Minority consumers reported these services as effective more frequently than Non-Minority individuals, with Asian and Hispanic individuals having the highest levels of satisfaction. Those with a High School education and some College were observed as having higher levels of satisfaction with CL services than others as well. Many consumers reflected on how the MRC's assistance has been tremendously valuable. Many consumers, however, were not aware of some or all the CL services provided by the MRC. Others indicated they do not require CL services.
- Finding affordable and accessible housing continues to remain a challenge for many consumers due to the high cost of living in Massachusetts. The Independent Living Centers may be able to assist consumers in this area, and

counselors may be able to refer consumers to other resources to assist with housing needs.

- A total of 10% of consumers feel they require additional services and supports. This number decreased about 5% from 2020. These services include job search assistance, job placement and job training, financial assistance, transportation, affordable and accessible housing, counseling and guidance, information on available services, assistive technology, education and training, services from IL centers, and services and supports from other agencies, and computer/technology skills training and/or equipment.
- The most important single service consumers are receiving includes job placement and job search services, assistance with college education and job training, tuition waivers, vocational counseling and guidance, assistive technology, job readiness training, assistance with obtaining supplies for school and work, ongoing employment supports, job trainings, and transportation.
- A majority of MRC counselors and supervisors (73% Satisfied/Very Satisfied) are satisfied with their ability to assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining, maintaining, and advancing in competitive employment based on their skills, interests, needs, and choices. This satisfaction rate is down slightly from the last report. The majority of MRC counselors are generally satisfied with most services provided to consumers, including internal job placement services, services from Community Rehabilitation Providers, and education and training provided to consumers by schools and colleges. One area of improvement identified by counselors was the need to improve communication with both consumers and providers. Counselors identified areas that would assist them in doing their job better, such as improved support and resources for job placement, more full time job placement specialists, increased information on job leads for consumers, additional on-the-job training and other training resources, continued enhancements to the MRCIS system, more resources for vocational assessment and vocational training for consumers, and training on policies, procedures, and pre-employment transition services, amongst others. Most consumers appear to be satisfied with services received from Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs). The majority of MRC staff also are somewhat or very satisfied with CRP services.
- There are areas where additional MRC staff training may assist in improving the quality and effectiveness of VR services delivered to consumers. Specific areas include trainings on the MRCIS system, as well as on VR best practices, policies, and procedures, strategies for maintaining communication with consumers and time management, internal controls, WIOA common measures and requirements, trainings on autism, and on pre-employment

transition services and transition services under WIOA, and remote learning and service transition strategies. The newly initiated Learning and Development Department within MRC will lead ongoing staff training efforts, utilizing best practices and data driven decision making to make training related decisions.

- Asian/Pacific Islanders were identified as being slightly underserved by MRC VR in comparison to their proportion in the overall state population. Additionally, while MRC is serving other minorities in proportion or greater to the proportion of the statewide population, MRC should focus on outreach to all minority communities to make sure their needs are met and to assist in addressing barriers to employment.

#### B. who are minorities;

The CSNA report indicates the need for multiple VR services was found to be slightly greater amongst individuals of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. For example, minority consumers were more likely to find on-the-job training, job-driven training, work-readiness/soft skills training, and vocational training as important service needs. The need for college education supports and transportation services were also higher amongst consumers of minority background compared to white consumers.

As the Commonwealth's population continues to become more ethnically and racially diverse, MRC's consumer population is also following this pattern, however MRC's consumer population remains about 80% white while the 2020 Census indicates Massachusetts as a whole is 77.3%.

Over the past ten years, MRC has seen an increase in consumers from minority backgrounds. Hispanic consumers. The proportion of Native American consumers dropped to 1.2% in FY 2020, but that is only a tenth of a percent less than the 10-year high it reached in FY 2019. Numerically and proportionally, the largest growth is in Hispanic consumers, who reached a 10-year high in FY 2020, which is consistent with Census Bureau American Community Survey estimates for Massachusetts.

Consumers with Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity have been growing the fastest over the past 5 years (+2.1%), while African Americans served has remained steady over the same period. African Americans are served by the MRC at a higher rate (17.7%) than their rate in the overall population (7.4% in 2020 census).

Since FY 2013, MRC has seen a flat pattern in Asian consumers served (remaining between 3.4% and 3.8%) after seeing a major increase in Asians served between FY 2006 and FY 2012. It continues to appear that Asians are underserved in comparison with their rate in the overall state population (3.8% of MRC consumers compared to 8.2% for all Massachusetts population). For Hispanic/Latinx ethnicity,

MRC is serving these consumers at a rate slightly above their rate in the general population (13.7% for MRC vs 12.6% in the 2020 census for the state as a whole).

As growth in the Asian community continues to be seen in the state's general population, it is recommended that MRC continues its outreach efforts to Asian communities. Additionally, while MRC is serving other minorities in proportion or greater to the proportion of the statewide population, MRC should focus on outreach to all minority communities to make sure their needs are met and to assist in addressing barriers to employment. It is also recommended that MRC continue to develop and implement its consumer engagement program which will include coordination of outreach services to community organizations in areas with underserved populations. MRC should also work with its Employee Resource Groups, Bilingual Committee, the SRC, its DEIA council and other groups to focus on outreach to diverse and underserved communities for all people of color to ensure all their needs are met.

*C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;*

The MRC has again identified Asian and Pacific Islanders as being underserved by the MRC's Vocational Rehabilitation program compared to their proportion in the overall state population. Growth in the Asian population continues to be seen in the state's general population while it has remained steady amongst the MRC population. It is recommended that MRC develop outreach efforts to reach all minority communities, including the Asian community to ensure the needs of these communities are being met.

The MRC has made a commitment to reach out to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are also ethnic and cultural minorities through its DEIA initiatives, Diversity Committee and through its Language Access Plan. The MRC should continue these outreach efforts to ethnic and cultural minorities to increase participation in the VR program from these diverse communities, especially for people of color. As growth in the Asian community continues to be seen in the state's general population, it is recommended that MRC continues its outreach efforts to Asian communities. MRC conducted a focus group in its Lowell Office, which has a higher concentration of Asian consumers. A planned focus group in the Braintree Area was postponed due to COVID-19, however MRC conducted additional focus groups virtually as part of its collaboration with Commonwealth Medicine to gather further information on how MRC can better address the needs of this and other underserved populations (as well as many other stakeholder groups).

Based on the results of the Lowell Focus group and from SRC input, MRC has also developed a workgroup and work plan to focus on outreach efforts to Asian and other minority communities. Strategies and resources for outreach efforts will be developed as part of this workgroup. It is recommended MRC complete of focus groups or community meetings in Braintree and/or Boston, and/or other areas with high population concentration of Asian communities, with consultation of the DEIA council,

the Office of Consumer and Family Engagement, diversity and bilingual committees, and the SRC to review results and to develop best practices in collaboration with community organizations for increasing outreach efforts and services to the Asian community and all other communities of color based on the findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment in order to ensure the needs of these communities are addressed in terms of Vocational Rehabilitation services.

*D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and*

In order to meet the needs of individuals served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System, MRC continues its efforts to collaborate with the other core partners in the workforce investment system to reduce unemployment of individuals with disabilities and to provide effective services to employers throughout the state, to seek out collaborative opportunities including possible projects and grants that may assist individuals with disabilities across Massachusetts in obtaining competitive employment. MRC continues its efforts to work closely together with its partners on WIOA implementation including WIOA common performance measures, use of labor market information, co-location of staff, and other efforts. MRC participates in numerous workgroups such as the State Plan Steering Committee, WIOA Steering Committee, WIOA Systems Integration Workgroup, and other committees who are working on the alignment of services under the workforce system.

MRC continues its collaboration with other core partners under WIOA to survey and further identify the needs of individuals working with other components of the Workforce system. Some of the identified needs include interviewing skills, resume development, job specific skills (CVS Pharmacy Technician training, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Program, retail job training, customer service jobs skills training, food service training, substance abuse counselor training, cybersecurity training, and human service training). MRC will continue to consult with core partners on the identified needs of their consumers as it relates to accessibility and access to employment opportunities, employment training, and provide employer trainings on disability awareness and job accommodations. MRC is reaching out to its core partners as part of its next needs assessment to gather additional data on the needs of individuals in the overall workforce system to complement and further enhance the CSNA process going forward. MRC will be reaching out to its core partners to gather additional data on the needs of individuals in the overall workforce system to complement and enhance the CSNA going forward.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission VR Program has a growing presence at the MassHire Career Centers; the MRC Commissioner serves on the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), and each MRC Area Director has a formal relationship with at least one MassHire Career Center. In addition, Area Directors or other MRC staff are on local workforce investment boards. MRC VR counseling staff make frequent visits

and often conduct interviews at the local career centers and has leased space at all Career Centers to further increase MRC's presence. MRC has MOUs and infrastructure funding agreements with local areas and the Career Centers. Finally, the MRC's job placement team and other assigned MRC staff work closely with local MassHire Career Centers to provide high quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities seeking expanded employment opportunities and MRC is providing assistance to MassHire Career Centers so they can best meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

*E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for Pre-Employment Transition Services or other transition services.*

In the FY2021 CSNA, obtaining a high school diploma, Pre-Employment Transition Services, and college education were rated as important service needs by over 90% of youths with disabilities. With the continued increase in the proportion of youth consumers responding to the CSNA, the importance of services related to obtaining a GED or high school diploma has remained elevated from prior to FY2021. As MRC continues to focus on providing services to youth and high school students, working directly with schools throughout the Commonwealth, and improving transition services through programs like Pre-ETS, this is expected to remain higher than historically observed due to the high need for transition and Pre-ETS services.

The most important and needed Pre-Employment Transition Services listed by MRC consumers of transition age (14 through 21- up to their 22nd birthday) included internships/work-based learning experiences (85%), followed by learning about education/jobs/careers (job exploration counseling) (81%), work-readiness training (81%), transitioning from high school to college/work (80%), mentorship/peer counseling/self-advocacy (77%). 74assistance with college education (76%), and college/career counseling (66%). Some consumers report they receive Pre-Employment Transition Services from schools outside of MRC, the frequency of the responses range from 17% for advocacy/peer counseling to 49% for work-based learning experiences. A total of 62% of consumers of transition age surveyed in FY2021 indicated they had received 1 or more Pre-ETS service.

The majority of transition age consumers indicate they are satisfied with Pre-Employment Transition Services provided by MRC and their partners in meeting their needs towards future education and employment (62% Satisfied/Very Satisfied. and 19% Somewhat Satisfied), and the majority who are receiving these services (72%) indicate these services are effective in preparing them for their future career.

Overall, results throughout the CSNA demonstrate a significant need for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) among students with disabilities and youth consumers of transition age and MRC is working to address this need through its various transition and Pre-ETS initiatives. MRC continues to work closely with local school districts and contracted service providers on transition and Pre-ETS services,

including coordinating services with those provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). MRC has a counselor assigned to every public high school in the Commonwealth, has developed strong working relationships with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

MRC also recently completed a 5-year demonstration grant called Transition Pathway Services, funded by RSA, which focused on the provision of work-based learning experiences. The results from the grant are being evaluated and lessons learned will be used to develop additional best practices in this area and continue to improve transition and Pre-Employment transition services in partnership with schools and providers.

2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and

In terms of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State. Most consumers appear to be satisfied with services received from Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs). The majority of MRC staff also indicate that they are generally satisfied with CRP services. The operation of CRP programs through the Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) procurements appear to address many but not all consumer needs. There also appears to be some areas where additional CRP capacity may potentially be needed to cover certain geographic areas or specific populations, and this should be examined closer by MRC. MRC also is working closely with CRPs as part of its ACCS employment initiative with the Department of Mental Health. MRC should continue to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on CRPs and use its working relationships to continue work collaboratively with CRPs to address consumer needs and improve service delivery, including the continued use of remote technologies and hybrid service delivery models. . Finally, improved communication and information flow between CRPs and MRC staff, more information on consumer referrals, and continued efforts to streamline paperwork processing may assist in improving service delivery to consumers and lead to more successful employment outcomes.

3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and Pre-Employment Transition Services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The FY2021 CSNA confirms that transition career services and Pre-Employment Transition Services for youth and high school students with disabilities are important and needed services across the Commonwealth. Results throughout the CSNA demonstrate a high need for these services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services among students with disabilities and youth consumers of transition age and MRC continues to work address this need in coordination with schools and Pre-ETS contracted service providers across the state.

In the FY2021 CSNA, obtaining a high school diploma, Pre-Employment Transition Services, and college education were rated as important service needs by over 90% of youths with disabilities responding to the survey. The most important and needed Pre-Employment Transition Services listed by MRC consumers of transition age (14 through 21 up to their 22nd birthday) included internships/work-based learning experiences (85%), followed by learning about education/jobs/careers (job exploration counseling) (81%), work-readiness training (81%), transitioning from high school to college/work (80%), mentorship/peer counseling/self-advocacy (77%), assistance with college education (76%), and college/career counseling (66%). Some consumers report they receive Pre-Employment Transition Services from schools outside of MRC, the frequency of the responses range from 17% for advocacy/peer counseling to 49% for work-based learning experiences. A total of 62% of consumers of transition age surveyed in FY2021 indicated they had received 1 or more Pre-ETS service.

MRC continues to work with local school districts and on transition and Pre-ETS services, including coordinating services with those provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). MRC has a counselor assigned to every public high school in the Commonwealth, has developed strong working relationships with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). MRC is also recently completed a 5-year demonstration grant, Transition Pathway Services, funded by RSA which focused on the provision of work-based learning experiences. The results from the grant and lessons learned will be used to develop additional best practices in this area and improve transition and Pre-Employment transition services. MRC offers Pre-ETS to students who are potentially eligible for VR services in addition to those who are VR eligible in collaboration with vendors and school districts and has worked with providers and schools to implement remote and hybrid service delivery strategies and to deal with challenges in Pre-ETS and Transition service delivery related to the COVID-19 pandemic. MRC has developed an agreement and worked with DESE to issue guidance to schools on the provision and coordination of individualized transition services for students with disabilities that lead to successful post-school outcomes in competitive integrated employment, post-secondary education and training, and community living.

To assist in determining the statewide need for pre-employment transition services, MRC analyzed statewide data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/selectedpopulations.aspx>). According to DESE data, there are 174,505 students with disabilities (consisting of 18.9% of all high school students statewide) enrolled in public high schools in Massachusetts as of October 1, 2021, all who may be potentially eligible for VR services and/or who may benefit from Pre-ETS services. Based on this data and the continued high need for Pre-ETS services demonstrated throughout the CSNA as described above, MRC forecasts that once again, during FY2022 that it will need to expend its entire 15% expenditure requirement of VR funds to provide Pre-ETS services as required under



WIOA (approximately \$6.3 million) in order to provide the five required Pre-ETS services to students with disabilities (work-based learning experiences, job exploration counseling, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in post-secondary education and other comprehensive training programs, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy). MRC forecasts that due to the fact that the entire 15% is required on required Pre-ETS activities, that no funding will remain to provide authorized pre-employment transition services beyond the five required services due to the high need for Pre-ETS services as demonstrated in this year's CSNA findings and the DESE data.

***k. Annual Estimates***

Describe:

- a. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;

The 2020 U.S. Census determined that the population of Massachusetts was 7,029,917, an increase of 482,288 (+7.4%) from 2010.

The 2020 U.S. Census reported the following demographic profile for the residents of the state:

69.6% were White alone; 7.0% were Black or African American alone; 8.7% were multi-racial; 7.2% were Asian alone; 7.1% were Some Other Race alone; 0.3% were American Indian and Alaska Native alone; 0.1% were Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone. 12.6% were of Hispanic ethnicity (any race).

Based on an analysis of data from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) (<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/selectedpopulations.aspx>), there are 174,505 students with disabilities (consisting of 18.9% of all high school students statewide) enrolled in public high schools in Massachusetts as of October 1, 2021.

In 2019, there were 6,821,140 individuals living in the community in Massachusetts, of which 787,330 were persons with disabilities: a prevalence rate of 11.5%. Of these, 374,563 individuals with disabilities are aged 18 to 64 and living in the community. This is a projection based on available data from the 2020 Disability Statistics Compendium. Thus, our projection is that approximately 500,000 individuals may be eligible for MRC VR services.

[https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/Events/2021\\_release\\_year/Final%20Accessibility%20Compendium%202020%20PDF\\_2.1.2020reduced.pdf](https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/Events/2021_release_year/Final%20Accessibility%20Compendium%202020%20PDF_2.1.2020reduced.pdf)

[https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/Events/2021\\_release\\_year/2020%20Supplement%20reduced.pdf](https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/Events/2021_release_year/2020%20Supplement%20reduced.pdf)

Please note that this is the most up to date information available as of when the State Plan update was developed.

2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:

*A. The VR Program;*

**FFY2023 Annual Estimates: It is estimated that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will provide services with funds provided under Part B of Title I of the Act as follows during FFY2023:**

- New individuals to be provided services to determine eligibility (new applicants): Projection: 7,000
- New individuals to be provided services to determine order of selection priority assignment and vocational rehabilitation needs (new individuals determined eligible): Projection: 6,200
- New Individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments (New IPEs): Projection: 5,500
- New Individuals with most significant disabilities to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments (New IPEs, Most Significantly Disabled): Projection: 2,750
- Total Eligible Individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services (new and existing): Projection: 23,000

**FFY2024 Annual Estimates: It is estimated that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will provide services with funds provided under Part B of Title I of the Act as follows during FFY2024:**

- New individuals to be provided services to determine eligibility (new applicants): Projection: 7,600
- New individuals to be provided services to determine order of selection priority assignment and vocational rehabilitation needs (new individuals determined eligible): Projection: 6,800
- New Individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments (New IPEs): Projection: 6,200
- New Individuals with most significant disabilities to be provided vocational rehabilitation services necessary to render them employable consistent with an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and subsequent amendments (New IPEs, Most Significantly Disabled): Projection: 3,100

- Total Eligible Individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services (new and existing): Projection: 24,000

*B. The Supported Employment Program; and*

MRC will be utilizing Title I and Title VI B funds to provide Supported Employment services. It is estimated that the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission will provide Supported Employment services with Title I and Title VI funds to 450 individuals annually in both FFY2023 and FFY2024.

*C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;*

During FFY2022/PY2021, MRC estimates we will serve 23,000 consumers, excluding potentially eligible students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services. MRC is not operating under an order of selection and all categories are open for services as of this time.

- The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and  
MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure but is not operating under an Order of Selection at the current time. All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.
- The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

**FFY2022 Estimates:**

Based upon current forecasting, it is estimated that the costs of services with VR funds will be approximately \$70.2 million dollars in FFY2022.

MRC estimates it will serve 23,000 eligible individuals in the VR program in FFY2023. MRC has an order of selection policy and procedure but is not operating under an OOS and all categories are open at this time. Estimates of cost per category (all consumers are being served) are broken down as follows:

Disability Priority Category 1 (Most Significantly Disabled): 9,890 consumers, total cost of service, \$31,050,000, average cost per individual in category: \$3,139

Disability Priority Category 2 (Significantly Disabled): 11,040 consumers, total cost of service, \$28,400,000, average cost per individual in category: \$3,025

Disability Priority Category 3 (Disabled): 2,070 consumers, total cost of service, \$5,762,360,000, average cost per individual in category: \$2,784

Potentially Eligible Consumers receiving Pre-ETS: 3,000 students, cost of service \$6,300,000, average cost per student: \$2,100

**FFY2023 Estimates:**

Based upon current forecasting, it is estimated that the costs of services with VR funds will be approximately \$70.7 million dollars in FFY2023. MRC has an order of selection policy and procedure but is not operating under an OOS and all categories are open at this time. Estimates of cost per category (all consumers are being served) are broken down as follows:

MRC estimates it will serve 24,000 eligible individuals in the VR program in FFY2023, broken down as follows:

Disability Priority Category 1 (Most Significantly Disabled): 10,320 consumers, total cost of service \$31,300,000, average cost per individual in category: \$3,033

Disability Priority Category 2 (Significantly Disabled): 11,520 consumers, total cost of service, \$33,600,000, average cost per individual in category: \$2,917

Disability Priority Category 3 (Disabled): 2,160 consumers, total cost of service, \$5,814,000, average cost per individual in category: \$2,692

Potentially Eligible Consumers receiving Pre-ETS: 3,000 students, cost of service \$6,300,000, average cost per student: \$2,100

***I. State Goals and Priorities***

The designated State unit must:

1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has developed the following goals and priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs in collaboration with the SRC. These have been identified based on the most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) during fiscal year 2021 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. They are also based on recommendations and input from the SRC, and input from MRC Senior Management. Additionally, these goals include the new WIOA Common Performance Measures. MRC will review progress towards these goals on at least a quarterly basis with senior management and the SRC. The SRC was involved with the development of the goals and has agreed to these goals.

2. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.

MRC has based its goals and priorities on the most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) during fiscal year 2021 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. They are based on recommendations and input from the SRC, and input from MRC Senior Management. Additionally, these goals include the new WIOA Common Performance Measures. The SRC was involved in the development of these goals as well.

The MRC has formulated agency specific goals following recommendations in conjunction with recommendations from the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. These goals were formulated with the five WIOA Combined State Plan goals in mind; each of the 22 MRC goals below have been identified and categorized as falling within at least one of the four statewide goals. Targets will be reviewed on an annual basis during the 4-year state plan and will be included in the two-year plan update.

**Overall Massachusetts WIOA Combined State Plan Goals:**

- Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.
- Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.
- Improve career mobility and unsubsidized employment outcomes for youth.
- Ensure Massachusetts has a world-class service delivery system by integrating use of modern tools and techniques.

**MRC Goal 1:**

Create career pathways for job seekers through increasing Employment Outcomes through placement, training, and Job Driven Trainings provided through MRC's Job Placement Unit, Employer Account Management System, and Annual Statewide Hiring Event. Continue to coordinate these business engagement efforts with WIOA partners as part of the overall MassHire Massachusetts workforce system.

This aligns with Goal II of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

### Key Performance Indicators:

Continue measuring Key Performance Indicators related to Successful Employment Outcomes (SEO's) including:

- Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes for Vocational Rehabilitation Division and percentage change over the prior year's results
- Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes achieved through the involvement of the MRC in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year's results
- Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 closures) with Employers participating in MRC's Account Management System in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year's results
- Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 Closures) from consumers participating in MRC's annual Statewide Hiring Event in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year's results

### Target:

#### MRC's target goals:

- 3,200 Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC's Vocational Rehabilitation Division and 3% a positive percentage change over prior year results, with 15% of all VR eligible consumers served achieving a successful employment outcome.
- Exceed 400 Successful Employment Outcomes, or 11% of all SEOs, for MRC's Job Placement Unit annually and a positive percentage change over prior year results
- Exceed 200 Employment Outcomes, or 5.5% of all SEOs, from Employer Account Management System annually
- 40% Successful Employment Outcomes for consumers participating in Statewide Hiring Event achieve an annually, a 3% increase over prior year's outcomes

### Data Sources:

MRCIS, OneMRC (future)

### Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

### Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.

**MRC Goal 2:**

Continue to operate a joint venture using the MRC Competitive Integrated Employment Service (CIES) program and the Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) program with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to increase employment outcomes and create career pathways to better meet the needs of individuals with Behavioral Health needs utilizing the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Model and the CIES Pay for Performance competitive employment model.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

MRC will evaluate the ACCS program based on Key Performance Indicators:

- MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with ACCS Counselors
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with CIES-ACCS providers
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with internal Job Placement Services
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers having a completed IPE within 45 days from eligibility
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiating Placement Services from CIES-ACCS providers or MRC Job Placement Unit Staff as part of their ACCS services
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers receiving Benefits Planning as part of their MRC ACCS services
  - a. MRC ACCS Job Seekers successfully being placed into employment through CIES-ACCS and MRC Job Placement Unit services
  - b. MRC ACCS Job Seekers are successfully maintaining employment for 90 and 180 days through ACCS-CIES and Internal MRC Job Placement services
  - c. MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed who are working an average and median of 20+ hours/week
  - d. MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed receiving an average hourly wage of \$15/hour and a median hourly wage of \$14.25/hour
  - e. 80% of MRC ACCS Job Seekers satisfied with CIES-ACCS Services they received

Target:

- MRC ACCS Counselors will serve 1,500 job seekers annually based on the caseload capacity goal of 50 per caseload, 60% or more of cases will have eligibility completed within 20 days of application
- 150 ACCS Job Seekers engaging with internal Job Placement Services annually
- 60% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers will have a completed IPE within 40 days from eligibility.
- 65% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiating Placement Services from CIES-ACCS providers within the program year.
- 70% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers with Social Security Insurance or Social Security Disability Insurance are receiving Benefits Planning as part of their MRC ACCS services
- 40% of MRC ACCS Job Seekers will be successfully being placed into employment through CIES-ACCS and MRC Job Placement Unit services.
- 75% of Job Seekers will successfully maintaining employment after placement for 90 and 180 days through ACCS-CIES and Internal MRC Job Placement services.
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed work an average and median of 25 hours/week.
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed receive an average hourly wage of \$15/hour and a median hourly wage of \$14.25/hour.
- MRC ACCS 80% of Job Seekers are satisfied with CIES-ACCS Services they received.

Data Sources:

MRCIS, CIES-ACCS Vendor Reports, MRC Satisfaction Survey

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated on an ongoing basis, including quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.



**MRC Goal 3:**

Operate the Empower to Employ program in collaboration with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) in order to work to improve services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF support utilizing the Integrated Resource Team Model and the Pay for Performance competitive employment model. This project is part of MRC's efforts with its WIOA partners to align and coordinate services amongst state partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

MRC will evaluate the Empower to Employ program using Key Performance Indicators with DTA and will update as required. Use data from Key Performance Indicators to develop targets during PY2022 and PY2023 based on PY2021 data.

**Target:**

- Increase services to allow 100 or more placements annually for the project.
- Expand project sites from 5 to 8 by the end of PY2023.
- Employed project participants will earn an average hourly wage of \$16.50 or more and work an average of 30 hours or more per week.

**Data Sources:**

MRCIS

**Frequency of Evaluation:**

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

**Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:**

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 4:**

Maximize Employment Retention for MRC Consumers Employed at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Second Quarter after Exit.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Measure the following metric in order to gauge progress toward Goal 4:

- Employment Rate at the 2nd Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings.

Target:

Initial target is 52% pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data.

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 5:**

Maximize Employment Retention of competitive employment for MRC Consumers Employed at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Fourth Quarter after Exit and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 5:

- Employment Rate at the 4th Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings

**Target:**

Initial target is 49% pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

**Data Sources:**

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data

**Frequency of Evaluation:**

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

**Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:**

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 6:**

Increase Median Quarterly Earnings for MRC Consumers Employed in competitive employment at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Second Quarter after Exit.

This aligns with Goal III of the Combined Overall WIOA State Plan based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 6:

- Median Quarterly Earnings at the 2nd Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings.

**Target:**

Initial target is \$4,500 quarterly earning pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

**Data Sources:**

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data.

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Increase credentialing and job placement outcomes for individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment.

**MRC Goal 7:**

Maximize the Number and Proportion of MRC Consumers with Recognized Secondary and/or Post-Secondary Credential Attainment during Participation in the MRC VR Program.

This aligns with Goal III of the Combined Overall WIOA State Plan and based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 7:

- Percent of MRC Consumers obtaining post-secondary education credentials and/or obtaining a secondary school diploma or equivalent during participation in the MRC VR Program (or up to 1 year after exit from program).
  - For proportion, previous number divided by the total number of consumers served during the program year.

Target:

Initial target is 22% based on currently available data and monitoring of progress. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Level of Education Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 quarterly reporting.

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 8:**

Maximize the Percentage of MRC Consumers Enrolled in Education and Training Programs leading to a recognized credential or employment achieving measurable skills gains during the Program Year.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 8:

- Percent of MRC Consumers enrolled in education and training programs leading to employment or a recognized post-secondary credential achieving measurable skills gains during the program year with documented progress divided by total number of consumers enrolled in education or training in MRCIS.

Target:

40% is the proposed target to be submitted in the state plan. Pending establishment of negotiated targets from RSA for PY22 and PY23.

Data Sources:

Level of Education Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 quarterly reporting, WIOA Annual Report

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

### **MRC Goal 9:**

Provide Effective Services to Employers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to ensure retention rates of individuals placed in competitive employment.

This aligns with Goal I of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

### **Key Performance Indicators:**

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 9:

- (a) Employment retention rate with the same employer at 2nd and 4th quarter after exit for MRC consumers closed during the current program year (Status 26 Closures) based on Employer Tax ID (EIN) in Unemployment Insurance Wage Data.
- (b) Number of repeat business customers (defined as a business where MRC places more than one job seeker during the program year)

### **Target:**

- 400 or more repeat business customers annually where multiple job seekers are placed into employment. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2024.
- Initial Target is 70% of job seekers retained at the same employer between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit. Establish and refine target based on baseline of data and track progress on performance. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2024.

### **Data Sources:**

Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data, WIOA Annual Report.

### **Frequency of Evaluation:**

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

### **Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:**

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 10:**

Maximize Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Job Seekers for 90 Days or more and establish a new annual program outcome goal. Reset goal and target annually based on performance.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 10:

- Total Sum and Percentage of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Consumers for the Current Program Year (Status 26 Closures).

**Target:**

- Achieve 3,200 or more successful employment outcomes in the program year.
- Achieve an Employment Rate at closure of 55.8% statewide as a result of consumer attaining successful employment outcomes.

**Data Sources:**

Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS, Monthly Key Performance Indicators Tracking Report

**Frequency of Evaluation:**

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

**Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:**

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 11:**

Maximize the number of Consumers Exiting the MRC VR Program whose Primary Source of Economic Support is from their own Employment Earnings.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Next Steps:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 11:

- Proportion of Individuals Successfully Closed in Status 26 in the current fiscal year with an RSA-911 Employment Status Code of Competitive Employment in MRCIS with hourly wages at or above minimum wage (the higher of either State or Federal Minimum Wage; currently Massachusetts is higher at \$12.75) whose Primary Source of Support at Closure is Personal Income (Code 1) minus the proportion of those consumers whose primary source of support at application was personal income (Code 1).

Target:

Ratio of 65% or more.

Data Sources:

MRCIS, Monthly Key Performance Indicators Tracking Report.

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated monthly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 12:**

Fully implement the re-design of Pre-ETS Services to Eligible and Potentially Eligible students (14 – 22) Maximize the Number and Percentage of high school students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services, including work-based learning experiences (Pre-ETS/Potentially Eligible) from MRC, either eligible or potentially eligible. Continue to coordinate Pre-ETS service delivery with partners and schools.

This aligns with Goal IV of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 12:

- Number of students (potentially eligible and eligible) receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) from MRC and its contracted providers during the program year.



- Percent of students initiating services for each of the five Pre-ETS services (Work-Based Learning, Job Exploration Counseling, Counseling on Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education, Workplace Readiness Training, Self-Advocacy) from MRC and its contracted provider.
- Completion of an annual program evaluation report on Pre-ETS services provided by MRC and present findings to the SRC and MRC leadership.
- Explore ways to work with DESE and other partners to coordinate Pre-ETS services.

Target:

- Serve 3,000 or more students receiving one or more of the five Pre-ETS services during the program year.
- An average of 60% of students will initiate services for each of the five Pre-ETS services (Work-Based Learning, Job Exploration Counseling, Counseling on Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education, Workplace Readiness Training, Self-Advocacy) from MRC and its contracted providers during the program year.
- Completion of an annual program evaluation report on Pre-ETS services provided by MRC and present findings to the SRC and MRC leadership.
- Set up meetings with DESE and workforce partners to discuss coordination of Pre-ETS Services.

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated monthly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 13:**

Maximize the Number and Percentage of youth (defined as ages 14 through 24) consumers served by MRC completing education and training programs, including post-secondary education as part of MRC's efforts to coordinate services for youths with WIOA partners, including the MassHire workforce system.

This aligns with Goal IV of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 13:

- Number and Percent of Youth Ages 14 to 24 Completing Education and Training Programs. Measured by the flow of Youth Consumers moving from Status 18 Training and Education into Status 20 Job Ready or Status 22 Job Placement during the month/fiscal year divided by the total number of youth consumers served in Status 18 Training and Education during the month/fiscal year.

Target:

At or above 150 or 3% of youth consumers per month completing training or education, annual total of 2200 or 15%

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated monthly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Increase credentialing and job placement outcomes for individuals, including youth with barriers to employment.

**MRC Goal 14:**

Create career pathways for job seekers through maximizing the Number of Successful Competitive Employment outcomes and the percent of Placements leading to Successful Employment Outcomes through MRC's Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) programs in partnership with Community Rehabilitation Providers.

This aligns with Goal II of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 14:

- Total Number of 90 Day Successful Employment Outcomes from CIES Program; Total Number of CIES Successful Employment Outcomes divided by the total number of 30-Day Placements for the CIES Program, % of CIES consumers served achieving a placement.

Target:

- Exceed 600 Successful Employment Outcomes for CIES for the fiscal year and greater than 75% of CIES placements result in successful employment outcomes, and 50% or more of CIES consumers served during the year are placed into employment.
- Complete the redesign and deployment of MRC CIES contracts successfully through the RFP and annual monitoring and program evaluation process to provide CIES Pay for Performance services (Annual Program Evaluation Report).

Data Source:

MRC CIES Quarterly Cumulative Utilization Report and Annual Program Evaluation Report

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated monthly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.

**MRC Goal 15:**

Continue to provide consumers with an avenue to access employment and training opportunities through participation in the Donated Vehicle Program in partnership with Good News Garage and exploring other transportation partnerships.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 15:

- Number of Consumers Participating in the Donated Vehicle Program who obtain a successful employment outcome or who enter training and education

(Status 18) divided by the number of consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year.

- Research additional transportation partnerships to assist with transportation including programs related to bicycling.

Target:

1. Greater than 90% of Consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year result in successful employment outcomes or enrollment in training or education (Status 18).
2. Issue 100 vehicles per program year utilizing the RFR process, for a total of 400 over the 4-year period.
3. Number of individuals who may be employed as a result of this program.
4. 90% or greater satisfaction with the program.
5. Completion of research on additional transportation partnerships and presentation of a report to leadership and the SRC.

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 16:**

Provide Quality Vocational Rehabilitation Services leading to increased successful employment outcomes to individuals with Autism. Coordinate services for individuals with Autism with partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 16:

- Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Cause Code of 08 and employment rate for these consumers.
- Number of consumers served on the Autism Spectrum

Target:

- Equal or greater to 200 consumers employed per program year
- 75% employment rate or greater for consumers on the autism spectrum receiving Life Mapping services
- 55.8% or greater employment rate for consumers with autism spectrum receiving VR services

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 17:**

Continued Outreach to the Asian community to identify strategies for serving this underserved population.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Implementation of additional Focus Groups to MRC regions with high concentrations of Asian community, such as Braintree and Boston
- Increase in the number and percent of Asian consumers served by MRC

Target:

- Complete focus groups or community meetings in Braintree and/or Boston, and/or other areas with high population concentration of Asian communities by the end of the program year, with consultation of the diversity and bilingual committees to review results and to develop best practices in collaboration

with community organizations for increasing outreach efforts and services to the Asian community based on the comprehensive needs assessment survey conducted by the SRC, to present to agency leadership.

- Develop and implement a new consumer engagement program which will include coordination of outreach services to community organizations in areas with underserved populations.
- Increase in the number and percent of Asian consumers served by MRC from prior year.

Data Sources:

Program evaluation program data, MRCIS, SRC engagement work plan.

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 18:**

Research Best Practices Models to create career pathways and increase employment of Individuals with Disabilities based on recommendations provided by the SRC Executive Committee.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Completion of research of best practices, models, or capstone projects for the development of new programs intended to provide enhanced training and job placement for individuals with disabilities for presentation to the leadership team and the SRC.

Target:

Completion of research and completion of a report by the end of the program year for presentation to MRC Leadership and the SRC.

Data Sources:

CSAVR, Google/Electronic Reference Libraries.

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 19:**

Expand the use of occupational goal information from MRC job seekers to inform job placement efforts. Share occupational data and coordinate sharing of labor market information with WIOA Workforce Partners including MassHire.

This aligns with Goal V of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Develop a report of MRC job seekers based on vocational goals in the MRCIS system by Standard Occupational Code (SOC Code) compared to job placements and outcomes for job seekers by SOC Code.
- Track placements and occupational goals by SOC code and SOC category.
- Research strategies for linking occupational code data with industry classification data.
- Revamp labor market information reports for MRC staff.

Target:

1. Complete reports and presentation of findings to agency leadership and the Job Placement Unit by the end of the program year.
2. Research strategies and develop recommendations for linking occupational code and industry classification data to guide job placement efforts, sector employment, and to assist with coordination of business services with WIOA partners.
3. Complete new labor market report templates for MRC staff.

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Ensure Massachusetts has a world-class service delivery system by integrating use of modern tools and techniques.

**MRC Goal 20:**

Research and develop ways to conduct outreach to college students and other groups to increase awareness of MRC services and research additional resources to assist MRC consumers who are in post-secondary education programs.

This aligns with Goal V of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Completion of research into ways MRC can outreach to college students to increase awareness of MRC services. Develop additional resources and programs that may assist MRC consumers in post-secondary education program. Present findings to the leadership team and the SRC.

Target:

Completion of research into ways MRC can outreach to college students to increase awareness of MRC services. Develop additional resources and programs that may assist MRC consumers in post-secondary education program. Develop a report and present findings to the leadership team and the SRC.

Data Sources:

Google/Electronic Reference Libraries

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.



Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**MRC Goal 21:**

Implementation of a new MRC MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts.

This aligns with Goals I and III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators:

- MRC will develop Key Performance Indicators for this project with MassHire. Use data from Key Performance Indicators to establish a baseline and develop targets during PY2022 and PY2023 based on PY2021 data.
- Completion of an annual program evaluation report on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program and present findings to the SRC, MRC leadership, and WIOA partners.

Target:

- Completion of Key Performance Indicators, Establishment of baseline data and develop targets by PY2022 based on project data.
- Completion of an annual program evaluation report on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program and complete presentation of findings to the SRC, MRC leadership, and WIOA partners.

Data Sources:

MRCIS, Reports from MassHire

Frequency of Evaluation:

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated annually.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

## **MRC Goal 22:**

Provide Quality Vocational Rehabilitation Services leading to increased successful employment outcomes to individuals with behavioral health needs. Coordinate services for individuals with Behavioral Health Needs<sup>[1]</sup> with partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

### **Key Performance Indicators:**

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 22:

- Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Code of 18 and employment rate for these consumers (excluding those participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program)
- Number of consumers served with a Disability Code of 18 during the program year

### **Target:**

- Equal or greater to 700 consumers employed per program year (excluding those consumers participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program)
- Employment rate of 55.8% or greater for consumers with Disability Code 18 receiving MRC VR services (excluding consumers participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program)

### **Data Sources:**

MRCIS

### **Frequency of Evaluation:**

Progress toward completing this goal will be evaluated quarterly and annually.

### **Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:**

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

<sup>[1]</sup> Behavioral Health Needs are defined by RSA within Policy Directive *RSA-PD-16-04* as Disability Code 18: Psychosocial Impairments (e.g., interpersonal and behavioral impairments, difficulty coping)

- a. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

MRC has based its goals and priorities on the most recent Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) during fiscal year 2021. The purpose of the survey is to capture the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. The goals and priorities are also based on recommendations and input from the SRC and input from MRC Senior Management. Additionally, these goals include the new WIOA Common Performance Measures.

- a. *The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates:*

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) in conjunction with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) conducted its most recent annual Comprehensive Statewide VR Consumer Needs Assessment (CSNA) in the Fall of 2021. The information and findings are incorporated into the MRC's section of the Massachusetts WIOA Combined State Plan, as well as in MRC's Strategic Planning and Quality Assurance activities. The findings on consumer needs listed in the CSNA are presented and shared with MRC Senior Management and VR staff, the full SRC, and other key stakeholders as part of the MRC's State Plan and continuous quality improvement processes. It is also available to the public via the MRC website. The 2021 CSNA process constituted a number of approaches, including: a consumer survey (with additional content for students with disabilities on Pre-Employment Transition Services); focus groups; analysis of key statistical and demographic information and facts taken from the MRCIS system, US Census Bureau Data, Bureau of Labor Statistics Data and the Annual Disability Statistical Compendium, findings from other reports and surveys including the Consumer, Provider, and Counselor Satisfaction surveys; youth and employer surveys; and collaboration and discussion with the SRC and other key stakeholders.

The MRC CSNA report and appendix can be found on MRC's website at the following links: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2021-comprehensive-statewide-needs-assessment/download>.

- b. *the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and* WIOA in its goals and priorities. MRC will continue to report data to RSA on these measures for PY2022 and further program years as specified in the final requirements for the WIOA Combined/Unified State Plan. MRC's Analytics and Quality Assurance department will continue to analyze the data as it becomes available and create a report for management on the common measures. Information on the Common Measures is reported to VR and agency leadership and is presented regularly by MRC Analytics and Quality Assurance staff to MRC counselors and Area Offices. A data dashboard of this information will be developed as part of MRC's initiative to create a new case management system to push data down on these performance measures to staff at area offices and to counselors as applicable.

MRC has developed a series of trainings on WIOA Common Performance Measures, focusing on Measurable Skills Gains and Credential Attainment. A detailed Job Aid, training video, FAQ document, and ongoing technical assistance sessions have been developed and are provided to MRC counselors, supervisors, and managers. Monthly reports have been developed and are sent to VR staff to assist with performance in these areas.

## MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION

### MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION THREE-YEAR PERFORMANCE

WIOA Common Performance Measures	FY19/PY18	FY20/PY19	FY21/PY20
Employment Rate at 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	48.2%	52.2%	50.9%
Employment Rate at 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit	N/A	22.9%	48.4%
Median Quarterly Earnings at 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit	\$4,332.83	\$4,353.52	\$4,444.22
Credential Obtainment Rate	N/A	4.7%	16.9%
Measurable Skills Gains	8.4%	7.3%	21.0%
Effectiveness of Serving Employers –Retention from 2 <sup>nd</sup> to 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit (MRC)	75.0%	65.0%	70.0%
Effectiveness of Serving Employers – Repeat Business Customers (MRC)	11.6%	11.1%	10.8%

- c. *other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.*

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has an active and productive State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). The SRC works closely with the MRC on ways to improve Vocational Rehabilitation Services for individuals with disabilities across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on an ongoing basis.

Information and input from SRC members, SRC committees, quarterly SRC meetings, information from the [SRC annual report](#), and input from other consumer meetings and training were used by MRC to develop its goals best designed to address the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities. The agency and the SRC used the results of their review of consumer satisfaction, the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Report, other evaluation data and reports of the effectiveness of the VR program in their development of the goals and priorities. MRC is working with the SRC to modernize and revamp MRC's Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment processes. The SRC is participating in the working group to assist with setting priorities for the new survey tool, offering guidance on cultural sensitivity in the development and implementation of the tool, and providing consumer feedback at different phases of the work. The work is currently in the bid submission and review stage of the Request for Response.

Additionally, findings and recommendations from RSA monitoring activities conducted under section 107 is also incorporated in MRC's goals. MRC used information from [RSA's 2017 Monitoring Report](#) of MRC in the development of its goals for the State Plan. MRC also incorporated information from focus groups of consumers and stakeholders conducted with Commonwealth Medicine in 2020 and data analysis on diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.

***m. Order of Selection***

Describe:

1. Whether the designated State unit will implement an order of selection.

If so, describe:

- A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection. All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

MRC utilizes a fiscal forecasting process to determine whether to implement its OOS policy and to determine if funding is available to serve all eligible individuals and to determine if categories need to be opened or closed. MRC obtains input, guidance, and an official recommendation from the Statewide Rehabilitation Council as part of the process to determine whether an OOS needs to be established or modified.

A functional assessment is provided to all individuals determined eligible to determine their priority category assignment in accordance with 34 CFR 361.42. The definition of the priority categories and the order to be followed if MRC were to implement an OOS is outlined in MRC's OOS policy VR 19-01.

- B. The justification for the order

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection. All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

- C. The service and outcome goals

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection. All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

- D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order; and

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection. All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

- E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities.

MRC has an Order of Selection (OOS) policy and procedure in place but currently is not operating under an Order of Selection. All categories are open for services and all individuals eligible for VR services are receiving such services.

- If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.

MRC has elected to take the option of provision of services to VR eligible individuals who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment who are at risk of losing their job. These individuals, upon provision of appropriate documentation, will be placed into services. MRC projects that it will serve 400 individuals annually in PY2022 and PY2023 in need of job retention services at an average cost of \$1,000 per individual, resulting in 250 projected employment outcomes annually in both PY2022 and PY2023.

***n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI Funds.***

1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.

MRC will be utilizing Title I funds and Title VI B funds to provide Supported Employment Services. MRC has developed a contingency plan to use Title I funds to provide Supported Employment Services if Title VI B are not appropriated in the federal budget. MRC's Supported Employment Services are provided under the notation that rates, fees, and expenditures are subject to applicable Commonwealth of Massachusetts statutory, regulatory, and related requirements governing purchases of services and goods. Such parameters of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts govern, amongst other things, methods of procurement. Further, all providers of supported employment services need to qualify through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' interagency contractual process. To the maximum extent possible, the Commission and the Commonwealth utilizes procurement methods which facilitate the provision of services in a manner that affords

individuals meaningful choices among the entities (providers) that deliver services.

MRC establishes consumer need for this service on a fiscal year basis and then funds Supported Employment services for those consumers in that specific geographic location to help inform staffing and service delivery needs. In PY22, MRC has a goal to provide Supported Employment Services to 475 consumers across the state through its area offices and its Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) procurement. MRC will prioritize Supported Employment services to consumers with Mental Health needs, Developmental Disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injuries, Autism, and severe learning disabilities, amongst other needs.

2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:

*a. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and*

MRC will use 50% of Title VI B funds as represented by the Supported Employment-B award to provide supported employment services to youth based on their needs and services outlined in their individualized plan for employment. Services will be provided to assist youth with the most significant disabilities in choosing, obtaining, and maintaining competitive employment based on their interest, abilities, and skills. Title VI funds will only be used to provide supported employment services to youth once they are placed in a job. Title I funds will be used to provide supported employment services to youth prior to job placement.

These funds will also be used to provide extended services to up to 4 years for youths with the most significant disabilities until the youth reaches age 25 to assist them in maintaining and advancing in competitive employment. As a contingency plan if Title VI B Supported Employment funds are not appropriated, MRC will also use Title I funds and State funding to provide supported employment services to youth with the most significant disabilities based on their needs.

- b. How the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.*

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission works with other human service agencies to identify and secure funding and comparable benefits for extended supports for individuals in Supported Employment, including youth with the most significant disabilities. Funding for extended services is available from several sources, contingent upon the consumer's disability, eligibility, and the resources available to each state agency. This service

delivery system is currently in place enabling state agencies to cost share the appropriate services needed for consumers to choose, find, and maintain meaningful competitive supported employment. With the implementation of this initiative to partner with other human service agencies, we have seen an increase in the availability of resources for extended services. However, the available funding is administered at local levels and each situation handled individually. Sources of funding include:

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (State Revenue), Department of Developmental Services, Department of Mental Health, Medicaid Waiver Supported Employment Services, MRC Statewide Head Injury Program, Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Social Security Administration Work Incentives, as well as Natural Supports from employers and other comparable benefits.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission continues to promote collaboration with stakeholders regarding supported employment services and extended services. This is also evidenced in the number of jointly-funded programs that have developed. Some examples of these collaborative programs are services jointly funded for individuals with intellectual disabilities between the MRC and the Developmental Disability Services (DDS); for expansion of partnership between MRC and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) for individuals with mental health needs; for individuals who have traumatic brain injuries in conjunction with the Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP) of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission; and for the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

***c. State's Strategies***

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, in cooperation with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), conducted a needs assessment (CSNA) during Federal Fiscal Year 2021 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state. Strategies of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment programs are established consistent with the needs and trends identified in the survey results as necessary for vocational rehabilitation to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expand activities. These strategies are



designed to overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs and promote the abilities of people with disabilities to reduce stigmas. Strategies are developed with consultation of the SRC and other stakeholders.

Some strategies developed through this process, as described in the sections below, include development and refinement of MRC's pre-employment transition service (Pre-ETS) contracting; the development of a new employment model with the Department of Mental Health to assist consumers with mental health needs to obtain employment (This new model is designed to rapidly engage individuals in the Vocational Rehabilitation process.); and expansion of a project with the Department of Transitional Assistance to use the concepts of the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) model to engage and employ individuals with disabilities receiving TANF benefits, among other strategies.

MRC was recently awarded a 5-year Innovation Demonstration Grant project from the Rehabilitation Services administration. This program is focused on developing new strategies and practices to serve young adults as an alternative to standard VR, focused on enhancing factors shown to have a positive impact on employment and career advancement, leading to increased employment and wages. MRC also recently completed a 5-year demonstration grant called Transition Pathway Services, funded by RSA, which focused on the provision of work-based learning experiences. The results from the grant are being evaluated and lessons learned will be used to develop additional best practices in this area and continue to improve transition and Pre-Employment transition services in partnership with schools and providers.

Recognizing the critical need for access to technology during the pandemic, MRC was able to identify and deploy resources to assist with technology needs of consumers who are eager to return to work, including the deployment of laptops, printers, monitors, keyboards and mice, and headsets. In addition to equipment, MRC has provided funding for a "software essentials" training class.

MRC is also implementing strategies to increase the use of data driven decision making. MRC is developing a new case management system known as OneMRC for its Vocational Rehabilitation and Community Living divisions. The goal for this system is to provide additional automated reporting for managers, supervisors, and counselors to be able to easily access information at the statewide, district, office, and counselor level to inform decisions to help improve service delivery to MRC consumers, including the use of Tableau to provide interactive dashboards to staff to assist with measuring agency performance on WIOA Common Measures and other

Key Performance Indicators. This will also include consumer and provider portals into the system to help improve services.

MRC is also working with Synergy Consulting with creating processes for greater fiscal agility, fiscal stability, and fiscal accountability within the agency. The goal is to connect and create partnerships between the financial side and program side of MRC, helping to improve service delivery. Synergy is also helping MRC to revamp its Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment surveys to develop and implement an innovative data collection platform to assess consumer experience and engagement with MRC services. A RFR has been released for this project.

2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.

MRC provides an array of assistive technology services and devices to individuals with disabilities through all parts of the VR program and with partners.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is the state operator of the programs funded under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology, the Assistive Technology Program, and the Assistive Technology Loan Program that provides low-interest loans to consumers when other resources are not available to purchase needed adaptive technology.

In 2021, MRC's Vocational Rehabilitation Division collaborated with MRC's MassMATCH AT Act program to carry out a number of projects related to Assistive Technology and employment. Through these projects, MassMATCH's three AT Regional Centers in Boston, Worcester and Pittsfield increased access to AT devices related to employment, as well as provided training opportunities for staff of MRC, providers, employers, educators, or others who work with individuals with disabilities in achieving their employment goals. The overall purpose of the initiatives was to expand access to and awareness of AT and how it can help individuals with disabilities achieve employment-related goals.

The audience reached was made up of MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and others who work to assist MRC consumers achieve their employment goals. A total of 500 plus people were able to learn about assistive technology in ways they had not before.

MRC also participates in the REquipment program in collaboration with the Department of Developmental Services. REquipment is a durable medical

equipment (DME) re-use program offering free refurbished wheelchairs, scooters, shower chairs and more to adults, children and elders living across Massachusetts. This assistive technology service helps people with disabilities in addressing equipment needs to assist them in meeting their employment goals and living independently in the community.

Another program is the MRC Adaptive Assistance program, operated by MRC and two contracted providers, Easter Seals and United Cerebral Palsy. For the purposes of this program, adaptive assistance is defined as devices, aids, and enhancements for the elimination of barriers encountered by individuals with disabilities, primarily individuals with the most significant disabilities. Adaptive assistance is defined as services that either:

1. supplements or enhances functions of the individual or
2. that impacts their environment through changes, e.g., workshop modifications. Rehabilitation technology specialists may prescribe both types of rehabilitation technology services in order to create and/or maximize employment opportunities for an individual with a disability. The rehabilitation technology services are provided to open and/or expand vocational rehabilitation and employment opportunities.

MRC also provides vehicle modification and home modification services to Vocational Rehabilitation consumers with disabilities. The Vehicle Modification Program provides driving evaluations, vehicle modifications and equipment installation to privately owned vehicles of individuals with disabilities to enable them to achieve an employment outcome by removing barriers to transportation.

Vehicle modification services include structural (major) vehicle modifications, non-structural (minor) vehicle modifications and driver evaluation services. Structural modifications may include a lowered floor on mini and full-size vans, raised roof, raised entry, automatic wheelchair lift, automatic door opener, servo primary controls, reduced-effort steering and braking and similar modifications. Non-structural modifications may include mechanical hand controls, car-top wheelchair carriers, scooter lifts, steering knobs, and similar modifications.

In 2020 RSA authorized MRC to purchase two evaluation vehicles equipped with a variety of conventional and high-tech vehicle modifications to be used by MRC Vehicle Modification Program in evaluating consumers for driving and for general transportation needs. Last year the Commission awarded a contract to one of our long-term vendors to purchase, modify and equip two minivans,

Honda Odyssey and Chrysler Pacifica. Each vehicle will be equipped with a lowered floor, automatic ramp and with conventional as well as a high-tech driving equipment.

The vehicles and equipment would be from different competing manufacturers allowing for evaluating of consumers with a wide range of disabilities and for competitively procuring vehicle modifications. The Honda minivan will be modified by VMI of Phoenix, AZ and will receive a set of high-tech evaluation equipment by EMC Corporation of Augusta, ME. The Chrysler minivan will be modified by Braunability, of Winamac, IN and equipped with a high-tech evaluation package from Paravan, a German company.

MRC is in a process of awarding a “hosting” contract for both vehicles to a local driving school that provides driver evaluations and driver training services to our consumers.

The Adaptive Housing Program provides housing evaluations, architectural services, housing modifications, and equipment installation to individuals with disabilities to enable them to achieve an employment outcome by removing barriers to living in their current home.

Adaptive Housing services include major and minor home modifications. Major home modifications may include wheelchair ramps and lifts, stairlifts, bathroom modifications (such as roll-in showers, roll under sinks, higher toilets, and wider doors), and kitchen modifications (such as lowered counters, and roll under cooktops). Minor Home Modifications may include door openers, grab bars, handrails, and widening of doors.

Vehicle Modification and Home Modification services are available to MRC consumers who need these services in their Individualized Plans for Employment.

MRC also works with employers to help facilitate accommodations and to facilitate the provision of on-the-job assistive technology devices to individuals with disabilities employed through the MRC Vocational Rehabilitation program.

Persons served under MRC’s Assistive Technology programs described above are applicants or consumers of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The target population is individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom rehabilitation technology services are considered to potentially eliminate barriers to vocational rehabilitation and/or

enhance vocational rehabilitation and employment opportunities. These services are available statewide.

Population includes:

1. Potential applicants undergoing evaluation of vocational rehabilitation, especially when the disabling condition of the individual is of such a nature and severity that the inability of rehabilitation technology services to eliminate barriers to and/or enhance capacities could result in a determination of ineligibility;
2. Eligible vocational rehabilitation consumers for whom rehabilitation technology is being considered to assist the consumer to attain intermediate objectives and long-range rehabilitation goals; and
3. Eligible employed individuals to eliminate barriers to and/or enhance capacities for successful job performance.

Adaptive assistance evaluations, training, and consultations for individuals with disabilities served by the vocational rehabilitation program were:

1. Assessments of functional capacities of individuals with disabilities to include determinations of if and how the provision of rehabilitation technology services is likely to affect the capacity of the individual to perform successfully in competitive employment and/or enhance opportunities for the development of capacities for competitive employment;
2. Recommendations of specific rehabilitation technology for individuals with disabilities to include descriptions of related barriers to be eliminated and descriptions of functional capacities to be attained;
3. Rehabilitation technology training to affect the capacity of the individual with a disability to utilize specific assistive technology devices (equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities) and thus perform successfully in competitive employment and/or enhance opportunities for the development of capacities for competitive employment; and
4. Consultations to be provided to Commission staff to address the elimination of disability-related barriers, improvement of

opportunities for competitive employment, and the development of functional capacities of individuals.

5. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

MRC is focused on strategies ensuring equity in service delivery to consumers from all community and has made a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, including outreach to and serving individuals from minority and underserved communities. MRC is hiring a DEIA manager to oversee the agency's DEIA efforts. This role will report directly to the Commissioner and will be on the Executive Team. MRC is also working on the creation of a DEI Strategy and Implementation Plan and has created a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Council consisting of a cross-section of stakeholders. Goals, plans, and strategies are being developed to increase outreach to minority community with the goal of increasing their participation in the MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

MRC has made a commitment to outreach to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities, especially to Asian communities who have been identified as underserved. MRC is committed to having bilingual staff to more effectively reach those communities and to the expectation that directors from local area offices be involved in outreach to local community agencies and organizations, especially those that serve ethnic and cultural minorities. MRC is working on efforts to improve outreach to all communities to ensure equity in access to MRC VR services.

MRC also has an ongoing statewide Bilingual/Bicultural vocational rehabilitation counselor group who meet on a regular basis to discuss and share resources on how to outreach to and serve cultural and ethnic minorities, develop new or translate existing agency forms and brochures, and develop and conduct training programs in collaboration with MRC's Learning and Development Department for local and district offices. These counselors will continue to reach out to these populations and work to break down barriers to seeking and enrolling in vocational rehabilitation services. In addition, as populations grow MRC will continue increasing its data collection in areas related to DEIA to track progress.

MRC is also working to redesign and modernize its platforms for obtaining consumer input. MRC has launched an Office of Consumer and Family Engagement and is working in partnership with the SRC to

develop and implement an innovative data collection platform to assess consumer experience and engagement with MRC services, with focus on DEIA principles and practices to ensure MRC is hearing the voices of all its consumers from all communities to ensure their needs are being met.

MRC has translated key forms and informational materials into Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, French Creole, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese as outlined in MRC's Language Access Plan. MRC has also translated all correspondence letters in its electronic case management system into Asian languages spoken by MRC staff including Cantonese and Mandarin Chinese, Khmer, and Vietnamese. MRC also has contracts for foreign language translation services. As part of its working group established to work on outreach to the Asian and other diverse communities, MRC will be seeking to develop and translate new outreach and referral information.

MRC will continue to work with its Employee Resource Groups, Bilingual Committee, the SRC, its DEIA council, the Office of Consumer and Family Engagement, and other groups to focus on goals and strategies for outreach to diverse and underserved communities.

3. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and Pre-Employment Transition Services).

Based on the findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, MRC continues to implement strategies to address the needs of students with disabilities, including Pre-Employment Transition Services, through many efforts, including a multi-million-dollar procurement to provide Pre-ETS services to eligible and potentially eligible consumers. For eligible consumers, specific services are addressed in the consumers' individualized plan for employment based on their interests, choice, and needs. MRC continues its efforts to closely coordinate transition services and Pre-Employment Transition Services with local educational agencies. MRC has also worked with schools and its service providers on remote service delivery strategies to ensure youths and students with disabilities continued to receive transition and pre-employment transition services during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Through its MOU with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), MRC operates a working group to identify needs and best practices to improve and expand services for students with disabilities, including Pre-Employment Transition Services. MRC will continue to work closely with DESE to further coordinate service efforts and DESE has produced guidance for

local school districts on working with MRC to coordinate transition services, including amending and refining the MOU as needed. This is incorporated as part of MRC's strategic planning process.

MRC has a Transition team approach to oversee transition, coordination with educational authorities, and implementation of strategies to improve and expand services to students with disabilities. MRC recently completed a 5-year federal demonstration grant entitled Transition Pathway Services to promote best practices for Pre-ETS and Work-Based learning. MRC will use lessons from this grant to incorporate best practices for coordinating Pre-Employment Transition Services and transition services to students and youths with disabilities going forward.

4. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.

MRC and community rehabilitation providers continue to work closely to operate a variety of programs and services to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve suitable employment outcomes. These programs include Vocational Services; Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES), MRC's revised Pre-Employment Transition Services procurement (including provision of Pre-ETS to potentially eligible students), the MRC-DMH Employment project, and many other support services that are essential in vocational rehabilitation.

MRC has adjusted the CIES model based on lessons learned and input from its staff, Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP) partners, and other stakeholders. These adjustments were designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CIES services for MRC consumers. MRC also incorporated peer support and flexible supports into the CIES procurement. MRC has worked with CRPs to ensure services can be delivered in remote and hybrid structures to consumers as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

MRC is also working closely with CRPs on a project with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to provide contracted employment services under the CIES program for consumers participating in the Department of Mental Health's Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS) model. As part of MRC ACCS services through CIES, MRC has entered into Business Associate Agreements (BAAs) with CIES ACCS providers to assist with facilitating and coordinating services between MRC, DMH, and providers for participating consumers.

MRC and community providers collaborate in developing programs and services in such forums as: Statewide Rehabilitation Council that meets quarterly, meetings with representatives of the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers, meetings with the Massachusetts Providers Council, periodic district wide meetings with community rehabilitation programs, interagency and cross disability agency councils, task specific work teams, the



Massachusetts Association of People Supporting Employment First (MAAPSE), the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Association (MRA), and other provider trade groups across the Commonwealth. In addition, MRC Business Improvement Partners and MRC local area office staff also conduct quarterly review meetings to assess performance and provide feedback to assist CRPs providing services for MRC.

5. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.

MRC has established an electronic reporting and performance measurement system to monitor, analyze, and report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs. This system will allow the agency to make improvements to ensure optimal performance in accordance with the WIOA common performance measures. MRC continues to collect data on these measures and began reporting data to RSA in the fall of 2017. MRC has also developed and provided several trainings in coordination with WINTAC on the Common Performance Measures which has been delivered to MRC managers, staff, and the SRC. MRC also participates in a cross-agency workgroup with workforce partners on performance measurement under the Common Measures.

MRC continues to develop strategies designed to improve MRC's performance under the WIOA Common Performance Measures. MRC is focusing on the development of strategies to promote the placement of consumers into high quality careers with higher wages and benefits. MRC will also be developing training strategies for staff and its provider network to focus on high quality employment outcomes and seek ways to increase the median wage by focusing on more full-time jobs rather than part-time jobs. MRC will also strive to provide benefits planning on the front end of the placement process to ensure consumers understand how working may affect public benefits they may be receiving and to know about work benefits that are available for them to obtain high paying and self-sustainable employment. MRC was also awarded a 5-year Innovation Demonstration Grant project from the Rehabilitation Services administration. This program is focused on developing new strategies and practices to serve young adults as an alternative to standard VR, focused on enhancing factors shown to have a positive impact on employment and career advancement, leading to increased employment and wages.

MRC has developed a series of ongoing trainings on WIOA Common Performance Measures, focusing on Measurable Skills Gains and Credential Attainment. A detailed Job Aid, training video, FAQ document, and ongoing technical assistance sessions have been developed and are provided to MRC counselors, supervisors, and managers. Monthly reports have been developed and are sent to VR staff to assist with performance in these areas. As part of its initiative to develop a new case management system, MRC will also develop dashboard reports to track performance on the caseload, office, district, and statewide level

to assist with the WIOA Common Measures and other Key Performance Indicators.

6. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

As a key partner in the statewide Workforce Investment system, MRC continues to work towards to strengthen the alignment of the VR program with the other core programs of the workforce development system. MRC subscribes to the overall vision for the Massachusetts Workforce Investment system as described below.

All Massachusetts residents, including individuals with disabilities, will benefit from a seamless system of education and workforce services that supports career pathways for individuals and leads to a more informed, educated, and skilled workforce, which meets the Commonwealth's businesses' demands and sustains a thriving economy. To achieve this vision, Massachusetts will engage businesses to understand their needs and develop an integrated education and workforce system that supports career pathways to prepare residents with foundational, technical, professional skills and information and connections to postsecondary education and training. MRC will work with its core workforce partners to:

- Design career pathways across partners aligned with business demand;
- Improve foundational skills and transition to postsecondary education and training for individuals with barriers to employment;
- Assist individuals to achieve economic self-sufficiency through support services, labor market driven credentialing, and employment; and
- Meet the needs of job seekers and businesses who engage in the public workforce system (including partner programs).

As part of implementing strategies to meet this common vision, MRC is collaborating with other core partners in the workforce investment system to reduce unemployment of individuals with disabilities, to provide effective services to employers throughout the state, and to seek out collaborative opportunities including possible projects and grants that may assist individuals with disabilities across Massachusetts in obtaining competitive employment. MRC has entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with its workforce partners. This MOU outlines the principles for the continued development of the Massachusetts Workforce System. The MOU articulates a coordinated vision for organizing the public workforce system.

MRC continues its efforts to work closely with other partners in the workforce development system to assess performance and develop methods to track shared consumers across the workforce system, among other collaborations. MRC participates in numerous workgroups such as the WIOA Steering Committee, WIOA Systems Integration Workgroup, and other committees who are working

on the alignment and improvement of services under the workforce system, including services to individuals with disabilities. MRC is working with its workforce partners on the development of Workforce Connect as a consumer-facing and staff-facing dashboard and case management overlay to track shared consumers across the workforce system, among others.

Also, MRC continues to work with its workforce partners on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts. MRC continues to work on aligning its services and increasing its presence at the career centers as MRC is a required partner in the Career Center network. The MRC Commissioner serves on the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), and each area director has a formal relationship with at least one career center. In addition, area directors or other MRC staff are on local workforce investment boards. MRC has counselors assigned to each career center who are scheduling hours at the local career centers to provide an array of vocational rehabilitation services. MRC has leasing space at all career centers to further increase MRC's presence and operates a satellite office in the Southbridge Career Center. MRC updates its MOUs and infrastructure and cost-sharing agreements with local areas and the Career Centers on an annual basis which were negotiated on the local level. MRC's assigned counselors and job placement staff continue to work closely with local career centers to provide high quality vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities seeking expanded employment opportunities and to make the career centers more responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities including providing disability sensitivity training for career center staff and ensuring the career centers are accessible to all job seekers.

MRC will also work with its partners such as Community College and employer partners to coordinate training opportunities for individuals with disabilities on nights and weekends to accommodate those who are not able to attend trainings during traditional work hours.

8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:

*A. Achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;*

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, in cooperation with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), conducted a needs assessment during Federal Fiscal Year 2021 to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state. The strategies of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment programs are established by the Senior Leadership Team, consistent with the needs and trends identified in the needs assessment, in order to achieve its goals and priorities, and support innovation and expansion activities. These strategies are designed to overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported

Employment programs. MRC will utilize the following strategies to achieve each of its stated goals and priorities, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment.

- MRC engages in outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities which includes staff outreach to community and state agencies, schools, other public institutions, and the general public by contact and presentation by MRC local office, district, and administrative staff, printed brochures, and consumer meetings and trainings. MRC is working on efforts to improve outreach to all communities to ensure equity in access to MRC VR services. MRC will continue to work with its Employee Resource Groups, Bilingual Committee, the SRC, its DEIA council, the Office of Consumer and Family Engagement, and other groups to focus on outreach to diverse and underserved communities.
- MRC provides Supported Employment Services to consumers statewide through its network of Area Offices, working with community rehabilitation providers, links with the local school system for transitioning youth and other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health, especially through its clubhouse programs.
- MRC continues to work closely with the SRC. A workplan has been created for the MRC and SRC to track progress on the SRC recommendations that informed the development of MRC's goals and strategies. The workplan is blended and braided with the SRC's objectives as listed in their annual report. The SRC with the support of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) engaged a consultant to help the Council to apply Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles and to increase the competency of the Council's leaders and members around the federal mandates of the SRC. In May 2021, the consultants began to assess the Council's strengths and weaknesses, revise our mission and vision to reflect a commitment to DEI, and compile and train us on DEI centric tools to assist the SRC with leadership and operational capacity building. As the SRC infuses DEI principles into its leadership and operational structure, we will be better equipped to support MRC as it performs vocation rehabilitation outreach and service delivery to unserved/underserved individuals with disabilities eligible for and receiving vocational rehabilitation, especially in communities of Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC). The consultancy wrapped up in December 2021 with the presentation of The SRC Five-Year Roadmap to Practice and Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI): 2021-2025. The final version of the roadmap is on target for completion in February 2022 and will be discussed with the MRC Commissioner in March 2022.
- MRC continues to maintain and develop partnerships to help enhance and coordinate services for individuals with disabilities. This includes training

programs with MassHire Career Centers, the Department of Mental Health, and the Empower to Employ Initiative with the Department of Transitional Assistance, among others.

- MRC provides an array of assistive technology services and devices to individuals with disabilities through the VR program and with partners. The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is the state operator of the programs funded under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology, the Assistive Technology Program, and the Assistive Technology Loan Program that provides low-interest loans to consumers when other resources are not available to purchase needed adaptive technology. MRC has identified how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the Vocational Rehabilitation process; and has worked to ensure that assistive technology services and devices are available and provided to individuals with disabilities across the state.
- MRC, in consortium with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (MCDHH), was awarded an Innovation Demonstration Grant project from the Rehabilitation Services administration. This program will serve vocational rehabilitation (VR)-eligible young adults with a disability, ages 18–30. This program is focused on developing new strategies and practices as an alternative to standard VR, focused on enhancing factors shown to have a positive impact on employment and career advancement, namely, self-efficacy, self-awareness, self-sufficiency, and self-advocacy. This program has three phases: Career Readiness; Career Pathways; and, Career Extended Support, and will be delivered via Integrated Resource Teams separate from standard VR. The goal of the project will be for young adults to have improved levels of career readiness and career sustainability, and decreased reliance on public assistance.
- MRC is rolling out an integrated eligibility process for the agency known as MRC Connect. MRC Connect provides a dedicated and virtual team that guides an applicant through a cross-program application process for MRC's VR program as well as MRC's CL programs. A standardized application/referral form on MRC's website initiates the process by collecting information from applicants based on their needs, and then the team engages applicants to streamline their eligibility determination across multiple programs as applicable, including determination of eligibility for VR. The integrated eligibility process is being rolled out in stages, and currently three VR offices

and several MRC Community Living programs are part of this process, with the remaining VR offices and CL programs scheduled to be rolled out in stages through 2022.

- MRC's Analytics and Quality Assurance Department staff conducts ongoing training with agency managers, supervisors, and local staff at meetings and at district and local area offices on the Common Performance Measures and other key performance indicators, and overall agency performance including what they mean, how they are derived from agency statistics and how they impact agency performance. The Analytics and Quality Assurance Department also presents and disseminates information on Common Performance Measures, Data trends, and Needs Assessment results on a regular basis. MRC is developing a new case management system known as OneMRC for its Vocational Rehabilitation and Community Living divisions. The goal for this system is to provide additional automated reporting for managers, supervisors, and counselors to be able to easily access information at the statewide, district, office, and counselor level to inform decisions to help improve service delivery to MRC consumers, including the use of Tableau to provide interactive dashboards to staff to assist with measuring agency performance on WIOA Common Measures and other Key Performance Indicators.

*B. support innovation and expansion activities; and*

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the Commission under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act as Amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. Consistent with the findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and goals and priorities identified in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council, the Commission uses funds to support innovation and expansion activities to address the needs of individuals with disabilities, primarily individuals with the most significant disabilities. Activities include:

- On-The-Job Trainings and Job-Driven Trainings with Employer Partners: MRC continues to expand Job-Driven Trainings (JDT) and On-the-Job (OJT) training and evaluations. MRC has found that many consumers who participate in an OJT or Job-Driven training obtain employment with the OJT or JDT. Other participants can obtain employment elsewhere as a result of their participation in the OJT or JDT because they gained recent work experience and/or developed job-specific skills. MRC has created job driven training programs to date with the Home Depot, CVS Health, Lowes, CISCO, Red River Technologies, G4S Security Solutions, the Kraft Group, MAPFRE Insurance, Advance Auto

Parts, and Enterprise Holdings, and Allied Universal Security Services, amongst other employers. In addition, MRC holds job-driven trainings for human service jobs and addiction recovery jobs MRC also offers paid internships related to job-driven trainings. MRC will also work with its employer partners to coordinate training opportunities for individuals with disabilities on nights and weekends to accommodate those who are not able to attend these trainings during traditional work hours.

- MRC-Department of Mental Health Employment Initiative: MRC coordinates employment services for individuals with mental health needs served by the Department of Mental Health's Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) program in collaboration with DMH and its vendors. The new MRC/DMH Employment Initiative is designed to build an integrated employment framework that inspires and engages innovation to ensure full employment for people with mental health needs at the same rate of employment as the general population. The focus of this initiative is on individuals served by DMH through Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS). These individuals are being referred to MRC for Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services. To serve these individuals, MRC is using an Integrated Resource Team approach, where partner agencies and supports come together to craft and jointly own a Job Seeker's employment goal, to coordinate wrap-around services and ongoing collaboration and communication. MRC has hired dedicated staff with funding through the ISA to work with ACCS referrals. These counselors will have smaller caseloads and will work with MRC CIES providers, DMH providers, DMH, and other MRC staff to rapidly engage with consumers, develop a plan for employment, and coordinate services designed to assist these consumers in achieving successful employment outcomes.
- Consumer Technology Initiative to obtain hardware and software for consumers to assist with accessing services remotely and to assist with applying for and obtaining employment, including technical support from a vendor to assist with issues related to the technology, and training on how to use the technology.
- IT enhancements to modernize the agency's technology and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services. MRC is developing a new case management system for both Vocational Rehabilitation and its Community Living divisions known as OneMRC. This new modern platform will modernize the agency's case management and reporting and will include a provider portal to assist in reporting and tracking the provision of Pre-ETS services to potentially eligible consumers, to enhance tracking and reporting on internal job placement services, to develop a consumer portal for information and referral, and to move the agency to a fully

paperless system. This system will also enhance reporting and data available to staff and will be used to develop reports and data dashboards to bring data down to the office and caseload level to assist with data driven decision making to help improve services to MRC consumers.

- MRC's Job Placement Unit operates an annual Federal Hiring Event in partnership with MCB, other workforce partners, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) in their Boston and Hartford offices. The Hiring Event assists consumers with securing competitive employment comparable with their interests and abilities. MRC prepares consumers to interview for available jobs with employers participating in the event. It focuses on direct job placement with participating employers and is not simply a career fair. MRC will be completing its 10<sup>th</sup> hiring event in 2022. Since 2013, Over 575 individuals have been successfully employed across the Commonwealth through participating in this annual one-day event. The aggregate annual wages of all successfully employed consumers through the hiring event since 2013 is approximately \$12.7 million. Consumers have been employed in a variety of occupations ranging from office and administrative support, health care, protective service, human services, and management occupations, amongst others.
- Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in State Jobs: MRC places numerous individuals with disabilities into state government jobs each year, including at MRC. MRC has a diverse workforce with a high percentage of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. We have a key contact with the state's Human Resources Division to facilitate employment for consumers in state jobs, including the provision of On-The-Job training and internship opportunities with state and federal agencies. The Commonwealth also participates in MRC's annual hiring event to provide information to consumers on available state job opportunities, including how to apply.
- Learn to Earn: MRC is engaged with the Learn to Earn initiative. Learn to Earn is a comprehensive approach to providing unemployed and underemployed individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs with the supports, skills, and credentials they need to gain and retain employment in occupations for which employers have persistent demand. Learn to Earn Programs will help participants set and achieve goals necessary for employment and sustained economic stability, such as maintaining and growing family net resources and minimizing the real or perceived potential impact of increased earned income on benefit receipt, including improving coordination across benefit programs and reducing benefit cliff effects. As part of this program, MRC is providing information on benefits counseling. An interactive data dashboard is also



being developed to show data from multiple state programs to monitor progress.

- Related to the Learn to Earn initiative, MRC partnered with Accenture to address the benefits cliff effect by designing a pilot and requesting SSA to amend administrative and benefit elements of SSI and SSDI programs for Massachusetts' citizens who participate in the pilot. The MRC-Accenture team developed a pilot proposal to create runways to livable wage jobs that will support beneficiaries in jumping, navigating, or avoiding the benefits cliff. This pilot is currently being evaluated by MRC and MRC is awaiting feedback and guidance on next steps from SSA.
- Apprenticeships: MRC will utilize available apprenticeship resources, including the ODEP guide to expand apprenticeship, to provide apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the Commonwealth. As an example, MRC participates in the Merit Apprenticeship Program. Additionally, MRC has obtained a copy of the ODEP guide on apprenticeships. MRC will also work with the Career Centers on providing apprenticeship opportunities for consumers. MRC has leased space at the career centers and has staff dedicated to the career centers to make available the range of career services from Career Centers for MRC consumers. MRC has made a new connection with the Department of Labor and is working on strategies as part of its cybersecurity Job Driven Training program. MRC continues to work directly with the Executive Office of Division of Apprentice Standards to identify apprenticeships within all labor market sectors. Additionally, MRC consumers participate in our On-the-Job Evaluation programs within the Division of Apprentice Standards.
- MRC has developed an Interagency Service Agreement (ISA) with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to develop training programs to assist individuals with disabilities to complete training programs and obtain credentials to be substance abuse counselors. This has been identified as a growth area and a higher compensated profession in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- MRC has developed a partnership with the Career Centers known as the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts.
- MRC partners and contracts with the Asperger/Autism Network's (AANE) Life Management Assistance Program (LifeMAP). This program provides practical assistance to individuals on the Autism Spectrum and other

related conditions. LifeMAP provides intensive, highly individualized coaching by professionals with expertise in both Autism Spectrum Disorder and specific content areas. Coaches focus on identifying and overcoming the specific barriers each client faces so that the clients can increase their levels of independence towards reaching their full potential.

*C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.*

MRC strategies to overcome barriers relating to access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the MRC VR Services Program and the MRC Supported Employment Services Program include the following. MRC is committed to equitable access to VR services and is focused on numerous diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility initiatives to help promote equity in MRC service delivery and outreach to diverse communities to ensure their needs are being met:

- MRC Connect Integrated Eligibility Project: MRC is rolling out an integrated eligibility process for the agency known as MRC Connect. MRC Connect provides a dedicated and virtual team that guides an applicant through a cross-program application process for MRC's VR program as well as MRC's CL programs. A standardized application/referral form on MRC's website initiates the process by collecting information from applicants based on their needs, and then the team engages applicants to streamline their eligibility determination across multiple programs as applicable, including determination of eligibility for VR. This process is intended to improve the ease and access for individuals with disabilities to access MRC services and obtain information on services, including Vocational Rehabilitation services.
- Outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities. MRC conducts outreach to community and state agencies, schools, other public institutions, and the general public. This is accomplished through direct contact and presentations by MRC local office, district and administrative staff, use of printed brochures, and agency consumer and employer trainings.
- The MRC Supported Employment Program provides Supported Employment Services to consumers statewide through its local Area Offices. Services are coordinated by MRC counselors using a network of community rehabilitation providers, links with the local school system for transitioning youth and other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health, especially through its clubhouse programs.
- MRC has an ongoing statewide Bilingual/Bicultural vocational rehabilitation counselor group who meet on a regular basis to discuss and share resources on how to outreach to and serve cultural and ethnic minorities, develop new or

translate existing agency forms and brochures, and develop and conduct training programs for local and district offices in collaboration with the Commission's staff development unit. MRC has twelve VR counselors skilled in American Sign Language (ASL) and are qualified to work with consumers who are deaf or hard of hearing; thirty are fluent in Spanish and work with Hispanic consumers; four are able to communicate in Cantonese; two in Vietnamese, three are fluent in Portuguese; three are fluent in Khmer, three are fluent in French/Haitian Creole, and one counselor is fluent in Hindi and Tamil. A smaller number of area directors, head clerks and other clerical staff are fluent in American Sign Language, Spanish, Khmer, Cantonese, Mandarin, Haitian Creole, or Portuguese. Eleven full- and part-time sign language interpreters are also on staff. The Commission also maintains a statewide contract with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to secure additional ASL interpreters and CART reporters, as needed. Staff with specific language skills and interpreters are geographically placed to coincide with population and other demographics relating to target consumer groups.

- **DEIA Projects** – MRC is focused on numerous DEIA efforts. MRC is hiring a DEIA manager to oversee the agency's DEIA efforts. This role will report directly to the Commissioner and will be on the Executive Team. MRC is also working on the creation of a DEI Strategy and Implementation Plan and has created a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Council consisting of a cross-section of stakeholders.
- **Social Media and Communication Department**—MRC has a new communications department staff who are developing new strategies to communicate with MRC consumers and stakeholders, including increased use of social media and digital communication tools.
- **Department of Family and Consumer Engagement**—As part of MRC's commitment to elevating the voices and leadership of the disability community within all decision-making spaces at MRC, the Office of Individual and Family Engagement was brought to life in 2020. The office is charged with developing a plan for the agency to work with MRC consumers and their families to solicit input on new initiatives and operational issues and provide opportunities for ongoing dialogue. In recent months, The Office of Individual and Family Engagement has developed multiple platforms to listen and learn from MRC Consumers. In October 2021, MRC hosted its second Listening and Learning Forum, a two-hour virtual space to bring together disability community members, families, and professional stakeholders to learn about MRC Services directly from other consumers, provide feedback on upcoming MRC initiatives, and engage in community peer support. Additionally, MRC disseminated its first consumer and family newsletter in November

2021, focused on providing success stories, event highlights, and ongoing resources for consumers and their supporters.

- MRC has translated key forms and informational materials into Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, French Creole, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Mandarin Chinese as outlined in MRC's Language Access Plan. MRC has translated all correspondence letters in its electronic case management system into these languages as well. MRC coordination of outreach services to community organizations in areas with underserved populations. MRC will continue to work with its Employee Resource Groups, Bilingual Committee, the SRC, its DEIA council and other groups to focus on outreach to diverse and underserved communities and develop appropriate training programs for staff.
- MRC is working to ensure equitable access to services for consumers with Autism. MRC has worked with several organizations such as The Asperger/Autism Network (AANE) to provide training to staff and providers on the needs of individuals with autism, including competency to address behavioral, communication (including Alternative Augmentative Communication or AAC), sensory, social, and generalization needs. This will assist MRC staff in developing the capacity to address behavioral, communication (including AAC), sensory, social, and generalization needs for consumers. MRC also works with AANE to provide life-mapping services to individuals on the Autism spectrum to ensure equitable access.
- MRC partners and contracts with the Federation for Children with Special Needs to assist families in accessing MRC services, including Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).
- MRC's new innovation grant will focus on serving youth and other underserved populations to assist in the employment of individuals with disabilities and assist with developing strategies for innovative Vocational Rehabilitation services.

***p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals***

Describe:

1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:
  - A. *Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.*

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission developed the following goals and priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs for the previous Program Year as submitted in the approved VR services portion of the Massachusetts PY2020-PY2024 Combined State Plan. These goals were identified based on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, these goals are based upon agency performance on the former RSA Standards and Indicators, recommendations, and input from the SRC, and input from MRC Senior Management. MRC will review progress on these goals on a regular basis with senior management. This is a report on progress on these goals based on PY2019 (FY2020), and PY2020 (FY2021) outcomes.

MRC's strategies are to work with the senior management team to evaluate and assess progress towards the achievement of these goals, to identify lessons learned, and any corrective actions. Progress towards goals is distributed to local managers, supervisors, and counseling staff and will be reviewed with the SRC and other stakeholders.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission developed the following goals and priorities for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment Programs for the previous Program Year as submitted in the approved VR services portion of the Massachusetts PY2020-PY2024 Combined State Plan. These goals were identified based on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment conducted in collaboration with the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to survey the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, these goals are based upon agency performance on the former RSA Standards and Indicators, recommendations, and input from the SRC, and input from MRC Senior Management. MRC will review progress on these goals on a regular basis with senior management. This is a report on progress on these goals based on PY2019 (FY2020), and PY2020 (FY2021) outcomes.

MRC's strategies are to work with the senior management team to evaluate and assess progress towards the achievement of these goals, to identify lessons learned, and any corrective actions. Progress towards goals is distributed to local managers, supervisors, and counseling staff and will be reviewed with the SRC and other stakeholders.

### **MRC Goal 1**

Create career pathways for job seekers through increasing Employment Outcomes through placement, training, and Job Driven Trainings provided through MRC's Job Placement Unit, Employer Account Management System, and Annual Statewide Hiring Event. Continue to coordinate these business engagement efforts with WIOA partners as part of the overall MassHire Massachusetts workforce system.

This aligns with Goal II of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Continue measuring Key Performance Indicators related to Successful Employment Outcomes (SEO's) including:

- Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes for Vocational Rehabilitation Division and percentage change over the prior year's results.
- Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes achieved through the involvement of the MRC in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year's results.
- Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 closures) with Employers participating in MRC's Account Management System in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year's results.
- Total number and percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 Closures) from consumers participating in MRC's annual Statewide Hiring Event in the current fiscal year and percentage change over the prior year's results.
- Continue to coordinate business engagement efforts as part of the MassHire workforce system through quarterly meetings of the Business Services and Engagement Workgroup.

Target:

MRC's target goals:

- 3,700 Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC's Vocational Rehabilitation Division and 3% a positive percentage change over prior year results, with 15% of all VR eligible consumers served achieving a successful employment outcome.
- Exceed 400 Successful Employment Outcomes, or 11% of all SEOs, for MRC's Job Placement Unit annually and a positive percentage change over prior year results.
- Exceed 200 Employment Outcomes, or 5.5% of all SEOs, from Employer Account Management System annually.
- Greater than 50% of JPS Successful Employment Outcomes are the result of employer referrals.
- 40% Successful Employment Outcomes for consumers participating in Statewide Hiring Event achieve an annually, a 3% increase over prior year's outcomes.
- Completion of quarterly meetings of the MassHire Business Services and Engagement Workgroup.

Data Sources:

MRCIS, Workgroup materials

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.

Evaluation of Progress: Goal 1:

Number and Percent of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC's VR Division:

Goal #1	FY20 #	FY20 %	FY21 #	FY21 %
Goal	3,700	15.0%	3,700	15.0%
Actual Outcome	3,042	13.5%	2,727	12.7%

Number and Percent of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC's Job Placement Unit:

Goal #1	FY20 #	FY20 %	FY21 #	FY21 %
Goal	400	11%	400	11%
Actual Outcome	680	22.3%	597	21.8%

Number and Percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 closures) with Employers participating in MRC's Account Management System in the current fiscal year:

Goal #1	FY20 #	FY20 %	FY21 #	FY21 %
Goal	200	5.5%	200	5.5%
Actual Outcome	644	21.2%	561	20.6%

Number and Percent of Successful Employment Outcomes (Status 26 Closures) from consumers participating in MRC's annual Statewide Hiring Event in the current fiscal year:

Goal #1	FY20 %	FY21 %
Goal	40.0%	40.0%
Actual Outcome	28.0%	46.0%

**Completion of quarterly meetings of the MassHire Business Services and Engagement Workgroup:**

Completed – MRC continued to participate in ongoing meetings of the MassHire Business Services and Engagement Workgroup throughout FY2020 and FY2021.

Comment on Progress:

MRC saw a decrease in referrals, consumers served, and employment outcomes in FY2020 and FY2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic which impacted MRC consumers, providers, employers, and MRC staff, leading MRC to have a decrease in employment outcomes. MRC did meet its

goals related to the number and percent of employment outcomes for MRC's hiring event, top employers in its account management system, and its Job Placement Unit despite the pandemic.

**MRC Goal 2:**

Successfully implement a joint venture using the MRC Competitive Integrated Employment Service (CIES) program and the Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) program with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to increase employment outcomes and create career pathways to better meet the needs of individuals with Behavioral Health needs utilizing the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) Model and the CIES Pay for Performance competitive employment model.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

MRC will evaluate the ACCS program based on Key Performance Indicators:

- MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with ACCS Counselors
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with CIES-ACCS providers
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with internal Job Placement Services
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers having a completed IPE within 45 days from eligibility
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiating Placement Services from CIES-ACCS providers or MRC Job Placement Unit Staff as part of their ACCS services
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers receiving Benefits Planning as part of their MRC ACCS services
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers successfully being placed into employment through CIES-ACCS and MRC Job Placement Unit services
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers are successfully maintaining employment for 90 and 180 days through ACCS-CIES and Internal MRC Job Placement services
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed who are working an average and median of 20+ hours/week
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed receiving an average hourly wage of \$12.50/hour and a median hourly wage of \$12.25/hour
- 80% of MRC ACCS Job Seekers satisfied with CIES-ACCS Services they received

**Target:**

To complete deployment of MRC-DMH employment initiative by the end of the Program Year 2020 (PY20). MRC is currently in the process of developing multi-year annual targets and will update as required.



- MRC ACCS Counselors will serve 900 job seekers based on the caseload capacity goal of 50 per caseload, 60% or more of cases will have eligibility completed within 30 days of application.
- This is a newly established program, and baseline information will need to be established before creating a decisive goal. A goal of MRC ACCS Referrals will be established based on the program's first year results.
- This is a newly established program, and baseline information will need to be established before creating a decisive goal. A goal of MRC ACCS Job Seekers engaging with internal Job Placement Services will be established based on the program's first year results.
- 60% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers will have a completed IPE within 45 days from eligibility.
- 65% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiating Placement Services from CIES-ACCS providers within the program year.
- 95% or more of MRC ACCS Job Seekers with Social Security Insurance or Social Security Disability Insurance are receiving Benefits Planning as part of their MRC ACCS services
  - i. 75% of MRC ACCS Job Seekers will be successfully being placed into employment through CIES-ACCS and MRC Job Placement Unit services.
  - ii. 75% of Job Seekers will successfully maintaining employment after placement for 90 and 180 days through ACCS-CIES and Internal MRC Job Placement services.
  - iii. MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed work an average and median of 22.5 hours/week.
  - iv. MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed receive an average hourly wage of \$12.50/hour and a median hourly wage of \$12.25/hour.
  - v. MRC ACCS 80% of Job Seekers are satisfied with CIES-ACCS Services they received.

Data Sources:

MRCIS, CIES-ACCS Vendor Reports, MRC Satisfaction Survey

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Evaluation of Progress: MRC Goal 2:**

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with ACCS Counselors:**

Goal #2	FY20 #	FY21 #
Goal	900	900
Actual Outcome	1028	1494

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with CIES-ACCS providers:**

Goal #2	FY20 #	FY21 #
Goal	Baseline	Baseline
Actual Outcome	62.4%	64.1%

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiated engagement with internal Job Placement Services:**

Goal #2	FY20 #	FY21 #
Goal	Baseline	Baseline
Actual Outcome	52	115

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers having a completed IPE within 45 days from eligibility:**

Goal #2	FY20 %	FY21 %
Goal	60.0%	60.0%
Actual Outcome	55.0%	64.0%

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers initiating Placement Services from CIES-ACCS providers or MRC Job Placement Unit Staff as part of their ACCS services:**

Goal #2	FY20 %	FY21 %
Goal	65.0%	65.0%
Actual Outcome	48.3%	59.0%

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers receiving Benefits Planning as part of their MRC ACCS services:**

Goal #2	FY20 %	FY21 %
Goal	95.0%	95.0%
Actual Outcome	64.9%	69.5%

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers successfully being placed into employment through CIES-ACCS and MRC Job Placement Unit services:**

Goal #2	FY20 %	FY21 %
Goal	75.0%	75.0%
Actual Outcome	7.5%	19.4%

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers are successfully maintaining employment for 90 and 180 days through ACCS-CIES and Internal MRC Job Placement services:**

Goal #2	FY20 %	FY21 %
Goal	75.0%	75.0%
Actual Outcome	70.0%	63.0%

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed who are working an average and median of 20+ hours/week:**

Goal #2	Average FY20 #	Median FY20 #	Average	Median FY21 #
Goal	20+ Hours	20+ Hours	20+ Hours	20+ Hours
Actual Outcome	20.7 Hours	20 Hours	21.4 Hours	20 hours

**MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed receiving an average hourly wage of \$12.50/hour and a median hourly wage of \$12.25/hour:**

Goal #2	Average FY20 #	Median FY20 #	Average FY21 #	Median FY21 #
Goal	\$12.50	\$12.25	\$12.50	\$12.25
Actual Outcome	\$13.95	\$12.75	\$14.75	\$13.75

**80% of MRC ACCS Job Seekers satisfied with CIES-ACCS Services they received: (will be done in next 2 years:**

Goal #2	FY20 %	FY21 %
Goal	80.0%	80.0%
Actual Outcome	N/A	N/A

**Comment on Progress:**

MRC has successfully deployed its ACCS employment initiative in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health. MRC is now in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of this program. MRC continues to track performance on ACCS Key Performance Indicators monthly. In FY19 and FY20, MRC achieved its targets for most of its Key Performance Indicators for ACCS. These metrics are reviewed monthly and are used by agency leadership and local leadership to guide program changes. MRC has seen success in this program with placements, use of benefits planning, and moving individuals into eligibility and IPEs in a timely fashion, with a reduced front-end dropout rate compared to the regular VR program.

**MRC Goal 3:**

Fully implement the redesign of the Empower to Employ program in collaboration with the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to work to improve services and outcomes for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF support utilizing the Integrated Resource Team Model and the Pay for Performance competitive employment model. This project is part of MRC's efforts with its WIOA partners to align and coordinate services amongst state partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan.

Key Performance Indicators:

- MRC will evaluate the Empower to Employ program using Key Performance Indicators with DTA and will update as required. Complete an ISA between MRC and DTA and hire staff for MRC-DTA Individual Planning and Support Pilot Project. Use data from Key Performance Indicators to develop targets during PY2020 and PY2021 based on PY2019 data.

Target:

- Completion of the Interagency Service Agreement, hiring of 100% of staff, and commencement of 100% of services for MRC-DTA Individual Planning by the end of the Program Year 2020 (PY2020), complete staff training for the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach.
- Increase services to allow 100 or more placements annually for the project.
- Expand project sites from 3 to 5 by the end of PY2020.
- Employed project participants will earn an average hourly wage of \$14.50 or more and work an average of 28 hours or more per week.

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

Evaluation of Progress:

Goal #3	FY20 #	FY21 #
Goal	100	100
Actual Outcome	37	51

Hours:

Goal #3	FY20 #	FY21 #
Goal	28	28
Actual Outcome	29.3	29.6

Wage:

Goal #3	FY20 #	FY21 #
Goal	\$14.50	\$14.50
Actual Outcome	\$15.51	\$16.03

**Completion of the Interagency Service Agreement, hiring of 100% of staff, and commencement of 100% of services for MRC-DTA Individual Planning by the end of the Program Year 2020 (PY2020), complete staff training for the Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach: Completed**

**Expand project sites from 3 to 5 by the end of PY2020: Completed**

Comment on Progress:

MRC completed the expansion of the DTA Empower to Employ program from 3 to 5 offices in 2020 including a revised Interagency Service Agreement with DTA. The project was impacted by COVID-19 leading to reduced referrals between Spring 2020 and mid-2021, but referrals have increased significantly since Summer 2021. Placements were down because of less referrals than anticipated but placements have begun to increase and are expected to increase going forward. MRC and DTA also plan further expansion of the project to additional sites. Finally, wages and hours of those consumers employed were higher than the target. This increase is likely a combination between both the types of employment outcomes that consumers are placed into and the fact that Massachusetts's Minimum Wage is progressively increasing annually to reach \$15.00 by January 2023. MRC has adjusted its goal upwards to account for the increases in the minimum wage.

**MRC Goal 4:**

Maximize Employment Retention for MRC Consumers Employed at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Second Quarter after Exit.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Measure the following metric in order to gauge progress toward Goal 4:

- Employment Rate at the 2nd Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings.

Target:

Initial target is 60% pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Performance Update (RSA Capturing baseline data):**

Goal #4	FY20	FY21
Goal	60.0%	60.0%
Actual Outcome	52.2%	50.9%

Comment on Progress:

MRC achieved a 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit employment rate of 52.2% for PY19/FY20, and 50.9% for PY20/FY21. RSA continues to collect baseline data on this measure and targets will be established beginning for PY2022/FY2023. MRC conducted a comparison between states from RSA data and MRC is above the national average for 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter employment rates. MRC continues to focus on staff training to improve performance on the Common Measures.

**MRC Goal 5:**

Maximize Employment Retention of competitive employment for MRC Consumers Employed at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Fourth Quarter after Exit and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 5:

- Employment Rate at the 4th Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings

Target:

Initial target is 55% pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Performance Update (RSA Capturing baseline data):**

Goal #5	FY20	FY21
Goal	55.0%	55.0%
Actual Outcome	22.9%	48.4%

Comment on Progress:

MRC achieved a 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit employment rate of 22.9% for PY19/FY20, and 48.4% for PY20/FY21. It appears our FY20 results may have been impacted by COVID-19, as the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter rate recovered significantly in FY2021. RSA continues to collect baseline data on this measure and targets will be established beginning for PY2022/FY2023. MRC conducted a comparison between states from RSA data and MRC is above the national average for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter employment rates. MRC continues to focus on staff training to improve performance on the Common Measures.

**MRC Goal 6:**

Increase Median Quarterly Earnings for MRC Consumers Employed in competitive employment at Exit from Vocational Rehabilitation at the Second Quarter after Exit.

This aligns with Goal III of the Combined Overall WIOA State Plan based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria to track progress of Goal 6:

- Median Quarterly Earnings at the 2nd Quarter after Exit for MRC Consumers closed during the Current Program Year (Successful and Unsuccessful closures) based on Unemployment Insurance Wage Earnings.

Target:

Initial target is \$3,900 quarterly earning pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Increase credentialing and job placement outcomes for individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment.

**Performance Update (RSA Capturing Baseline Data):**

Goal #6	FY20	FY21
Goal	\$3,900.00	\$3,900.00
Actual Outcome	\$4,353.52	\$4,444.22

Comment on Progress:

MRC achieved median quarterly earnings at the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit of \$4,353 for PY19/FY20, and \$4,444 for PY20/FY21. MRC continues to collect baseline data on this measure and targets will be established beginning for PY2022/FY2023. MRC conducted a comparison between states

from RSA data and MRC is above the national average for median quarterly earnings. MRC continues to focus on staff training to improve performance on the Common Measures.

#### **MRC Goal 7:**

Maximize the Number and Proportion of MRC Consumers with Recognized Secondary and/or Post-Secondary Credential Attainment during Participation in the MRC VR Program.

This aligns with Goal III of the Combined Overall WIOA State Plan and based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

#### **Key Performance Indicators:**

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 7:

- Percent of MRC Consumers obtaining post-secondary education credentials and/or obtaining a secondary school diploma or equivalent during participation in the MRC VR Program (or up to 1 year after exit from program).
  - For proportion, previous number divided by the total number of consumers served during the program year.

#### **Target:**

Establish baseline target based on currently available data and monitor progress. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2022.

#### **Data Sources:**

Level of Education Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 quarterly reporting

#### **Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:**

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

#### **Performance Update (RSA Capturing Baseline Data):**

Goal #7	FY20	FY21
Goal	Baseline	Baseline
Actual Outcome	4.7%	16.9%

#### **Comment on Progress:**

MRC continues to report baseline Credential Attainment data to RSA annually. MRC's performance increased significantly from 4.7% in PY19/FY20 to 16.9% in PY20/FY21. RSA will be establishing a negotiated performance target starting for PY22/FY23. MRC has developed a series of trainings and technical assistance sessions for MRC staff on Credential Attainment and Measurable Skills Gains to assist in this area.



### **MRC Goal 8:**

Maximize the Percentage of MRC Consumers Enrolled in Education and Training Programs leading to a recognized credential or employment achieving measurable skills gains during the Program Year.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

#### **Key Performance Indicators:**

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 8:

- Percent of MRC Consumers enrolled in education and training programs leading to employment or a recognized post-secondary credential achieving measurable skills gains during the program year with documented progress divided by total number of consumers receiving services through an IPE in the program year (Status 12-22).

#### **Target:**

20% is the negotiated target from RSA for PY2020 (FY2021), and 30% is the negotiated target for PY2021 (FY2022)

#### **Data Sources:**

Level of Education Data from MRCIS, RSA-911 quarterly reporting, WIOA Annual Report

#### **Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:**

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

#### **Performance Update:**

Goal #8	FY20	FY21
Goal	N/A	20.0%
Actual Outcome	7.3%	21.0%

#### **Comment on Progress:**

RSA established a performance target for MRC for Measurable Skills Gains of 20% for FY21/PY20 while baseline data was reported in PY19/FY20. MRC's performance for Measurable Skills Gains increased significantly from 713% in PY19/FY20 to 21% in PY20/FY21. The PY21/FY22 target is 30%. MRC has developed a series of trainings, actionable reports, and technical assistance sessions for MRC staff Measurable Skills Gains to assist in this area.

### **MRC Goal 9:**

Provide Effective Services to Employers in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to ensure retention rates of individuals placed in competitive employment.

This aligns with Goal I of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 9:

- Employment retention rate with the same employer at 2nd and 4th quarter after exit for MRC consumers closed during the current program year (Status 26 Closures) based on Employer Tax ID (EIN) in Unemployment Insurance Wage Data.
- Number of repeat business customers (defined as a business where MRC places more than one job seeker during the program year)

Target:

400 or more repeat business customers annually where multiple job seekers are placed into employment. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2022.

Initial Target is 70% of job seekers retained at the same employer between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit. Establish and refine target based on baseline of data and track progress on performance. Pending establishment of negotiated standards from RSA/DOL which are expected for PY2022.

Data Sources:

Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS, RSA—911 Report, Unemployment Insurance Quarterly Wage Data, WIOA Annual Report.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

Employer Retention (RSA Capturing Baseline Data):

Goal #9	FY20	FY21
Goal	70.0%	70.0%
Actual Outcome	65.0%	70.0%

Repeat Business Customers (RSA Capturing Baseline Data):

Goal #9	FY20#	FY20%	FY21#	FY21%
Goal	400	N/A	400	N/A
Actual Outcome	245	11.1%	215	10.8%

**Comment on Progress:**

MRC and RSA continue to collect baseline data on Effectiveness of Serving Employers. The two pilot measures, employer retention and repeat business customers are measured on an annual basis. MRC has seen an employer retention rate between 65% and 70% and a repeat business customer rate of about 11%. The number of repeat business customers is lower than expected likely because of lower employment outcomes during COVID. MRC will continue to report baseline data through PY2023 to RSA.

**MRC Goal 10:**

Maximize Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Job Seekers for 90 Days or more and establish a new annual program outcome goal. Reset goal and target annually based on performance.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 10:

- Total Sum and Percentage of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC Consumers for the Current Program Year (Status 26 Closures).

**Target:**

Achieve 3,700 or more successful employment outcomes in the program year.

Achieve a Rehabilitation Rate of 55.8% statewide as a result of consumer attaining successful employment outcomes.

**Data Sources:**

Status 26 Closure Data from MRCIS, Monthly Key Performance Indicators Tracking Report.

**Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:**

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Number and Percent of Successful Employment Outcomes for MRC's VR Division:**

Goal #10	FY20	Employment Rate FY20	FY21 #	Employment Rate FY21
Goal	3,700	55.8%	3,700	55.8%
Actual Outcome	3,042	51.0%	2,727	39.8%

Comment on Progress:

MRC saw a decrease in referrals, consumers served, and employment outcomes in FY2020 and FY2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic which impacted MRC consumers, providers, employers, and MRC staff, leading MRC to have a decrease in employment outcomes. MRC's employment rate also was lower than the target, particularly for FY2021. MRC is focusing on developing strategies to improve its employment rate going forward, such as looking at programs or projects which have higher employment rate and determining best practices which may be applicable to the entire VR program, and improvement has been seen during the first half of FY2022 in terms of both employment outcomes and the employment rate.

**MRC Goal 11:**

Maximize the number of Consumers Exiting the MRC VR Program whose Primary Source of Economic Support is from their own Employment Earnings.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Next Steps:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 11:

- Proportion of Individuals Successfully Closed in Status 26 in the current fiscal year with an RSA-911 Employment Status Code of Competitive Employment in MRCIS with hourly wages at or above minimum wage (the higher of either State or Federal Minimum Wage; currently Massachusetts is higher at \$12.75) whose Primary Source of Support at Closure is Personal Income (Code 1) minus the proportion of those consumers whose primary source of support at application was personal income (Code 1).

Target:

Ratio of 60% or more.

Data Sources:

MRCIS, Monthly Key Performance Indicators Tracking Report.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Proportion of Individuals Successfully Closed in Status 26 in the current fiscal year with an RSA-911 Employment Status Code of Competitive Employment in MRCIS with hourly wages at or above minimum wage:**

Goal #11	FY20	FY21
Goal	60.0%	60.0%
Actual Outcome	69.0%	70.8%

**Comment on Progress:**

This measure evaluates the percentage increase of consumers reporting they rely on income from employment as their primary source of support from time of application to closure. MRC exceeded its 60% target for both FY20 and FY21 by a wide margin.

**MRC Goal 12:**

Fully implement the re-design of Pre-ETS Services to Eligible and Potentially Eligible students (14 – 22) Maximize the Number and Percentage of high school students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services, including work-based learning experiences (Pre-ETS/Potentially Eligible) from MRC, either eligible or potentially eligible. Continue to coordinate Pre-ETS service delivery with partners and schools.

This aligns with Goal IV of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 12:

- Number of students (potentially eligible and eligible) receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) from MRC and its contracted providers during the program year.
- Percent of students initiating services for each of the five Pre-ETS services (Work-Based Learning, Job Exploration Counseling, Counseling on Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education, Workplace Readiness Training, Self-Advocacy) from MRC and its contracted provider.
- Completion of an annual program evaluation report on Pre-ETS services provided by MRC and present findings to the SRC and MRC leadership.
- Explore ways to work with DESE and other partners to coordinate Pre-ETS services.

**Target:**

Serve 3,000 or more students receiving one or more of the five Pre-ETS services during the program year.

An average of 70% of students will initiate services for each of the five Pre-ETS services (Work-Based Learning, Job Exploration Counseling, Counseling on Enrollment in Post-Secondary

Education, Workplace Readiness Training, Self-Advocacy) from MRC and its contracted providers during the program year.

Completion of an annual program evaluation report on Pre-ETS services provided by MRC and present findings to the SRC and MRC leadership.

Set up meetings with DESE and workforce partners to discuss coordination of Pre-ETS Services.

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Number of students (potentially eligible and eligible) receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) from MRC and its contracted providers during the program year:**

Goal #12	FY20	FY21
Goal	3,000	3,000
Actual Outcome	2435	3403

**Percent of students initiating services for each of the five Pre-ETS services:**

Goal #12	FY20	FY21
Goal	70.0%	70.0%
Job Exploration Counseling	69%	66%
Work Based Learning Experiences	76%	68%
Counseling on Enrollment Opportunities in Post-Secondary Education	50%	45%
Workplace Readiness Training	70%	69%
Self-Advocacy Instruction/Peer Mentoring	54%	50%

Completion of an annual program evaluation report on Pre-ETS services provided by MRC and present findings to the SRC and MRC leadership: In progress.

Set up meetings with DESE and workforce partners to discuss coordination of Pre-ETS Services: In progress

Comment on Progress:

MRC met its target for consumers served in Pre-ETS services (both eligible and potentially eligible) in FY2021 but fell short in FY2020 as COVID-19 impacted providers, consumers, schools, and staff. MRC's Business Improvement Partners (BIP's) partnered with and provided extensive technical assistance to the Pre-ETS Provider community to assist them to move their mostly in-person operations to virtual service delivery at the start of the pandemic. Most providers did not have the necessary software or hardware to provide virtual services, nor did the students who were to receive the services. Multiple provider meetings, informational

webinars, peer-to-peer forums and trainings were held Statewide, regionally, and individually to provide support and resources.

Additionally, significant additional funding was provided to Pre-ETS providers to support their technology resource needs for virtual work. There is a range in utilization of each of the 5 Pre-ETS service based on consumer needs, providers and counselors choose from the services based on the consumers interests and needs. Some services (Work Based Learning, Workplace Readiness Services, and Job Exploration Counseling) are used more often than the other 2 Pre-ETS services (instruction in Self Advocacy and Counseling on Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education). MRC will continue to work with its providers to improve Pre-ETS services.

In terms of development of a Pre-ETS evaluation report, MRC will complete the development of this process and report during the final 2 years of the State Plan. MRC also holds meetings with DESE on Pre-ETS service coordination as needed. During the pandemic, MRC coordinated with and informed our DESE and Workforce partners of our changing service delivery and coordinated efforts to serve our joint consumers.

### **MRC Goal 13:**

Maximize the Number and Percentage of youth (defined as ages 14 through 24) consumers served by MRC completing education and training programs, including post-secondary education as part of MRC's efforts to coordinate services for youths with WIOA partners, including the MassHire workforce system.

This aligns with Goal IV of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

### **Key Performance Indicators:**

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 13:

- Number and Percent of Youth Age 14 to 24 Completing Education and Training Programs. Measured by the flow of Youth Consumers moving from Status 18 Training and Education into Status 20 Job Ready or Status 22 Job Placement during the month/fiscal year divided by the total number of youth consumers served in Status 18 Training and Education during the month/fiscal year.

### **Target:**

At or above 200 or 3% of youth consumers per month completing training or education, annual total of 2500 or 16%.

### **Data Sources:**

MRCIS

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Increase credentialing and job placement outcomes for individuals, including youth with barriers to employment.

**Number and Percent of Youth Age 14 to 24 Completing Education and Training Programs:**

Goal #13	FY20 #	FY20 %	FY21	FY21 %
Goal	2,500	16.0%	2,500	16.0%
Actual Outcome	1,852	20.6%	1,614	20.4%

Comment on Progress:

MRC achieved its target for the proportion of youth consumers completing education and training programs in FY20 and FY21 but served less youth than anticipated due to decreased referrals as a result of COVID-19.

**MRC Goal 14:**

Create career pathways for job seekers through maximizing the Number of Successful Competitive Employment outcomes and the percent of Placements leading to Successful Employment Outcomes through MRC's Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) programs in partnership with Community Rehabilitation Providers.

This aligns with Goal II of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 14:

- Total Number of 90 Day Successful Employment Outcomes from CIES Program;  
Total Number of CIES Successful Employment Outcomes divided by the total number of 30-Day Placements for the CIES Program, % of CIES consumers served achieving a placement.

Target:

Exceed 850 Successful Employment Outcomes for CIES for the fiscal year and greater than 75% of CIES placements result in successful employment outcomes, and 60% or more of CIES consumers served during the year are placed into employment.

Complete the redesign and deployment of MRC CIES contracts successfully through the RFP and annual monitoring and program evaluation process to provide CIES Pay for Performance services (Annual Program Evaluation Report).

Data Source:

MRC CIES Quarterly Cumulative Utilization Report and Annual Program Evaluation Report



Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.

**30 Day Placements:**

Goal #14	FY20	FY21
Goal	850	850
Actual Outcome	680	613

**90 Day Placements:**

Goal #14	FY20	FY21
Goal	638	638
Actual Outcome	539	460

**Total Number of CIES Successful Employment Outcomes divided by the total number of 30-Day Placements for the CIES Program:**

Goal #14	FY20	FY21
Goal	75.0%	75.0%
Actual Outcome	79.3%	75.0%

**% of CIES consumers served achieving a placement:**

Goal #14	FY20	FY21
Goal	60.0%	60.0%
Actual Outcome	50.1%	52.1%

Comment on Progress:

In FY2020 and FY2021, MRC fell short of some of its CIES performance targets, mainly since less consumers were served during these fiscal years than anticipated due to COVID-19 which impacted both MRC, its providers, and its consumers. Less consumers served led to less employment outcomes and placements. MRC did achieve its target for the percentage of placements who achieved a successful outcome. MRC continues to closely monitor CIES program results and the Business Improvement Partners (BIPs) work closely with providers and are focusing on improving performance.

MRC has completed development of new Key Performance Indicators for CIES which will be rolled out in FY2023 and used by MRC's BIPs to focus on improving CIES outcomes.

### **MRC Goal 15:**

Continue to provide consumers with an avenue to access employment and training opportunities through participation in the Donated Vehicle Program in partnership with Good News Garage and exploring other transportation partnerships.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

### **Key Performance Indicators:**

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 15:

- Number of Consumers Participating in the Donated Vehicle Program who obtain a successful employment outcome or who enter training and education (Status 18) divided by the number of consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year.
- Research additional transportation partnerships to assist with transportation including programs related to bicycling.

### **Target:**

1. Greater than 90% of Consumers participating in the Donated Vehicle Program during the current fiscal year result in successful employment outcomes or enrollment in training or education (Status 18).
2. Issue 100 vehicles per program year utilizing the RFR process, for a total of 400 over the 4-year period.
3. Number of individuals who may be employed as a result of this program.
4. 90% or greater satisfaction with the program.
5. Completion of research on additional transportation partnerships and presentation of a report to leadership and the SRC.

### **Data Sources:**

MRCIS

### **Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:**

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

### **Number of Consumers Participating in the Donated Vehicle Program who obtain a successful employment outcome or who enter training and education (Status 18):**

Goal #15	FY20	FY21
Goal	100	100
Actual Outcome	80	99

**Percent of consumers receiving Good News Garage Donated Vehicle achieving employment or enrolled in education/training:**

Goal #15	FY20	FY21
Goal	90%	90%
Actual Outcome	97.5%	96.9%

**Completion of research on additional transportation partnerships and presentation of a report to leadership and the SRC:** In Progress

**90% or greater satisfaction with the program:** In Progress

**Comment on Progress:**

MRC continues to operate the Donated Vehicle Program in partnership with Good News Garage. There were some impacts in terms of reduced deliveries during FY2020 due to COVID but otherwise the program remains on track. Over 95% of consumers receiving a donated vehicle in FY2020 and FY2021 have achieved employment and/or have enrolled in education or training programs. Finally, MRC met with MassMobility prior to COVID-19 and have worked with MassMobility to update transportation resources linked to MRC's website. MRC will continue to work on transportation efforts during the last two years of the state plan period.

**MRC Goal 16:**

Provide Quality Vocational Rehabilitation Services leading to increased successful employment outcomes to individuals with Autism. Coordinate services for individuals with Autism with partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

**Key Performance Indicators:**

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 16:

1. Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Cause Code of 08 and employment rate for these consumers.
2. Number of consumers served on the Autism Spectrum

**Target:**

- Equal or greater to 175 consumers employed per program year
- Modernize the Life Skill mapping planning process for individuals with Autism through completion of an enhanced procurement/RFR to provide these services.

- 75% employment rate or greater for consumers on the autism spectrum receiving Life Mapping services
- 55.8% or greater employment rate for consumers with autism spectrum receiving VR services

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

**Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Cause Code of 08 and employment rate for these consumers:**

Goal #16	FY20	FY21
Goal	175	175
Actual Outcome	344	353

**Employment Rate:**

Goal #16	FY20	FY21
Goal	55.8%	55.8%
Actual Outcome	47.0%	45.1%

**Number of consumers served on the Autism Spectrum:**

Goal #16	FY20	FY21
Goal	N/A	N/A
Actual Outcome	3343	3539

**Employment rate for consumers on the autism spectrum receiving Life Mapping services:**

75.8% actual, 75% goal.

**Modernize the Life Skill mapping planning process for individuals with Autism through completion of an enhanced procurement/RFR to provide these services:** In progress

**Comment on Progress:**

MRC continues to focus on services provided to individuals on the Autism spectrum. MRC continues to see an increase in both the number and percentage of consumers served with Autism. The number of consumers served with Autism increased in FY20 and FY21 even while the overall number of consumers served by MRC decreased. MRC also exceeded its target for

the number of consumers with Autism achieving employment outcomes by a wide margin. The employment rate of consumers with Autism was lower than the goal but higher than the employment rate for MRC overall for FY20 and FY21. Finally, consumers receiving Life Mapping services had a 75.8% employment rate in FY21. MRC continues to work closely with the Autism/Asperger Network (AANE) on the provision of Life Mapping and other supports to consumers with Autism. MRC also works closely with the Autism Commission on provision of services.

#### **MRC Goal 17:**

Continued Outreach to the Asian community to identify strategies for serving this underserved population. This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

#### **Key Performance Indicators:**

Implementation of additional Focus Groups to MRC regions with high concentrations of Asian community, such as Braintree and Boston. Increase in the number and percent of Asian consumers served by MRC

#### **Target:**

Complete focus groups or community meetings in Braintree and/or Boston, and/or other areas with high population concentration of Asian communities by the end of the program year, with consultation of the diversity and bilingual committees to review results and to develop best practices in collaboration with community organizations for increasing outreach efforts and services to the Asian community based on the comprehensive needs assessment survey conducted by the SRC, to present to agency leadership.

Develop and implement a new consumer engagement program which will include coordination of outreach services to community organizations in areas with underserved populations.

Increase in the number and percent of Asian consumers served by MRC from prior year.

#### **Data Sources:**

Program evaluation program data, MRCIS, SRC engagement work plan.

#### **Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:**

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

#### **Evaluation of Progress**

**Increase in the number and percent of Asian consumers served by MRC from prior year:** MRC saw a very slight increase in the proportion of Asian consumers served between FY2019 and FY2021, with a 0.2% increase from 3.6% in FY2019 to 3.8% in FY2021. The number of Asian

consumers did decrease during the time period, and the overall number of consumers served by MRC also decreased between this time period.

**Develop and implement a new consumer engagement program which will include coordination of outreach services to community organizations in areas with underserved populations:** Completed

Comment on Progress:

MRC has rolled out its office of Consumer and Family Engagement as of 2020. This new office continues to focus on developing multiple platforms to listen and learn from MRC Consumers and will continue to expand during the last 2 years of the state plan period. While MRC saw a slight increase in the proportion of Asian consumers served, the change was not significant. The agency is committed to increase the number of Asian consumers and all consumers of diverse backgrounds. MRC is working on efforts to improve outreach to all communities, including the Asian community, to ensure equity in access to MRC VR services. MRC will continue to work with its Employee Resource Groups, Bilingual Committee, the SRC, its DEIA council, the Office of Consumer and Family Engagement, and other stakeholders in this area.

**MRC Goal 18:**

Research Best Practices Models to create career pathways and increase employment of Individuals with Disabilities based on recommendations provided by the SRC Executive Committee.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Completion of research of best practices, models, or capstone projects for the development of new programs intended to provide enhanced training and job placement for individuals with disabilities for presentation to the leadership team and the SRC. **Applied for innovation grant to come up with best practices to serve individuals with disabilities**

Target:

Completion of research and completion of a report by the end of the program year for presentation to MRC Leadership and the SRC.

Data Sources:

CSAVR, Google/Electronic Reference Libraries.

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

### Evaluation of Progress:

**Completion of research of best practices, models, or capstone projects for the development of new programs intended to provide enhanced training and job placement for individuals with disabilities for presentation to the leadership team and the SRC:** In progress

Comment on Progress: MRC applied for and successfully received a RSA innovation grant to evaluate a new model to serve individuals with disabilities in Vocational Rehabilitation, focusing on young adults. The goal will be to provide coordinated service approaches to develop career pathway leading to increased employment and wages. Members of MRC's Analytics and Quality Assurance Department also completed a Capstone Project for a VR program evaluation certificate program which evaluated MRC's Employment Initiative (ACCS) with the Department of Mental Health.

### MRC Goal 19:

Expand the use of occupational goal information from MRC job seekers to inform job placement efforts. Share occupational data and coordinate sharing of labor market information with WIOA Workforce Partners including MassHire.

This aligns with Goal V of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

### Key Performance Indicators:

Develop a report of MRC job seekers based on vocational goals in the MRCIS system by Standard Occupational Code (SOC Code) compared to job placements and outcomes for job seekers by SOC Code.

Track placements and occupational goals by SOC code and SOC category.

Research strategies for linking occupational code data with industry classification data.

Revamp labor market information reports for MRC staff.

### Target:

Complete reports and presentation of findings to agency leadership and the Job Placement Unit by the end of the program year.

Research strategies and develop recommendations for linking occupational code and industry classification data to guide job placement efforts, sector employment, and to assist with coordination of business services with WIOA partners.

Complete new labor market report templates for MRC staff.

### Data Sources:

MRCIS

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Ensure Massachusetts has a world-class service delivery system by integrating use of modern tools and techniques.

Evaluation of Progress:

**Complete reports and presentation of findings to agency leadership and the Job Placement Unit by the end of the program year:** In Progress

**Research strategies and develop recommendations for linking occupational code and industry classification data to guide job placement efforts, sector employment, and to assist with coordination of business services with WIOA partners:** In Progress.

**Complete new labor market report templates for MRC staff:** In Progress.

Comment on Progress:

MRC has developed a report of consumers based on vocational goals in the MRCIS system by Standard Occupational Code (SOC Code) compared to job placements and outcomes for job seekers by SOC Code. This is currently done manually and sent to the Job Placement Unit. MRC will be working to automate this report as part of the OneMRC Case Management system development so it can be accessed with real time data by all staff on a regular basis.

MRC will be examining linking its occupational code data with industry classification data with the development of the OneMRC system by considering the addition of NAICS codes to the new system as it is developed. MRC also receives labor market information from MassHire and will continue to focus on development of additional labor market resources as part of its data modernization efforts.

**MRC Goal 20:**

Research and develop ways to conduct outreach to college students and other groups to increase awareness of MRC services and research additional resources to assist MRC consumers who are in post-secondary education programs.

This aligns with Goal V of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Completion of research into ways MRC can outreach to college students to increase awareness of MRC services. Develop additional resources and programs that may assist MRC consumers in post-secondary education program. Present findings to the leadership team and the SRC.

Target:

Completion of research into ways MRC can outreach to college students to increase awareness of MRC services. Develop additional resources and programs that may assist MRC consumers in



post-secondary education program. Develop a report and present findings to the leadership team and the SRC.

Data Sources:

Google/Electronic Reference Libraries

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

Evaluation of Progress:

**Completion of Research:** In progress

Comment on Progress:

MRC will focus on completing research on best practices in outreach to college students over the last two years of the state plan period. MRC will present findings to leadership and the SRC over the course of the final 2 years of the state plan period.

**MRC Goal 21:**

Implementation of a new MRC MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts.

This aligns with Goals I and III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Key Performance Indicators:

MRC will develop Key Performance Indicators for this project with MassHire. Use data from Key Performance Indicators to establish a baseline and develop targets during PY2020 and PY2021 based on PY2019 data.

Completion of an annual program evaluation report on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program and present findings to the SRC, MRC leadership, and WIOA partners.

Target:

Completion of Key Performance Indicators, Establishment of baseline data and develop targets by PY2021 based on project data.

Completion of an annual program evaluation report on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program and complete presentation of findings to the SRC, MRC leadership, and WIOA partners.

Data Sources:

MRCIS, Reports from MassHire

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

Evaluation of Progress:

**Completion of Key Performance Indicators, Establishment of baseline data and develop targets by PY2021 based on project data.** In progress.

**Completion of an annual program evaluation report on the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program and complete presentation of findings to the SRC, MRC leadership, and WIOA partners:** In progress

Comment on Progress:

MRC will develop KPI for the MassHire training programs by the end of PY2022 as additional baseline data is currently being collected in collaboration with MassHire. MRC will work with MassHire to collect additional data in a format to be matched against MRC's case management system and evaluate the progress of the program and will present findings to leadership and the SRC over the course of the final 2 years of the state plan period.

**MRC Goal 22:**

Provide Quality Vocational Rehabilitation Services leading to increased successful employment outcomes to individuals with behavioral health needs. Coordinate services for individuals with Behavioral Health Needs[1] with partners.

This aligns with Goal III of the WIOA Combined State Plan and is based on the results of the MRC Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and the SRC Recommendations.

Key Performance Indicators:

Evaluate the following criteria in order to track progress of Goal 22:

- Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Code of 18 and employment rate for these consumers (excluding those participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program)
- Number of consumers served with a Disability Code of 18 during the program year

Target:

Equal or greater to 600 consumers employed per program year (excluding those consumers participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program)

Employment rate of 55.8% or greater for consumers with Disability Code 18 receiving MRC VR services (excluding consumers participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program)

Data Sources:

MRCIS

Overall WIOA Combined State Plan Category:

Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.

[1] Behavioral Health Needs are defined by RSA within Policy Directive *RSA-PD-16-04* as Disability Code 18: Psychosocial Impairments (e.g., interpersonal and behavioral impairments, difficulty coping).

Evaluation of Progress:

**Number of successful employment outcomes as defined by Status 26 closures for MRC consumers with a Primary and/or Secondary RSA Disability Code of 18 and employment rate for these consumers (excluding those participating in the MRC DMH ACCS program):**

Goal #22	FY20 #	Employment Rate	FY21 #	Employment Rate
Goal	600	55.8%	600	55.8%
Actual Outcome	1106	36.4%	917	33.6%

**Comment on Progress:**

MRC exceeded its goals in FY2020 and FY2021 for the number of successful employment outcomes for individuals with mental health needs, however fell short of its goal for the employment rate for these consumers. MRC is working on strategies to improve its employment rate for all individuals served, particularly those with mental health needs as this is the largest group of consumers served by MRC.

*Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.*

The following is an evaluation of the extent to which the MRC program goals described in the previously approved VR services portion of the Unified State Plan for the most recently completed program year, were not achieved.

MRC achieved most of its goals and priorities and/or is making progress on its goals as stated in the approved VR services section of the Massachusetts Combined State Plan for PY2020-PY2024 except for portions of goals 1, 3, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, and 22. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic during PY19 and PY20 had an impact on MRC, its providers, schools, employer, and consumers. MRC saw a drop in referrals and consumers served during this period which impacted the number of employment outcomes in a number of programs which impacted several state plan goals. During PY17 and into PY18, MRC saw a drop in the number of consumers served by its VR.

There was also a period of increased unsuccessful employment outcomes which when combined with the impact of COVID-19 combined with lower referrals led to a drop in the number of consumers served. MRC has seen a stabilization in referrals with referrals starting to go back up, and employment outcomes for FY22 to date are running ahead of FY20 and FY21. MRC is also developing strategies to increase its employment rate through looking at best practices from services and programs with higher employment rates and will be evaluating a new model for VR through its recently awarded innovation grant from RSA.

MRC will continue to closely evaluate the progress towards its goals in PY22 and PY23 and make appropriate corrections as needed and present progress to leadership, the SRC, and stakeholders.

2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:

*A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.*

Supported Employment Program FY2021/PY2020 Goal Achievement:

Consumers Served: Goal: 475, Actual: 525

Employment Outcomes: Goal: 88, Actual: 105

MRC's strategy for provision and delivery of Supported Employment Services utilizes a network of community providers. MRC reviews progress on supported employment cases with staff and providers on a quarterly basis to assess progress and make any necessary corrective actions to ensure consumers are receiving quality services.

MRC achieved its goals for the Supported Employment Program for FY2021/PY2020 as stated in the approved VR section of the Massachusetts Combined State Plan. MRC saw a steady number of consumers successfully employed and served through MRC's Supported Employment Program. These consumers were served using a combination of Title I and Title VI B funds.

*B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.*

MRC achieved its supported employment goals for PY2020/FY2021, therefore there are no factors impeding the achievement of the goals and priorities. MRC monitors economic and labor market trends to forecast the potential impact on MRC's ability to achieve our employment goals and priorities. MRC's leadership team works closely with our fiscal staff to project available resources to provide services and the potential impact on achievement of our goals and priorities.

3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under Section 116 of WIOA.

Between PY2017 and PY2019, MRC reported baseline data to RSA for the WIOA common performance measures as specified in the state plan requirements. Beginning in PY20 MRC is reporting data under a negotiated performance goal for Measurable Skills Gains. The goal for PY20 was 20% and is 30% for PY21. All the other measures remain baseline for PY20 and PY21. As required by RSA, MRC began collecting data for the Common Performance Measures as of July 1, 2017, replacing the prior Vocational Rehabilitation Standards and Indicators. MRC is proposing performance goals for the Employment Rate at 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit, the Employment Rate at 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit, Median Wage at 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit, and Credential Attainment for PY22 and PY23 and negotiated targets will be developed with RSA for PY22 and PY23.

MRC has and will continue working with its workforce partners to complete the Statewide Performance Report for the Common Measures.

MRC's Analytics and Quality Assurance department will continue to analyze the data as it becomes available and creates reports for management and staff on the Common Measures.

A data dashboard of this information will also be developed as part of MRC's initiative to create a new case management system to push data down on these performance measures to staff at area offices and to counselors as applicable. This will allow the agency to work on strategies to increase performance on the Common Measures.

#### **MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION**

##### **MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION THREE-YEAR PERFORMANCE**

<b>Common Performance Measures</b>	<b>FY19/PY18</b>	<b>FY20/PY19</b>	<b>FY21/PY20</b>
<b>Employment Rate at 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit</b>	48.2%	52.2%	50.9%
<b>Employment Rate at 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit</b>	N/A	22.9%	48.4%
<b>Median Quarterly Earnings at 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit</b>	\$4,332.83	\$4,353.52	\$4,444.22
<b>Credential Obtainment Rate</b>	N/A	4.7%	16.9%
<b>Measurable Skills Gains</b>	8.4%	7.3%	21.0%
<b>Effectiveness of Serving Employers –Retention from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>Quarter After Exit (MRC)</b>	75.0%	65.0%	70.0%
<b>Effectiveness of Serving Employers –Repeat Business Customers (MRC)</b>	11.6%	11.1%	10.8%

4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (landE) activities were utilized.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the Commission under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities. Consistent with the findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and goals and priorities identified in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council, the Commission uses funds to support innovation and expansion activities to address the needs of individuals with disabilities, primarily individuals with the most significant disabilities, and to promote increased employment rates and labor force participation rates for people with disabilities across Massachusetts. Activities over the past two program years include:

- On-The-Job Trainings and Job-Driven Trainings with Employer Partners: MRC continues to expand Job-Driven Trainings (JDT) and On-the-Job (OJT) training and evaluations. MRC has found that many consumers who participate in an OJT or Job-Driven training obtain employment with the OJT or JDT. Other participants are able to obtain employment elsewhere as a result of their participation in the OJT or JDT because they gained recent work experience and/or developed job-specific skills. MRC has created numerous job-driven training programs with a variety of employers supporting employment opportunities in growth industries.
- MRC - Department of Transitional Assistance Empower to Employ Project: MRC and the Department of Transitional Assistance have developed a project known as Empower to Employ designed to increase employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities receiving TANF benefits. The partner agencies use a jointly-funded model of client engagement and intensive co-case management to provide individualized and meaningful services. Through this collaborative effort, DTA and MRC are utilizing an Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach to facilitate recruitment (pre-engagement), engagement, service delivery and placement.
- MRC-Department of Mental Health Employment Initiative: MRC coordinates employment services for individuals with mental health needs served by the Department of Mental Health's Adult Clinical Community Services (ACCS) program in collaboration with DMH and its vendors. The new MRC/DMH Employment Initiative is designed to build an integrated employment framework that inspires and engages innovation to ensure full employment for people with mental health needs at the same rate of employment as the

general population. The focus of this initiative is on individuals served by DMH through Adult Community Clinical Services (ACCS). These individuals are being referred to MRC for Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services. To serve these individuals, MRC is using an Integrated Resource Team approach, where partner agencies and supports come together to craft and jointly own a Job Seeker's employment goal, to coordinate wrap-around services and ongoing collaboration and communication. MRC has hired dedicated staff with funding through the ISA to work with ACCS referrals. These counselors will have smaller caseloads and will work with MRC CIES providers, DMH providers, DMH, and other MRC staff to rapidly engage with consumers, develop a plan for employment, and coordinate services designed to assist these consumers in achieving successful employment outcomes.

- Transition Pathway Services Demonstration Grant Project: MRC just completed a 5-year demonstration grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) known as the Transition Pathway Services Grant. This grant focused on the provision of work-based learning experiences. The results from the grant are being evaluated and lessons learned will be used to develop additional best practices in this area and continue to improve transition and Pre-Employment transition services in partnership with schools and providers.
- IT enhancements to modernize the agency's technology and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of services. These include a provider portal to assist in reporting and tracking the provision of Pre-ETS services to potentially eligible consumers, to enhance tracking and reporting on internal job placement services, to develop a consumer portal for information and referral, and to develop a paperless system using Electronic Data Management.
- MRC's Job Placement Unit operates an annual Federal Hiring Event in partnership with MCB, other workforce partners, and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) in their Boston and Hartford offices. The Hiring Event assists consumers with securing competitive employment comparable with their interests and abilities. MRC prepares consumers to interview for available jobs with employers participating in the event. It focuses on direct job placement with participating employers and is not simply a career fair. Since 2013, Over 575 individuals have been successfully employed across the Commonwealth through participating in this annual one-day event. The aggregate annual wages of all successfully employed consumers through the hiring event since 2013 is approximately \$12.7 million. Consumers have been employed in a variety of occupations ranging from office and administrative support, health care, protective service, human services, and management occupations, amongst others.

- **Transportation:** MRC is working diligently to address transportation barriers faced by its consumers. MRC has updated transportation resource fact sheets on its website and makes them available to consumers at its Area Office. MRC hired a transportation coordinator through its Transition Pathway Services (TPS) grant and MRC is documenting lessons learned and best practices now that the grant period has ended. One major achievement has been that MRC consumers are now automatically eligible for the Transition Access Pass (TAP) program. This program offers half-fare rides on all Regional Transit Authorities across the Commonwealth. MRC also works with the Executive Office of Health and Human Service Transportation office on transportation for consumers and operates an innovative car donation program to assist individuals in accessing worksites. MRC has a benefits planning grant to assist consumer in their efforts to go to work, which can include the Plan for Achieving Self Supports (PASS) and impairment-related work expenses as incentives for an individual to go to work. MRC also uses IRS Section 44 as a strategy to assist consumers with Transportation needs. MRC will continue to work with transportation agencies to explore other creative transportation options for consumers. MRC also met with MassMobility and worked to update transportation resources and linked them to the MRC website to ensure this information is available to MRC consumers.
- **Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in State Jobs:** MRC places numerous individuals with disabilities into state government jobs each year, including at MRC. MRC has a diverse workforce with a high percentage of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. We have a key contact with the state's Human Resources Division to facilitate employment for consumers in state jobs, including the provision of On-The-Job training and internship opportunities with state and federal agencies. The Commonwealth also participates in MRC's annual hiring event to provide information to consumers on available state job opportunities, including how to apply.
- **Research Best Practices Models to Increase Employment of Individuals with Disabilities:** MRC will continue to research best practice models designed to increase the employment rate of individuals with disabilities in Massachusetts.
- **Learn to Earn:** MRC is engaged with the Learn to Earn initiative. Learn to Earn is a comprehensive approach to providing unemployed and underemployed individuals who are receiving assistance from public benefit programs with the supports, skills, and credentials they need to gain and retain employment in occupations for which employers have persistent demand. Learn to Earn Programs will help participants set and achieve goals necessary for employment and sustained economic stability, such as maintaining and growing family net resources and minimizing the real or perceived potential



impact of increased earned income on benefit receipt, including improving coordination across benefit programs and reducing benefit cliff effects. As part of this program, MRC is providing information on benefits counseling.

- Work Based Learning Experiences for Students with Disabilities to assist them in preparing for future employment and educational experiences.
- Apprenticeships: MRC will utilize available apprenticeship resources, including the ODEP guide to expand apprenticeship, to provide apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the Commonwealth. As an example, MRC participates in the Merit Apprenticeship Program. Additionally, MRC has obtained a copy of the ODEP guide on apprenticeships. MRC will also work with the Career Centers on providing apprenticeship opportunities for consumers. MRC has leased space at the career centers and has staff dedicated to the career centers to make available the range of career services from Career Centers for MRC consumers.
- MRC has developed an Interagency Service Agreement (ISA) with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to develop training programs to assist individuals with disabilities to complete training programs and obtain credentials to be substance abuse counselors. This has been identified as a growth area and a higher compensated profession in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- MRC has developed a partnership with the Career Centers known as the MassHire Training and Placement Collaborative Program where MRC is coordinating training services for MRC Job Seekers through the MassHire Career Center network, as part of efforts to coordinate service delivery across WIOA workforce partners in Massachusetts.
- MRC partners and contracts with the Asperger/Autism Network's (AANE) Life Management Assistance Program (LifeMAP). This program provides practical assistance to individuals on the Autism Spectrum and other related conditions. LifeMAP provides intensive, highly individualized coaching by professionals with expertise in both Autism Spectrum Disorder and specific content areas. Coaches focus on identifying and overcoming the specific barriers each client faces so that the clients can increase their levels of independence towards reaching their full potential.

***q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.***

Include the following:

1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has established a process to provide quality Supported Employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, for adults and youth. MRC will be utilizing Title I funds and Title VI B funds to provide Supported Employment services. MRC has developed a contingency plan to use Title I funds to provide Supported Employment Services if Title VI B are not appropriated in the federal budget MRC provides a range of supported employment services to assist consumers in their efforts to choose, obtain and maintain complete employment opportunities based on their abilities, skills, interests and needs as outlined in their Individualized Plan for Employment. MRC provides Supported Employment services through its area office network. MRC provides supported employment services to youths and adults with disabilities based on their needs and services outlined in their individualized plan for employment.

MRC utilizes a network of Qualified Community Rehabilitation Providers through MRC's Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) program to purchase and provide Supported Employment services to consumers. These programs, located throughout the state, serve persons with an array of significant disabilities including mental health, autism, deaf/severely hearing impaired, severely physically disabled, traumatic brain injured and dual diagnosed persons with intellectual disabilities and mental health, and other individuals with disabilities. MRC adjusted the CIES model based on lessons learned and input from its staff, CRP partners, and other stakeholders. These adjustments are designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of CIES services for MRC consumers, including supported employment services. MRC also incorporated peer support and flexible supports into the CIES procurement which should benefit consumers receiving supported employment services through MRC.

In addition, MRC works with its Workforce Partners and continues to expand partnerships with other state agencies such as the Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Mental Health to provide wrap-around supports and comparable benefits to assist individuals receiving supported employment services in obtaining and maintaining employment.

## 2. The timing of transition to extended services.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has developed a process to provide extended ongoing employment support services to assist individuals with disabilities in maintaining and advancing in their careers utilizing state funding, comparable benefits, and natural supports for long-term extended support services after federal funds can no longer be used. Paid extended supports are provided through a network of qualified community rehabilitation providers as part of MRC's Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) program as well as partnering with other state agencies such as the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Developmental Services.

Funding for extended long-term support services is available from several sources depending on the nature of the consumer's disability and the resources available. Sources include:

- a. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission State Ongoing Support Funding
  - b. IRS Section 44
  - c. Department of Mental Health
  - d. Department of Developmental Services
  - e. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Statewide Head Injury Program
  - f. Social Security Work Incentives/PASS Plan
  - g. Impairment-Related Work Expenses
  - h. Natural Supports from Employers
  - i. Medicaid Waiver Supported Employment Services
  - j. Other Comparable Benefits
1. Transition to extended services begins once the individual achieves job stability for 90 days or more. As part of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), supported employment cases are identified and the need and funding source for extended support services is identified as part of the IPE. For youths, Title VI-B reserve funds will be used for extended supports. After job stability is achieved for this period of time, the MRC VR case may be closed successfully when the consumer and counselor mutually agree to the closure of the case. After case closure, post-employment services can be provided as needed, or the case can be moved to state-funded ongoing support resources with contracted service providers, or extended supports provided through other agency funding, or employer-based or other natural supports as described above.

### ***Certifications***

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate:

**Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

Name of designated State agency: **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Toni A. Wolf**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner**

**States must provide written and signed certifications that:**

1. The **designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above** is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA\*, and its supplement under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act. \*\* **Yes**
2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the **designated State agency listed above** agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **Yes**
3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan,\* the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under Title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. \*\* **Yes**
4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. **Yes**
5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. **Yes**
6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law. **Yes**
7. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement. **Yes**
8. The **Authorized Representative listed above** has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services. **Yes**
9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. **Yes**

## Footnotes

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### **Certification 1 Footnotes**

\* Public Law 113-128.

\*\* Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

### **Certification 2 Footnotes**

\* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

\*\* No funds under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

### **Certification 3 Footnotes**

\* No funds under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in \*\*\* under Certification 2 footnotes.

Additional Comments on the Certifications from the State.

### ***Certification Regarding Lobbying — Vocational Rehabilitation***

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

- No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
- If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.
- The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including

subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

*Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance*

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that: If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization: **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Toni A. Wolf**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)

(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to [MAT\\_OCTAE@ed.gov](mailto:MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov).

***Certification Regarding Lobbying — Supported Employment***

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements, the undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

- No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
- If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this

Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

- The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

*Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance*

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that: If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization: **Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

Full Name of Authorized Representative: **Toni A. Wolf**

Title of Authorized Representative: **Commissioner**

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

***Assurances***

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: **The State Plan must provide assurances that:**

1. *Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:*

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

2. *Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:*

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

3. *Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:*

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

- a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. **The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable: (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council**
- c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
- e. the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds:  
**No**

- f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: **No**



- g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan. **No**

- h. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.

#### *4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services:*

The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

- a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above: **Yes**

- d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs
- j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State,
  - has developed and will implement,
    - strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
    - strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and
  - has developed and will implement strategies to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).

*5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:*

- a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under Title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
- c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.

*6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:*

- a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under Title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.

*7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:*

- a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that:
  - the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.

- an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act , which is developed and updated with Title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

## Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) State Plan

### Program-Specific Requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation (Blind)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan\* must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA:

\* Sec. 102(b)(D)(iii) of WIOA

#### **a. Input of State Rehabilitation Council (RC)**

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

- 1. input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's functions;**

#### INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

All agencies, except for those that are independent consumer-controlled commissions, must describe the following:

Input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including input and recommendations on the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, recommendations from the Council's report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other Council reports that may have been developed as part of the Council's function.

On December 1, 2021 the Rehabilitation Council held a public hearing to solicit feedback about how vocational rehabilitation services could be improved and what areas may require additional attention. Members of the public offered helpful feedback and expressed interest on a range of issues (see attached). The issue that generated the most discussion and interest was to help mid-career professionals with job placement and to develop capacity around job retention by connecting successful VR clients with internal and outside resources.

The MCB RC has made the following recommendations (listed in no particular order of priority) for the FY 2021-2024 state plan:

**Recommendation #1:**

Make budget recommendations and advocate, when appropriate, to ensure that MCB both receives sufficient VR funding and provides appropriate and cost-effective services for consumers;

**Recommendation #2:**

Ensure that MCB's social services and vocational rehabilitation staff can fully participate in IEP meetings for children and youth;

**Recommendation #3:**

Enhance the service delivery of MCB VR counselors to increase job development activities, job placement services, technology services, job retention, and job coaching services to all individuals (including individuals with other disabilities in addition to blindness) receiving vocational services at MCB regional offices;

**RC Update:**

- a. The RC has closely followed the Commonwealth's "Future of Work" initiative and is working with MCB as it develops new opportunities for employment, including remote work opportunities that do not rely on transportation.
- b. Two job fairs were held remotely in October 2020 and 2021, with an emphasis on reaching out to employers.
- c. The RC praised MCB's internship program, held remotely in 2020 and 2021, which was innovative and successful.
- d. The RC continues to follow orientation and mobility training, as this component of VR training empowers clients to travel to and from a worksite independently.
- e. The RC was informed about MCB's efforts to provide ongoing face-to-face instruction during COVID. Additionally, the techniques used by pedestrians who travel with a cane were impacted by social distancing, and these were discussed.
- f. The RC supported MCB's annual White Cane Day, which was held remotely and enabled greater geographical participation due to the remote conferencing platform.
- g. In its quarterly meetings, the RC followed closely the MCB's transition.
- h. RC raised concerns from consumers about two regional offices whose lease was ending, and a proposal to move them to locations that were less accessible by public transportation.
- i. The RC recommended that the new locations remain accessible and received affirmation that the offices would not move during the upcoming year.

- j. MCB closed the two regional offices in fall of 2020 without consulting with either of its advisory boards. The closures raised considerable concern among consumers.
- k. RC expressed regret there would no longer be regional offices in Worcester and New Bedford. Asked for improved communication with RC and more transparency. Recommended improved communication to impacted clients in impacted regions, including direct communication in non-technical formats for consumers who do not use email.
- l. As MCB established “touchdown spaces” to meet employee and consumer needs after the closure of the regional offices, it proposed a policy in which case workers would travel with a demonstration kit of available devices and place an order for future delivery.
- m. The RC expressed concerns about the impact of a policy that could lead to delays in service.
- n. The RC recommended that hardcopy records be kept secure and not be in case workers' homes after offices closed and case workers worked from home.
- o. RC expressed concern about parity of service, so consumers living in outlying areas receive same level of service as those in Boston.]

#### Recommendation #4:

Work with committee chairs to grow and increase the productivity of RC committees;

#### Recommendation #5:

Work and advocate for accessibility of state and local government portal systems, including all applications for services and all documents posted on these portals;

#### Recommendation #6:

Continue to work with state officials to support the Commonwealth's initiative to move forward as a model employer;

#### Recommendation #7:

Revitalize the Braille literacy council to support the quality of Braille instruction provided by school systems to elementary through high school age children;

#### Recommendation #8:

Advocate for digital accessibility including state and local government portal systems, including all applications for services and all documents posted on these portals as well as address the inaccessibility of online job applications;

#### Recommendation #9:

In 2021, MCB created a landing page on its website for the RC. The RC has benefitted from this communication tool and will provide feedback to MCB about accessibility issues and layout.

#### Recommendation #10:

Explore opportunities to increase the number of vending stands and to diversify the type of industries in which they are placed.

#### RC Update:

- MCB and the MCB RC are concerned that vending stands in Massachusetts have been on the decline.
- MCB continues to explore other opportunities away from the food industry in an attempt to diversify the program.
- The Randolph-Shepard program has been significantly impacted by the COVID pandemic and the Commonwealth's "Future of Work" initiative because of the significant decline in number of employees going into federal office buildings for work.
- Only five out of 27 vendor stands in the state are currently open.
- The Deputy Commissioner is holding meetings with vendors to discuss the situation and explore other opportunities.
- In December 2020, an MCB task force completed draft language for submission to the Massachusetts legislature that would modernize and streamline the MCB state statutes.
- The task force recommended language that would significantly modernize and strengthen the Randolph-Shepard program by addressing the evolving needs of vendors.
- A representative from the Rehabilitation Council was a member of the task force and contributed to the proposals.

#### Recommendation #11:

Review the 2018 Comprehensive Needs Assessment methodology to ensure that questions are consistent with the requirements and focus of WIOA on competitive integrated employment.

#### RC Update:

1. One focus group was held, and a web-based survey was developed and conducted.
2. MCB RC has continued to review the consumer satisfaction studies conducted.
3. The Council had in previous years provided input into the design of these studies as well as the design of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment study.
4. The MCB RC worked with the agency on the development and implementation of the 2020 comprehensive needs assessment methodology in line with the requirements and focus of WIOA on competitive integrated employment.
5. One focus group was held, and a web-based survey was developed and conducted.
6. The RC used Google Forms and found it to be accessible; it will be used for future web-based surveys.

7. MCB contracted with Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG) to complete a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment that was completed in September 2020.
8. PCG used multiple data sources to develop the analysis and recommendations within this report including:
9. Secondary data sources (American Community Survey (ACS) 1- and 5-year estimates)
10. Consumer and community partners surveys
11. Key informants focus groups and interviews
12. Case management data
13. Qualitative analysis (personal experiences and stories).
14. Results and analysis indicate that participants MCB and staff services support positive outcomes for individuals who receive services. Additionally, MCB enjoys positive, strong relationships that bolster resources and support positive outcomes.
15. Results and analysis also indicate that there are areas for growth to strengthen services and outcomes for individuals who are minorities, who live in rural areas, or who may need increased access to transportation or technology.
16. Findings also indicate that services for youth could be enhanced and increased to reach a wider number of individuals.
17. The RC Chair participated in an agency workgroup that made recommendations to PCG during the course of the CSNA.
18. MCB will continue to work closely with the RC and a sub-committee on needs assessment to plan future needs assessment methodology.
19. MCB engaged a consultant to develop an MCB survey of its consumers to support MCB's efforts to better ascertain the data dynamics of people with blindness throughout the Commonwealth.
20. The goal of this innovative program is to enhance its development and targeting of future programming and to contribute to its comprehensive needs assessment.
21. The consultant developed a short survey to be asked during the intake process.
22. The consultant developed a much larger panel of questions that could be used in the survey of existing clients.
23. The RC provided feedback to MCB and to consultants on the design of the questionnaire.
24. RC members noted that some questions were highly personal.
25. The RC is aware of consumer concerns about the nature of several of the questions and will work with MCB when planning future needs assessments to revisit this issue.



#### Recommendation #12:

Review transportation accessibility and its impact on the ability of consumers to pursue vocational objectives.

#### RC Update:

- The director of MCB's Mobility Unit attends a number of meetings on regional and statewide transportation issues to keep the agency informed on issues relevant to transportation accessibility.
- The RC hosted the community liaison from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) who presented the MBTA's "Forging Ahead" initiative.
- The MBTA sought and received feedback from the RC as it contemplated route reductions, fare increases, and ways to protect transit-critical populations caused by reduced ridership and budget shortfalls due to Covid.

#### Recommendation #13:

Review MCB's implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

#### RC Update:

- The RC continues to pay close attention to the agency's implementation of WIOA.
- MCB provides updates on the effort at each meeting. The agency and the council have continued to refine goals and priorities and plans for innovation and expansion based on the new law.
- MCB and the Rehabilitation Council are in full support of the Workforce Development Plan Vision that all Massachusetts residents will benefit from a seamless system of education and workforce services that supports career pathways for individuals and leads to a more informed, educated, and skilled workforce, which meets the Commonwealth's business demands and sustains a thriving economy.
- The agency and the council are committed to the following paths to the realization of that vision:
- Work with Core Program partners to promote Career Pathways for individuals who are legally blind and to improve the MassHire delivery system.
- Strengthen the alignment of the MCB VR program with the other core programs of the workforce development system.
- Use state and regional labor market information analysis to develop more employment options for consumers who are legally blind, utilizing regional labor market data, regional economic development agencies, and business intelligence gathered from interactions with core partners.
- Participate in the development of a coordinated, streamlined regional strategy for business partner outreach and follow up.

- WIOA and its state plan requirements have been discussed at each quarterly meeting of the Rehabilitation Council since its enactment.
- The agency's performance on RSA standards and indicators over previous years has at all times met the minimum level of overall performance established by RSA.
- Some agency-specific results for FY/2020 are:
- Percentage of MCB consumers who exited with employment was (66.4%).
- Average hourly earnings for competitive employment outcomes for MCB was \$26.23.
- Average number of hours worked per week for competitive employment outcomes was 32 hours.
- Cost per participant served in Career Services: \$340.47
- Cost per participant served in Training Services: \$5336.07
- The Rehabilitation Council planned to hold its June 2020 quarterly meeting at a MassHire center but cancelled it due to the COVID emergency.
- All meetings since March 2020 have been held remotely.
- The Rehabilitation Council looks forward to rescheduling a visit to a MassHire center when conditions permit.
- To enable several senior MCB staff members and RC members to participate in recurring state meetings about employment, the RC adjusted its quarterly meeting times and will continue to meet at the new time.
- The RC provided an update to MCB about summer programs for youth and the impact of COVID on the provision of services at MCB's primary residential service provider.
- The RC also presented information to MCB about the return of students to physical classrooms and in resources for families of K-12 youth with disabilities.
- Between April and September 2021, MCB contracted with a consultant to conduct a Return on Investment (ROI) study of the effectiveness of the agency's VR programs.
- An RC representative participated in task force meetings and recommended that qualitative as well as quantitative data be included. One focus group targeted recent MCB summer interns.
- A representative from the RC assisted in recruiting focus group participants and in drafting questions for use during the sessions. The final report will be sent to RC members.
- The Rehabilitation Council submits an annual report to the Governor of Massachusetts and to the Rehabilitation Services Administration.
- Attachment: Public Hearing Summary.

Public Hearing Comments:  
WIOA Combined State Plan  
December 1, 2021  
4:00 to 5:00 by Zoom

RC Subcommittee members:

- Naomi Goldberg, Chair
- Trisha Hart, MCB
- Cheryl Scott, RC, Executive Director MassHire State Workforce Board
- Jerry Berrier, RC, Zoom host
- DeAnn Elliott, RC
- 11 participants present, including subcommittee members.

Comments:

- Randolph-Sheppard is a great employment opportunity. Would be great if it could grow. People can make \$500,000 per year. With all the Federal buildings in Massachusetts, it could be a bigger program here than it is.
- It's good that Massachusetts has a separate state agency for consumers who are blind. It means counselors have specialized knowledge of blindness. Still, it would be good if counselors had more specialized experience in employment and job placement. Many consumers are mid-career professionals and are looking for level entry and re-entry opportunities. Expertise needed to match consumer's skill set with appropriate opportunities and geographically realistic placements. Would like to see more VR counselors with employment as a specialty.
- Consumers who have successfully completed VR don't always know about MassHire. They need more connection to engage with resources. Some wait for something to happen.

What is biggest impediment to looking for a job and the hiring process?

- Benefit issue is a problem. Consumers need to connect with benefit counseling early. Some clients go through training and discover later that their income will negatively impact their eligibility for SNAP, housing vouchers, or a disability package. Not sure if problem is lack of information, outdated information, client not asking the right questions, etc. Information sessions could be offered. Who at MCB is handling benefit counseling?
- Benefit cliffs exist. Clients' situations change over time, and consumers may be making decisions based on outdated information. Benefits counseling isn't a checkbox—could be useful to offer it at several points during a client's rehabilitation as their situation evolves.
- It could be useful to frame information by giving examples: if someone earns minimum wage and works 20 hours per week, their income will be x. People frequently don't think

about it this concretely until they learn they're not eligible for something. Consumer may get a raise and it catches them by surprise.

- Consider holding a monthly Q and A to provide answers to consumer questions. Heads up-these are the things that can impact your benefits. Even generic info is helpful.
- Case workers are responding and are communicative.
- MCB could improve the way it helps clients understand their aptitudes, interests, and skills. Desire for more career counseling. Some clients already know what they want, or they can find resources, while others need more guidance.
- Inaccessible software is an issue. Successful employees may be required to use new software programs that are incompatible with screen readers. Employees have trouble doing their jobs and may leave. They may not know that scripting is an option, or how to ask for it as an accommodation, or where to get it.
- There are other legal-type questions that may arise as employees perform their jobs. It's challenging to know what resources exist or where to go. This issue is about retention of successful VR placements, rather than making new ones. It would be helpful to have someone at MCB who could serve as a point of contact for working with clients to help them identify resources, identify approaches and advocate for themselves in employment situations. Perhaps this person could also connect with the employer if the situation warranted it.
- It was noted that "realistic" job placement means different things to different people. It can feel limiting to hear someone say one's career aspirations aren't realistic.
- VR is required to look at consumer's skills, aptitudes, and interests. If a career choice doesn't seem realistic, it's sometimes due to a mismatch between interests and skills, for instance, and not due to disability. "Realistic" may refer to job market and one's ability to earn a living in that profession.
- There's difficulty with Paylocity data base. It's a Payroll support service for companies across the state. It's not entirely accessible with JAWS.

#### Summary:

There was a strong desire to help mid-career professionals with job placement, and to develop capacity around retention by connecting successful VR clients with internal and outside resources.

1. the Designated State unit's response to the Council's input and recommendations; and

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind appreciates the Council's thoughtful input and recommendations and accepts the input and recommendations. MCB is providing an update relative to Recommendation #7: An MCB vocational rehabilitation counselor is a member of the Massachusetts Braille Literacy Advisory Council (BrLAC) which meets monthly. Another MCB staff member has been asked to make a presentation to the BrLAC on MCB's provision of braille instruction to consumers.

**2. the designated State unit's explanations for rejecting any of the Council's input or recommendations.**

No input or recommendations were rejected.

**b. Request for Waiver of Statewideness**

When requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement, the designated State unit must identify the types of services to be provided by the program on a non-statewide basis. The waiver request must also include written assurances that:

**1. a local public agency will provide the non-Federal share of costs associated with the services to be provided in accordance with the waiver request;**

Not applicable. The agency is not requesting a waiver of statewideness.

**2. the designated State unit will approve each proposed service before it is put into effect; and**

Not applicable. The agency is not requesting a waiver of statewideness.

**3. All State plan requirements will apply requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan will apply to the services approved under the waiver.**

Not applicable. The agency is not requesting a waiver of statewideness.

**c. Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Development System.**

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system with respect to:

**1. Federal, State, and local agencies and programs:**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind falls within the purview of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Other agencies within this organization include: the Department of Mental Health, Department of Developmental Services, Department of Public Health, Department of Children and Families, Department of Transitional Assistance, Department of Youth Services, Department of Elder Services, Office of Medicaid (MassHealth), Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Office for Refugees and Immigrants, Department of Veterans' Services, Chelsea Soldiers' Home, and Holyoke Soldiers' Home. The agency has strong cooperative and collaborative relationships with all of these agencies. Agency heads meet every two weeks to discuss issues of mutual concern and to resolve inter-agency problems. Other agency staffs meet collaboratively to work on numerous Secretariat-wide projects. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in the agency's unit that provides specialized services to persons who are deaf-blind and intellectually disabled blind work closely with the Massachusetts Department of

Developmental Services (DDS) to facilitate development and completion of plans and services for persons with developmental disabilities who may need their services in addition to vocational rehabilitation services. These specialized counselors also work very closely with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and staff of the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults to provide coordinated services to deaf-blind persons.

**2. State programs carried out under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has excellent relationships with the programs funded under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act and administered through the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. These include MassMatch, a program that provides comprehensive information about the availability and funding of assistive technology; the Assistive Technology Program that provides AT assessments, buys, and sets up equipment, and provides train and follow-up. Three providers, Massachusetts Easter Seals and United Cerebral Palsy of Berkshire County and the University of MA-Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering provide services on a regional basis and have on-site AT devices for evaluation and training. The Massachusetts Assistive Technology Loan Program, operated by Easter Seals Massachusetts, gives people with disabilities and their families access to low-interest cash loans so they can buy the assistive technology devices they need. A number of MCB consumers benefit each year from these programs.

**3. Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture;**

While Massachusetts is not predominately a rural state, there are rural communities, especially in central and western Massachusetts. When appropriate, the agency works with USDA Rural Development programs such as the Small Business Resource at Cornell University in developing vocational opportunities for consumers. The agency makes frequent referrals to the SNAP program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that is administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance in Massachusetts; MCB has also participated in special outreach initiatives of that program.

**4. Noneducational agencies serving out-of-school youth; and**

Massachusetts has a number of programs for out-of-school youth that MCB works with to provide services for individual consumers. During the past year, MCB has been working closely with the Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD), a non-profit agency that empowers youth with disabilities to reach their full potential by providing transformative mentoring programs, youth development opportunities, and inclusion expertise. MCB offers all transition-age students and out-of-school youth mentoring through the Partners for Youth with Disabilities Mentor Match program. The Mentor Match pairs youth and young adults with disabilities with adult mentors who best fit their personality, interests, and skills. MCB also has begun offering transition-age students and out-of-school youth online mentoring through Project L.E.N.S.

## **5. State use contracting programs.**

In 2015, the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Program was expanded to include Veteran Business Enterprises, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Business Enterprises; and Disability-Owned Business Enterprises. Some consumers of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind have been able to take advantage of this program to increase their business and vocational opportunities.

### **d. Coordination with Education Officials**

Describe:

#### **1. DSU's plans**

The designated State unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of VR services, including pre-employment transition services, as well as procedures for the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for the students.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities include:

- The implementation of the agency's agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). MCB and ESE cooperate to outreach to and identify students with visual impairments who are in need of transition services and pre-employment transition services. Outreach to these students occurs as early as possible during the transition planning process and includes information about the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals.
- The continued provision of consultation and technical assistance to the education agency relative to the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including pre-employment transition services and vocational rehabilitation services.
- The continued transition planning by MCB and education personnel that facilitates the development and completion of students' individual education programs through the Chapter 688 process described in Section B. below.

#### **2. Information on the formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency with respect to:**

##### **A. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has for several years had a cooperative agreement that complies with WIOA relative to the services provided to legally blind children. The agreement describes the roles and

responsibilities, including financial responsibilities of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services. It also provides for regular communication and information sharing on topics of mutual interest such as agency policy initiatives; resources; transition activities, including pre-employment transition services; the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks; and the Expanded Core Curriculum for legally blind students.

**B. transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and implementation of their individualized education programs;**

MCB conducts formal transition planning in conjunction with education personnel that facilitates the development and completion of students' individualized education programs through the following process. As indicated above, MCB falls within the purview of the Executive Office of Human Services of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Chapter 688, a state law passed in 1984 mandated that the Executive Office of Health and Human Services establish a Bureau of Transition Planning to assure the provision of adequate transitional planning services to disabled persons completing special education. The Bureau of Transitional Planning monitors an inter-agency cooperative planning process that requires the participation of all relevant human services agencies. An individual transition plan must be developed by the agencies at least six months before the termination of special education services. This plan must be approved by an inter-agency Transitional Advisory Committee, the Secretary of Human Services, and the consumer or his guardian. The plan outlines the services to be provided and identifies the agency responsible for the provision of each service. This process assures that an individualized plan for employment is developed and approved for each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services before the student leaves the school setting. MCB has found that this transitional planning process has clarified agency responsibilities and has made it much easier to arrange necessary support services to enable consumers to participate in vocational rehabilitation services.

**C. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;**

A new agreement with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) was finalized several years ago that describes the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services.

Specific provisions of the agreement include:

- Regular Communication - DESE and MCB representatives will meet semi-annually and as necessary to communicate and share information on topics



of mutual interest including, but not limited to, legislative and regulatory changes; agency policy initiatives; resources; transition activities, including pre-employment transition services; the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks; and the Expanded Core Curriculum for legally blind students.

- MCB assistance with Braille Literacy and Curriculum for Legally Blind Students - MCB with the participation of the Braille Literacy Advisory Council (BrLAC) will advise DESE on issues related to Braille Literacy, the implementation of the Unified English Braille Code (UEB), the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and the Expanded Core Curriculum for legally blind students.
- Coordination with AIM Library - MCB will contact all eligible students identified through the mandatory report of legal blindness and will provide information about the purpose and benefits of the Accessible Instructional Materials Library ("AIM Library"). The AIM Library will share information with MCB about users who grant permission. MCB will provide information on available services to newly identified eligible individuals.
- DESE Guidance for School Districts - DESE, with the assistance of MCB, will provide school districts with guidance on using the Expanded Core Curriculum with eligible students. DESE, with the assistance of MCB, will develop guidance for school districts on the Workforce and Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014; on MCB services for legally blind students and how such services can be accessed; on developing collaborative relationships with MCB caseworkers, on procedures for including caseworkers in the development of IEPs and transition plans, and accessing pre-employment transition services.
- DESE will provide local school districts with technical assistance to facilitate district compliance with G.L. c. 71B, §§ 12A-12C.
- MCB's role as the federally designated Vocational Rehabilitation Agency for Blind Individuals - A referral to MCB may be made when a student is 14 and older. MCB will determine if a student is eligible for MCB vocational rehabilitation services. If a student is eligible, MCB will coordinate the development of an Individualized Plan for Employment ("IPE") before the student leaves the school setting and will oversee implementation of the IPE, post-graduation or when the student turns 22 years of age, whichever comes first.
- For students eligible for MCB service and who are discussing transition, MCB may be invited to participate as a member of the IEP Team and may recommend transition services and goals consistent with the IPE for the student.
- MCB will provide information, as requested, to school districts about school and community-based vocational training and integrated employment (including supported employment) training for transition-

aged eligible students available through MCB regional offices. MCB will designate staff in regional offices to provide technical support to school districts on legal blindness, independent living skills development, the Expanded Core Curriculum for legally blind students as it relates to the General Curriculum, and transition services, including pre-employment transition services.

- Both DESE and MCB shall abide by state and federal laws and policies concerning student and client records confidentiality, and agency policies and procedures.
- DESE will provide school districts with technical assistance and guidance concerning special education law and policy and will monitor compliance.
- In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by WIOA, nothing in this agreement will be construed to reduce the obligation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) of a local educational agency (LEA) or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related services and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities.
- In accordance with IDEA, nothing in this agreement relieves MCB of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet MCB's eligibility criteria.
- Disputes regarding MCB financial responsibility for services provided or recommended by MCB for blind students will be resolved by the MCB Deputy Commissioner.
- The agreement shall be in effect for ten years subject to biannual review. It may be revised upon agreement by the parties or terminated by either party upon written notice to the Commissioner of intent to withdraw.

**D. procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.**

As described in Section B. above, identification and outreach are accomplished by transition planning by MCB and education personnel that facilitates the development and completion of students' individualized education programs through the Chapter 688 process.

MCB provides children's services to legally blind children under its state social services funding. Children participating in these services are referred by their social workers to vocational rehabilitation counselors when they are age 14. Referrals from this program are a major component of outreach for the provision of pre-employment transition services, transition services, and other vocational rehabilitation services.

An MCB vocational rehabilitation counselor has developed, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Federation for Children with Special Needs (the state Parent Training and Information Center), an information packet for the parents of children with visual impairments on the pre-employment transition services and transition services offered by the MCB vocational rehabilitation program.

In addition, all legally blind children and adults in Massachusetts are registered with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind as a consequence of the state's mandatory reporting law and, thus, identified. MCB regularly reaches out to all registrants between the ages of 14 and 22 to acquaint them with the agency and its services and to offer pre-employment transition services, transition services, and other vocational rehabilitation services.

#### **e. Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(3)). Describe the manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit VR service providers.

In accordance with the procedures of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has contracts with all private, non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers that it purchases services from. Statewide rates and technical specifications are established in these contracts for the services most commonly purchased from non-profit vocational rehabilitation services providers including vocational evaluation, supported employment, on-site job coaching and job development. These contracts are subject to competitive bidding; solicitations are posted on the COMMBUYS website maintained by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As required by the Rehabilitation Act, one member of the State Rehabilitation Council represents a non-profit provider. In addition, several other members happen to work for non-profit providers. During the recent years, MCB has developed enhanced public-private collaborations with the Commonwealth's significant non-profit service providers for the blind to leverage MCB's resources. The organizations include Perkins, the Carroll Center, and Massachusetts Association for the Blind (MAB) Community Services. In the fall of 2018, the MCB Commissioner held a statewide meeting for the leadership teams of MCB and of partner agencies to build closer relationships and to discuss common concerns and possible mutual initiatives at a high level. The agency has also been collaborating with the Perkins School in its initiative, the Perkins Business Partnership (PBP), which is actively assisting MCB job-ready consumers to optimize their resumes and to obtain job interviews. Perkins Business Partnership meetings involve MCB job-ready candidates breaking into small groups with PBP members to review resume, evaluate and brainstorm job search strategies and identify a mentor. MCB is exploring other ways to increase collaboration and regular communication with all of the Massachusetts non-profit agencies that serve blind consumers to improve the provision of services to persons who are legally blind.

#### **f. Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(4)). Describe the designated State agency's efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide supported employment services and extended employment services, as applicable, to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

In October 1997, a Community-Based Employment Service (CBES) service delivery system was developed through the Executive Office of Health and Human Services Employment Services Advisory Committee. Later that year, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), the Massachusetts Commission of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) and the Massachusetts Commission of the Blind (MCB) collaborated on the release of a competitive bid for CBES. It was the first interagency collaboration of its kind. Because of this effort, a supported employment consumer is able to access a system of supports in a more streamlined fashion that incorporates collaboration and consumer choice and is outcome driven. This effort is designed to offer all reasonable and allowable supports to consumers, including extended services. Through this effort the disability agencies have a consistent pay scale, defined outcomes and can now easily cost share the support services for people with disabilities. The CBES service delivery system continues, slightly modified, with the existing agencies, as the Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) service delivery system today. In recent years, MCB has contracted with an increasing number of new providers of community-based supported employment services. The results of these services have varied, but the agency's positive experience in the cases of some consumers who have needed very intensive supported employment services. The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) have over the years worked cooperatively with MCB and provided extended services to a number of legally blind persons that have been provided supported employment services by MCB. A new Memorandum of Agreement with DDS that includes provisions for use of joint agency resources to ensure quality service delivery and long term supports for supported employment was executed in November 2015. This includes a formal commitment of funding from MCB for appropriate supported employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long-term, ongoing employment support services when needed. The agreement also provides for cross-training of staff. In accordance with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, MCB executed a WIOA Cooperative Agreement with MassHealth in January 2016. In addition, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) has clarified that MCB consumers who have been rehabilitated into competitive integrated supported employment will be eligible to receive funding for on-going supports under its state-funded Extended Ongoing Supports Program. MCB is very appreciative of the help and advice that the MRC Extended Ongoing Supports Program provided and expects that

the availability of this resource will increase the opportunities for supported employment for legally blind consumers who have significant secondary disabilities but do not qualify for on-going supports from another state or private agency.

#### **g. Coordination with Employers**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.8(b)(5)). Describe how the designated State unit will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of:

##### **1. VR services; and**

In recent years, MCB has participated in several hiring events with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission that were sponsored by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). Federal contractors are required to set a hiring goal of having 7% of their employees drawn from qualified workers with disabilities by regulations promulgated in 2013. MCB has also held several smaller in-service presentations for OFCCP contractors and intends to continue its outreach to OFCCP contractors using several strategies including: participation in hiring events, scheduling group and individual in-service presentations and assistive technology demonstrations, and contact with individual OFCCP contractors on behalf of consumers who are applying for jobs.

MCB employment specialists participate in regional employment collaboratives that share information on employer needs at regular meetings. The members of these collaboratives also share job listings across agencies.

- MCB obtained a grant, now completed, from the Job-Driven Technical Assistance Center at the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) to enhance the collaboration among MCB, the Carroll Center, and the Perkins Business Partnership in order to more effectively meet the job placement needs of both consumers and employers. As part of the project, MCB operationalized a VisionWorks Consortium which consists of MCB, the Carroll Center for the Blind, and the Perkins School for the Blind. The three organizations that are a part of the consortium pooled their employer contacts to track the business partner engagement to increase employment opportunities for job seekers who are visually impaired. This project was fruitful in many ways and the three agencies have continued to work together on initiatives such as the “2020 Challenge” discussed below.
- Perkins School for the Blind, MCB, the Carroll Center, the National Braille Press, and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study usually hold a job fair each October. This year the partners held an employer education event instead. The event included approximately seventy employers who were asked to interview, mentor, provide an internship opportunity to, hire, or promote at least one blind consumer (or one more than during 2019) during the year as part of a

“2020 Challenge” initiative. Many of the employer’s present expressed their commitment to this initiative.

- MCB plans to develop a guide for Massachusetts business employers on tax incentives available for hiring individuals with disabilities. There are numerous tax incentives available to incentivize businesses to hire individuals with disabilities; however, they are poorly understood by many employers. Complexity is a deterrent for many potential employers of MCB consumers. Having an accessible and easy-to-follow guide will facilitate employment interaction for MCB’s consumers and potential employers.

MCB is currently exploring the best avenues to solicit employers’ opinions about additional mutual cooperation to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration and pre-employment transition opportunities for consumers and students with disabilities. The agency will use the knowledge and expertise of those Rehabilitation Council members who represent business, labor, and industry and that of the members of the Perkins Business Partnership, an alliance among Perkins, the Carroll Center for the Blind, and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind in this endeavor.

## **2. transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for students and youth with disabilities.**

The Perkins Business Partnership (PBP) is major initiative to coordinate with employers in the provision of transition services, including pre-employment transition services, for youth and of employment-related services to other consumers who are visually impaired or blind. PBP is an alliance between Perkins, the Carroll Center for the Blind, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and some of the region’s best-known businesses (including large banks, hospitals, and insurance companies) that is working to break down barriers to employment and expand opportunities for individuals who are blind. PBP also provides the following services to employers: Information on workplace accommodations, information on interviewing candidates who are blind, and accessibility consulting.

MCB is currently exploring the best avenues to solicit employers’ opinions about additional mutual cooperation to identify other competitive integrated employment and career exploration and pre-employment transition opportunities for students with disabilities.

MCB has had extensive experience over the past sixteen years in collaborating with employers to provide career exploration opportunities, pre-employment transition services, and transition services within its summer internship program to more than 1,000 consumers. Approximately 80 consumers participated in the program during the summer of 2019.

## **h. Interagency Cooperation**

Describe how the designated State unit will collaborate with the State agency responsible for administering each of the following programs to develop opportunities for competitive integrated employment, to the greatest extent practicable:

### **1. the State Medicaid plan under title XIX of the Social Security Act;**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has always had a good relationship with MassHealth, the program that provides Medicaid services in Massachusetts. About 33% of the persons registered as legally blind in Massachusetts benefit from the program. MassHealth services have been key comparable benefits that have enabled many VR consumers to reach their vocational goals. The agency's state-funded Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program also works closely with MassHealth to provide services under the Home and Community-Based waiver that can provide the underpinning of vocational outcomes in some cases.

### **2. the State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities; and**

The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in the agency's unit that provides specialized services to persons who are deaf-blind and intellectually disabled and blind work very closely with the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to facilitate the development and completion of plans and services for persons with intellectual disabilities who may need DDS services in addition to vocational rehabilitation services. These specialized counselors also work closely with the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and staff of the Helen Keller National Center to provide coordinated services to deaf-blind persons.

During 2016, MCB and DDS agreed to share and match data in order to identify all consumers who are potentially eligible for services from both agencies. When the data match was completed, approximately 1,800 consumers had been identified. A further review by DDS estimated that 400 of these consumers might be appropriate for VR services.

The two agencies have executed a Memorandum of Agreement that includes provisions for use of joint agency resources to ensure quality service delivery and long-term supports that result in competitive, integrated employment outcomes. This includes funding from MCB for appropriate vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long-term, ongoing employment support services when needed.

### **3. the State agency responsible for providing mental health services.**

Over the years, the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) has worked cooperatively with MCB by providing extended services and other services to some legally blind persons that have received supported employment services and other services from MCB.

#### **i. Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development**

(Formerly known as Attachment 4.10)). Describe the designated State agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit, including the following:

##### **1. Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development**

###### **A. Qualified Personnel Needs.**

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

###### **i. the number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category:**

- The average caseload per MCB vocational rehabilitation counselor is 70 vocational rehabilitation consumers. Growth in MCB's consumer base has been static during the past few years. Based upon this pattern and an agency turnover rate of about 1%, it is projected that there will be a need for some 10-15 entry-level direct services staff over the next five years. The agency estimates that in PY2023, it will serve approximately 1,300 legally blind individuals. The agency believes that numbers and types of personnel listed below are adequate and will continue to be adequate in five years, based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.
- Administrative Staff: 1, Rehabilitation Counselors and Employment Specialists: 18, Other Direct Service (AT engineers, OM, RT, etc.): 20, Direct Service Supervisors: 3 and Clerical and Support Staff: 5



**ii. the number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and**

- Administrative Staff: 0, Rehabilitation Counselors and Employment Specialists: 1, Other Direct Service (AT engineers, OM, RT, etc.): 0, Direct Service Supervisors: 1 Clerical and Support Staff: 0

**iii. projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State agency to provide VR services in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.**

- Projected vacancies over the next five years: Administrative Staff: 2 Rehabilitation Counselors: 3 Other Direct Service (AT engineers, OM, RT, etc.): 5 Direct Service Supervisors: 1 Clerical and Support Staff: 1

## **B. Personnel Development**

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

**i. a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;**

- Assumption College
- Springfield College
- University of Massachusetts at Boston

Many MCB staff have graduated from these programs over the years. One recently hired counselor has a degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Assumption College. The agency also provides internship and practicum opportunities for rehabilitation counseling students.

**ii. the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and**

In a given academic year, upwards of 100 undergraduate students and 125 graduate students are enrolled in degree programs, either full-time or part-time, as rehabilitation "majors" at Assumption College, Springfield College, Salve Regina, and the University of Massachusetts at Boston.

**iii. the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel**

**category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.**

Each year, upwards of 50 undergraduate students are awarded the Bachelor's degree and upwards of 60 graduate level students graduate with credentials to qualify for certification by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification and/or licensure by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## **2. Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel**

Describe the development and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

- As part of its ongoing In-Service Training Program, MCB's Staff Development Unit regularly conducts needs assessments of the professional staff to identify training requirements and areas needing attention. The Staff Development Unit also utilizes the resources of Technical Assistance Center at the Institute for Community Inclusion for needs assessment data; direct training programs; and referral and evaluation of trainers, lecturers, and presenters. MCB's Staff Development Unit utilizes this data to plan, budget and provide the most comprehensive training plan possible.
- MCB is a leader in the area of adaptive technology and has long utilized its in-house resources to keep its professional staff current in this area.
- Training on the Rehabilitation Act is regularly included in the annual training calendar.
- Recruitment is conducted through mechanisms such as the Massachusetts online job recruitment site and at job fairs. Preparation is accomplished through new staff orientation, supervision, and on-going training.
- MCB has had a productive relationship with the graduate rehabilitation-counseling program at Assumption College and Springfield College. MCB has been able over the years to hire a number of graduates of Assumption College and Springfield College as MCB rehabilitation counselors. MCB also has developed a positive relationship with the University of Massachusetts, Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling program and has hired several graduates as rehabilitation counselors. Another college, Cambridge College, offers some coursework in Rehabilitation Counseling. MCB is in contact with the college and sends job openings to the college.

### 3. Personnel Standards

Describe the State agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards consistent with section 101(a)(7)(B) and 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that designated State unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

**A. standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing VR services; and**

In accordance with 34 CFR 361.18 c (2)(I), the highest requirements in the State applicable to a professional discipline means the highest entry-level academic degree needed for any national or State approved or recognized certification, licensing, or registration requirement. In Massachusetts, pursuant to 34 CFR 361.18 (c) (2)(I), the degree needed if a person chooses to apply for state licensure is a master's in rehabilitation counseling or a related field. Persons who have attained a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or have been awarded a license in rehabilitation counseling by the Board of Allied Mental Health and Human Services Professions before July 1, 1999 are deemed to have met the academic standard. Meeting the academic standard requires the attainment of a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a related field from a recognized educational institution and successful completion of a graduate-level course in each of the following areas:

- Job Placement or Occupational Information;
- Vocational Assessment and Evaluation;
- Vocational Counseling; and
- Medical or Psychosocial Aspects of Disabilities

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind defines a person with a master's degree in a related field as one who has a master's degree with a major in Counseling, Guidance, Psychology, Education, Special Education, Social Work, Human Services, Human Development, Sociology, or in a major that has been determined to be comparable by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. Some years ago, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind developed an Action Plan to Comply with Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act in conjunction with the Regional Office of the Rehabilitation Services Administration. This plan called for completion of a plan by which all existing Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) who did not have a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a related field would be on a mandatory schedule to fulfill this academic requirement, consistent with the ongoing provisions of federal law and in accordance with the MCB State Division of Human Resources and labor union policies and/or agreement(s). All vocational rehabilitation counselors who did not meet this standard have now completed additional

graduate-level work to meet CSPD requirements. The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has for a number of years begun to apply the master's-level standard to new hires, if at all possible.

**B. the establishment and maintenance of education and experience requirements, in accordance with section 101(a)(7)(B)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act, to ensure that the personnel have a 21st century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

MCB actively recruits new rehabilitation staff from area graduate-level college and university programs.

**4. Staff Development.**

Describe the State agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that, consistent with section 101(a)(7)(C) of the Rehabilitation Act, all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

**A. System of staff development**

A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated State unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology, including training implemented in coordination with entities carrying out State programs under section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has for a number of years, begun to apply the master's-level standard to new hires, if at all possible. In addition, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind supports graduate-level training for its professional staff through its Staff Development Unit. MCB actively recruits new rehabilitation staff from area graduate-level college and university programs. The agency also provides a number of short-term training opportunities for vocational rehabilitation staff.

The agency also provides a number of short-term training opportunities for vocational rehabilitation staff. During PY2021 MCB conducted more than twenty in-service training programs on topics such as: ethics, diversity, eye diseases, and work incentives

On March 23, 2021, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) held its sixth MCB Pre-ETS Visions of Collaboration Conference for Teachers of the Visually Impaired, MCB VR counselors and supervisors, and other special education staff. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the conference was held virtually over Zoom. The agenda included presentations on Managing Mental Health Issues; Remote Instruction with Assistive Technology During Covid; Employment Options for Non-College Bound Consumers. Employers, special education staff,

students, and MCB staff were among the presenters. The participant evaluations were very positive.

Agency staff also attended a number of training courses and programs provided by the Commonwealth and other private institutions.

The Steering Committee of the Massachusetts Workforce Board works with the Steering Committee members, including the MassHire Department of Career Services, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, to coordinate cross-training for staff. Additional cross-training on labor market information and technology tools is a high priority. Cross-training staff is available across all partners (economic development organizations, MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Centers, TANF-SNAP, adult education, vocational rehabilitation, business services, Veterans, and other key programs) on the online technology tools available to individuals across programs including JobQuest, TORQ, Career Information System, etc. MCB VR staff members also participate in webinars offered by the Job Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (JDVRTAC) and the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC).

MCB intends to take advantage of any other webinars and training opportunities on workforce and labor force needs.

The agency also offers participation in an Aspiring Supervisor Certificate Program in order to prepare interested staff to apply for supervisory positions that are expected to become vacant within the next few years.

## **B. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge**

procedures for the acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources to designated State unit professionals and paraprofessionals.

The Commission acquires and routinely disseminates rehabilitation materials and research to staff such as the latest publications from the Institute on Rehabilitation on Issues, training materials from the Research and Training Centers, training guides and resource materials produced by recipients of RSA training grants, and literature from the American Foundation for the Blind and the National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision at Mississippi State University. In addition, each counselor and supervisor have a personal computer giving them access to a wide variety of software applications and websites to acquire rehabilitation materials and research reports.

## **5. Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs**

Describe how the designated State unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in appropriate modes of

communication with or in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability.

The agency has two Rehabilitation Teachers who are fluent in Spanish, and another Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor who is fluent in both Albanian and Greek languages. One VR supervisor speaks French and the language of the Congo. MCB also has one staff member is fluent in Polish. MCB VR counselors who work with deaf-blind individuals are proficient in American Sign Language.

#### **6. Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**

As appropriate, describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated State unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Memorandum of Understanding between MCB and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education contains provisions to explore ways to develop cross-training opportunities on transition and pre-employment transition services. For the fourth year, the agency also developed and sponsored a conference called "Vision of Collaboration" on pre-employment transitions services. More than 150 Teachers of the Visually Impaired, MCB VR counselors and supervisors, and other special education staff attended.

MCB has developed Memoranda of Understanding with both the Department of Mental Health and the Department of Developmental Services. These Memoranda of Understanding include provisions for the cross training of staff to improve shared client service delivery. In 2017 the Department of Developmental Services delivered training for all VR staff and the Department of Mental Health provided training in 2018. In 2017 MCB delivered training "Adjustment to the Challenges of Vision Loss" for the Department of Developmental Services at their annual "A FOCUS on Vision" conference. In 2017 the Massachusetts Office on Disability delivered a training program for all VR staff on ADA Training: Employer Responsibilities. In 2017 MCB delivered cross training for all Department of Transitional Assistance's Service Coordinators who are responsible for the effective service delivery of agency services for clients with disabilities. In 2019 MCB provided training on the Expanded Core Curriculum under IDEA. In addition, MCB has had VR and Pre-ETS staff attend ongoing training at the Federation for Children with Special Needs.

## **j. Statewide Assessment**

### **1. Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the VR services needs of those:**

#### **A. with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;**

In 2020, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind engaged Public Consulting Group, Inc. to work with MCB to conduct an updated Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA).

The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) meets §361.29 Section 101(a)(15) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, including an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the vocational rehabilitation service needs of:

- Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program carried out under this title;
- Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system (other than the vocational rehabilitation program), as identified by such individuals and personnel assisting such individuals through the components; and
- Youth with disabilities, and students with disabilities, including their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services

The CSNA assessed the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition services and preemployment transition services, and the extent to which such services provided under this Act are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) in order to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Finally, the CSNA includes an assessment of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

#### **Key Activities:**

- Gathered and analyzed MCB policies and guidance, information about current operations and plans, and relationships, to analyze and describe the current landscape of MCB's programs and services.
- Used multiple data sources to develop the results and analysis within this report including:
  - Secondary data sources (American Community Survey (ACS))

- Key informant focus groups and interviews
- Case management data
- Qualitative analysis (personal experiences and stories)

#### Outcomes:

PCG collaborated with MCB to gather quantitative and qualitative data, including stakeholder engagement, to describe the rehabilitation needs of individuals who are blind and visual impairments, with an emphasis on targeted populations. Results and analysis indicate that participants MCB and staff services support positive outcomes for individuals who receive services. Additionally, MCB enjoys positive, strong relationships that bolster resources and support positive outcomes. Results and analysis also indicate that there are areas for growth to strengthen services and outcomes for individuals who are minorities, who live in rural areas, or who may need increased access to transportation or technology. Findings also indicate that services for youth could be enhanced and increased to reach a wider number of individuals.

The full CSNA has been published on MCB's website at: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/2020-rsa-re-allotment-project-summary>.

#### **B. who are minorities;**

Overall, the distribution of race and ethnicity in MCB's open cases follow expected distributions. However, individuals who are Black or African American are represented at a rate 10% higher than expected from population estimates. Individuals who are Hispanic are also represented 10% higher than expected. Conversely, the rate of people who are White is 11% lower than expected. These results parallel the higher rates of individuals in urban areas and youth served.

Data presented demonstrates that racial and ethnic minorities are represented as MCB participants at rates comparable to or higher than Massachusetts population estimates. This data may indicate that MCB has effective mechanisms of reaching and engaging with individuals who are minorities.

Comparing the feedback of open cases and all cases reveals differences in perspective on the consumer's experience. Across all cases, survey responses indicate that individuals who are minorities have a relatively positive service experience. Across accommodations, technology and equipment, times, and needed testing and assessment, individuals who are minorities are more likely to be positive about their service experience compared to their peers who are not a minority. However, individuals who are minorities are less likely to indicate that services are in a convenient place for them or that they can use public transportation to get to MCB offices and services. Respondents report overall positive counselor interaction.

While the analysis of all cases leads to positive trends, analysis of open cases reveals different trends. Instead of an overall positive service experience compared to individuals who are not minorities, respondents report a less positive experience in 7 of 8 surveyed areas. It should be noted that respondents were still overall positive in many areas, such as receiving services in a convenient place (87% agreed). Here we point to a difference in data when comparing all cases



vs. open cases. Open cases were less likely to report positive experiences in a variety of interactions with their counselors. On only one of seven questions about experience with a VR counselor. When responding to 'My counselor talked to me about my choices when developing my plan for employment.' individuals who are minorities are more likely to report a positive experience than non-minority open cases. On average across counselor experience questions, members of minority groups with open cases were 8-percentage points less likely to agree to positive statements. Most notably, the few members of a minority groups with open cases agree that counselors helped consumers understand the sorts of careers they could pursue (48.0%). The difference in reported perspectives over time may be related to differences in service delivery, perspective, sample size, or recall. Additional information and exploration are recommended in subsequent sections of this report.

Members of minority groups report gaps in CRP capacity at a higher rate than their peers who are not minorities. Twice as many members of a minority group thought that it took a long time to get a job (44% vs. 18%), and three times as many individuals who are minorities indicated that CRPs did not have enough staff (33% vs. 9%). While there were no respondents of 'non-minority consumers' who indicated a lack of providers for a specific population, 11.1% of individuals who are minorities did agree that there were not enough providers for a specific population. Twice as many individuals who are minorities also felt that the staff of CRPs lacked the skills needed to support different kinds of needs. These reported deficits in consumer experience with CRP's merits further exploration and subsequent action.

**C. who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;**

**Individuals with advanced education or diverse employment goals:** From analysis conducted on available data, individuals with advanced education, or diverse employment goals, may be underserved. In open responses, several MCB participants commented that they felt MCB was not as effective at supporting individuals with advanced education. This may relate to the low utilization rate of One Stop Centers reported in the consumer data as well. Further exploration and analysis would be needed to learn more about service delivery and outcomes of consumers with higher levels of education attainment.

**Individuals who live in rural areas:** Analysis of case management data indicates that individuals with visual impairments are represented at a lower rate than would be expected based on population estimates. Focus groups and open-ended survey and interview responses both suggest that individuals in more rural portions of the state can feel neglected by MCB services and perceive a lack of opportunity to engage in the full range of MCB services and experiences. Additionally, with 60% of survey respondents indicated that transportation was a barrier toward employment, it makes sense that individuals who live in rural areas would also experience these challenges. **The analysis of case management data in conjunction with data collected over the CSNA process may indicate that individuals who live in rural areas may be underserved.**

**D. who have been served through other components of the statewide workforce development system; and**

MCB's practice is to refer all VR consumers to MassHire Career Centers. MCB has, over the years, offered to place staff on-site at the centers, to provide staff training on blindness and accessibility, and to provide consultation career centers on the accessibility of materials and software. With the implementation of WIOA, the MassHire centers are more open to using MCB as a resource (rather than referring the consumer back) than they have been in the past.

**E. who are youth with disabilities and students with disabilities, including, as appropriate, their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services.**

MCB serves a higher percentage of youth ages 14-21 compared to expected population distribution (24.4% vs. 4.5%). In fact, youth comprise the largest percent of MCB's open cases. The demographics of youth MCB serve mirror expectations set in Massachusetts demographics.

Survey results highlight several strengths throughout MCB's programs for youth with visual impairments. Youth report positive experiences with VR counselors with little disagreement. Similarly, respondents receive services positively. Except for the Department of Education (k-12), youth report that MCB effectively coordinates services with its partners, particularly the Carroll Center for the Blind and post-secondary schools. Finally, youth report that VR counselors show tremendous cultural, background, and identity respect.

While youth comprise a large percentage of MCB's open cases, and these youth report positive service delivery is positive services, there are opportunities for improvement.

The survey responses and focus groups identify barriers to accessing services. Respondents share that transportation is a consistent barrier to services and successful outcomes. Providers report students spread over a large geography prohibits serving more students. Students identify transportation as the most common barrier. Teachers of students with visual impairments and providers also identify transportation as a primary barrier to both service delivery and employment opportunities. Potentially related to the transportation, teachers also share that some students lacked community and social interaction and experiences, creating a barrier to fostering independent living skills.

Students also report they experience job-related barriers. While no single barrier was overwhelmingly selected, its notable that a majority who experience barriers in this category show multiple individual barriers. Over a third of

students responding selected three or more barriers. Job-related barriers include:

- Employer attitudes towards people with disabilities
- Poor job market or a lack of opportunities
- Limited relevant job experience
- Lack of opportunities to explore careers

While many youths 14-21 lack job experience, overcoming these barriers are critical to becoming employed as an adult. The provision of Pre-ETS can reduce barriers in all these areas.

**2. Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and**

Massachusetts has numerous well-regarded community rehabilitation programs. There are several that specialize in serving persons who are blind or visually impaired: the Perkins School for the Blind, the Carroll Center for the Blind, the Lowell Association for the Blind, and MAB Community Services. In the 2018 Comprehensive Needs Assessment, respondents were asked: “What organization or governmental agency provides you with the most help relating to your visual impairment?” While 65% of respondents named MCB as the organization that provides the most help relating to their visual impairment, 7% named the Perkins School. Others named Carroll Center for the Blind (4%), MAB Community Services (4%), but 11% of respondents received help relating to their visual impairment from other organizations that were not listed.

**3. Include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition career services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

Analysis of this survey indicates that there is a clear need for pre-employment transition services. MCB plans to conduct future surveys tailored to the needs of youth and students with disabilities.

***k. Annual Estimates***

Describe:

**1. The number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services;**

The number of potentially eligible legally blind persons in Massachusetts is approximately 26,000, the number of persons currently registered as legally blind; approximately, 65% of the registrants are aged 65 and older.

## **2. The number of eligible individuals who will receive services under:**

### **A. The VR Program;**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind estimates that approximately 1,300 legally blind individuals per year will receive VR services as active consumers during PY2022 and PY2023. In October 2017, MCB established a new eligible category for individuals with low vision with a progressive visual impairment (including dual sensory loss) and a diagnosis leading to legal blindness. MCB shall provide all VR services to individuals who qualify for services under the low vision category in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as most recently amended. This improves the opportunity for the caseload to grow substantially. The definition of legal blindness in Massachusetts is A person is legally blind if his/her visual acuity is, with correction, 20/200 or less in the better eye, or if, regardless of visual acuity, the peripheral field of his/her vision is reduced to a radius of 10 degrees or less. The definition for the new category includes a visual acuity of 20/70 or less in the better eye after best correction, due to a condition that is expected to lead to legal blindness; or a visual field no greater than 40 degrees' radius in the better eye with correction, due to a condition that is expected to lead to legal blindness.

### **B. The Supported Employment Program; and**

It is estimated that 15-25 individuals with the most significant disabilities will be provided with Supported Employment services.

### **C. each priority category, if under an order of selection;**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in PY2022 or PY2023

## **3. The number of individuals who are eligible for VR services, but are not receiving such services due to an order of selection; and**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in the foreseeable future.

## **4. The cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.**

The projected annual cost of services for PY2023 will be approximately \$10,700,000. About \$7,000,000 will be from Section 110, the Basic Vocational Rehabilitation Program. In the event federal funds for Supported Employment are not available in PY2023, MCB will utilize federal and state vocational rehabilitation funds instead.

## **I. State Goals and Priorities**

The designated State unit must:

### **1. Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed**

Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the State VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and jointly agreed to any revisions.

Goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind State Rehabilitation Council

### **3. Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs.**

#### JOINTLY DEVELOPED STATE PLAN GOALS AND PRIORITIES

#### [FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2022-2023](#)

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Rehabilitation Council (RC) and MCB have reviewed the 2019 version of the jointly developed state plan goals and priorities to determine which items should remain priorities, which items no longer require the same focus as in 2019, and whether additional goals and priorities should be areas of focus going forward. Despite the decision to focus on the following goals and priorities, the MCB and the RC will continue to evaluate the way in which vocational rehabilitation services are provided, the quality of those services, and MCB's financial capacity to serve consumers. MCB and the RC have developed these goals and priorities with consideration of the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic.

The RC and MCB have jointly developed the following goals and priorities for FFY22-23.

#### [Goal I:](#)

Increase job retention, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's evaluation process to track progress toward the goal.

#### [Priorities:](#)

- Review literature and data on job retention trends and best practices.
- Develop an evaluation process to measure job retention for both consumers whose cases have been closed (rehabilitated) and for consumers who are currently receiving services.

- Establish a process to regularly monitor and report on the job retention status of both rehabilitated and current consumers.
- Develop and deploy training on self-advocacy to assist consumers in successfully advocating for reasonable accommodation needs.

#### Goal II:

Increase employment options for VR consumers, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's evaluation process to track progress toward the goal. This includes reporting on increasing business partnerships, VR consumers engaging in career development and job search, and consumers obtaining employment.

#### Priorities:

- Develop and implement plans to increase training opportunities for transition and pre-employment transition) consumers per RSA's requirements.
- Continue to enhance the agency's internship program to increase consumers engaged and employment partnerships.
- Increase consumers' proficiency in keyboarding/touch typing by offering training and by encouraging consumers, especially those going to college, to acquire such skills.
- Coordinate with the other partners of the Massachusetts workforce development system, particularly MassHire, to better enable the partners to provide appropriate assistance to individuals who are legally blind. MCB technical assistance and infrastructure funding to MassHire Career Centers delineated in state and local memoranda of understanding.

#### Goal III:

Measure and evaluate the effectiveness of VR programming and services as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's evaluation process to track progress toward the goal.

#### Priorities:

- Evaluate the continuing implementation of electronic registration of legally blind residents of Massachusetts and appropriate referral to VR of working-age registrants and the timely processing of VR referrals.
- Continue to develop metrics to understand trends in referral to VR and registration of legally blind persons. The metrics developed will address timeliness, volume, demographics, etc.

- Examine the current MCB survey methodology. Tailor questions to address accessibility, equity, inclusion, and consumer concerns. This priority will require a closer relationship between the RC and appropriate MCB staff.
- Review and analyze studies and surveys to develop ways to obtain additional feedback aimed at improving VR services.
- Survey providers and partners that interact with the VR system and consumers.
- MCB and any consultants will continue to partner with RC to include a consumer, employer, and community partner perspectives into future survey design.
- Annually review the agency performance on statistical measures of effectiveness and recommend actions to improve performance when appropriate.
- Review consumer survey tools to determine whether they are in need of revision.

#### Goal IV:

Help consumers, including students and potentially eligible students, to develop and increase the independence needed to be successful in competitive employment, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's evaluation process to track progress toward the goal.

#### Priorities:

- Increase and adjust Assistive Technology services and training for eligible MCB consumers to support those currently working to maintain or advance their employment opportunities.
- Continue to increase access to computers and basic keyboarding skills in order to enable more MCB registered consumers to acquire basic job readiness skills. Additionally, educate consumers about the importance of these skills.
- Continue to increase consumers' access to adaptive equipment as measured by the number served by the agency's Technology for the Blind Unit or referred to the Carroll Center's training program.
- Continue to improve accessibility of pre-employment transition, transition, and college students' access to educational materials, resources and websites.
- Continue to improve communication and collaboration between MCB VR counselors and all other state, federal, contracted and private agencies providing technology, vocational training and employment services to MCB consumers, including eligible and potentially eligible pre-employment transition consumers.
- Continue to provide appropriate after-school assistive technology and orientation and mobility services as pre-employment transition services to eligible and potentially eligible middle and high school students.

- Continue to provide appropriate job exploration and counseling pre-employment transition services such as mentorships and exposure to real life career information.
- Provide appropriate work readiness pre-employment transition services in areas such as financial management, budgeting, and social skills.

#### Goal V:

Continue to improve the quality of communication between MCB and stakeholders, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's evaluation process to track progress toward the goal.

#### Priorities:

- Ensure that consumers participating in VR receive direct and accessible communication about changes to MCB policies and procedures that might affect them.
- Ensure that the Rehabilitation Council has information that is as timely, accurate, complete and as accessible as possible, in order to enable the RC to provide MCB with the most meaningful feedback.
- As the economy changes, continue to engage with the business community to assess their evolving labor needs.

### **3. Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:**

The goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:

#### **A. The most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;**

The Rehabilitation Council (MCB RC) has continued to review the consumer satisfaction studies and the comprehensive needs assessment on a routine basis and the members and the agency have used them in developing the goals and priorities.

#### **B. the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA; and**

The agency and the Rehabilitation Council look forward to using the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA and the baseline measurements. WIOA and its state plan requirements have been discussed at each quarterly meeting of the Rehabilitation Council since its enactment. The agency and the council have developed new goals and priorities based on the law.

#### **C. other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.**



The agency and the Rehabilitation Council used the results of their review of consumer satisfaction studies in their development of the goals and priorities.

**m. Order of Selection**

Describe:

**1. Whether the designated State unit will implement and order of selection. If so, describe:**

**A. The order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided VR services.**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

**B. The justification for the order.**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

**C. The service and outcome goals.**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

**D. The time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

**E. How individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities; and**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

**2. If the designated State unit has elected to serve eligible individuals, regardless of any established order of selection, who require specific services or equipment to maintain employment.**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is not under an Order of Selection and does not anticipate that an Order of Selection will be necessary in FFY 2021.

**n. Goals and Plans for Distribution of title VI Funds.**

**1. Specify the State's goals and priorities for funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.**

One of MCB's major goals for FY 2023 is to expand provision of supported employment services, particularly to students and youth with disabilities. It is projected that a number of additional consumers (statewide) will be evaluated for their potential participation in supported employment programming and 10-20 of them will be appropriately served under the Supported Employment Program.

MCB will increase its outreach efforts to individuals with blindness and intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, acquired brain injury including individuals not eligible for the extended supports from the Department of Mental Health or the Department of Developmental Services. The clarification that MCB consumers who have been rehabilitated into competitive integrated supported employment will be eligible to receive funding for on-going supports under the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's state-funded Extended Ongoing Supports Program has been extremely helpful.

The agency has during the past several years created several new positions in its Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Unit. A major objective of MCB's Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Unit is to better provide specialized, intensive VR services to a group of multi-disabled consumers who are thought to be currently underserved; these are consumers who are not deaf or intellectually disabled but have very significant disabilities such as mental illness or brain injury in addition to blindness. Emphasis on serving deaf-blind and deaf-blind and intellectually disabled consumers who are leaving Special Education programs provided by the public schools and providing appropriate adult services, including supported employment, will continue. The agency's Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Unit has a goal that fifteen such consumers will be served under Title VI programming in FFY 2023.

The agency's experience indicates that supported employment can be a very effective service for deaf-blind consumers and also for consumers with blindness and multiple disabilities. In past years, MCB has been involved with several other agencies, including the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, in a successful effort to expand the number of providers of supported employment services. This effort has resulted in more choices for consumers; performance-based contracting has been adopted as an incentive to promptness and flexibility in service provision and to successful outcomes. MCB has provided staff training on supported employment a number of times over the years and intends to continue to offer training programs on supported employment for all VR staff. MCB will distribute any Title VI

resources from a centrally located blanket service contract, which has been established within the Deputy Commissioner budget center. This instrument enables MCB to encumber funds for authorized supported employment services with a wide variety of community-based vendors located in any of our six regional areas.

**2. Describe the activities to be conducted, with funds reserved pursuant to section 603(d), for youth with the most significant disabilities, including:**

**A. the provision of extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years; and**

One of MCB's major goals is to expand provision of supported employment services, particularly to students and youth with disabilities.

**B. how the State will leverage other public and private funds to increase resources for extended services and expanded supported employment opportunities for youth with the most significant disabilities.**

As stated in a previous section: The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) have over the years worked cooperatively with MCB and provided extended services to a number of legally blind persons that have been provided supported employment services by MCB. A Memorandum of Agreement that includes provisions for use of joint agency resources to ensure quality service delivery and long term supports for supported employment was executed in November 2015. This includes a formal commitment of funding from MCB for appropriate supported employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long-term, ongoing employment support services when needed. The agreement also provides for cross-training of staff.

**o. State's Strategies**

Describe the required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the VR and the Supported Employment programs (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act and section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)):

**1. The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.**

- Jointly Developed State Plan Goals and Priorities

**FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2022-2023**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Rehabilitation Council (RC) and MCB have reviewed the 2019 version of the jointly developed state plan goals and priorities to determine which items should remain priorities, which items no longer require the same focus as in 2019,

and whether additional goals and priorities should be areas of focus going forward. Despite the decision to focus on the following goals and priorities, the MCB and the RC will continue to evaluate the way in which vocational rehabilitation services are provided, the quality of those services, and MCB's financial capacity to serve consumers. MCB and the RC have developed these goals and priorities with consideration of the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic.

The RC and MCB have jointly developed the following goals and priorities for FFY22-23.

#### **Goal I:**

Increase job retention, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's evaluation process to track progress toward the goal.

##### *Priorities:*

Review literature and data on job retention trends and best practices.

Develop an evaluation process to measure job retention for both consumers whose cases have been closed (rehabilitated) and for consumers who are currently receiving services.

Establish a process to regularly monitor and report on the job retention status of both rehabilitated and current consumers.

Develop and deploy training on self-advocacy to assist consumers in successfully advocating for reasonable accommodation needs.

#### **Goal II:**

Increase employment options for VR consumers, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's evaluation process to track progress toward the goal. This includes reporting on increasing business partnerships, VR consumers engaging in career development and job search, and consumers obtaining employment.

##### *Priorities:*

Develop and implement plans to increase training opportunities for transition and pre-employment transition consumers per RSA's requirements.

Continue to enhance the agency's internship program to increase consumers engaged and employment partnerships.

Increase consumers' proficiency in keyboarding/touch typing by offering training and by encouraging consumers, especially those going to college, to acquire such skills.

Coordinate with the other partners of the Massachusetts workforce development system, particularly MassHire, to better enable the partners to provide appropriate assistance to individuals who are legally blind. MCB technical assistance and infrastructure funding to MassHire Career Centers delineated in state and local memoranda of understanding.

#### **Goal III:**

Measure and evaluate the effectiveness of VR programming and services as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's evaluation process to track progress toward the goal.

##### *Priorities:*

Evaluate the continuing implementation of electronic registration of legally blind residents of Massachusetts and appropriate referral to VR of working-age registrants and the timely processing of VR referrals.

- Continue to develop metrics to understand trends in referral to VR and registration of legally blind persons. The metrics developed will address timeliness, volume, demographics, etc.
- Examine the current MCB survey methodology. Tailor questions to address accessibility, equity, inclusion, and consumer concerns. This priority will require a closer relationship between the RC and appropriate MCB staff.
- Review and analyze studies and surveys to develop ways to obtain additional feedback aimed at improving VR services.
- Survey providers and partners that interact with the VR system and consumers.
- MCB and any consultants will continue to partner with RC to include a consumer, employer, and community partner perspectives into future survey design.
- Annually review the agency performance on statistical measures of effectiveness and recommend actions to improve performance when appropriate.
- Review consumer survey tools to determine whether they are in need of revision.

#### Goal IV:

- Help consumers, including students and potentially eligible students, to develop and increase the independence needed to be successful in competitive employment, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's evaluation process to track progress toward the goal.

#### Priorities:

- Increase and adjust Assistive Technology services and training for eligible MCB consumers to support those currently working to maintain or advance their employment opportunities.
- Continue to increase access to computers and basic keyboarding skills in order to enable more MCB registered consumers to acquire basic job readiness skills. Additionally, educate consumers about the importance of these skills.
- Continue to increase consumers' access to adaptive equipment as measured by the number served by the agency's Technology for the Blind Unit or referred to the Carroll Center's training program.
- Continue to improve accessibility of pre-employment transition, transition, and college students' access to educational materials, resources, and websites.
- Continue to improve communication and collaboration between MCB VR counselors and all other state, federal, contracted, and private agencies providing technology,

vocational training and employment services to MCB consumers, including eligible and potentially eligible pre-employment transition consumers.

- Continue to provide appropriate after-school assistive technology and orientation and mobility services as pre-employment transition services to eligible and potentially eligible middle and high school students.
- Continue to provide appropriate job exploration and counseling pre-employment transition services such as mentorships and exposure to real life career information.
- Provide appropriate work readiness pre-employment transition services in areas such as financial management, budgeting, and social skills.

#### Goal V:

Continue to improve the quality of communication between MCB and stakeholders, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's evaluation process to track progress toward the goal.

#### Priorities:

Ensure that consumers participating in VR receive direct and accessible communication about changes to MCB policies and procedures that might affect them.

Ensure that the Rehabilitation Council has information that is as timely, accurate, complete and as accessible as possible, in order to enable the RC to provide MCB with the most meaningful feedback.

As the economy changes, continue to engage with the business community to assess their evolving labor needs.

## **2. How a broad range of assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process and on a statewide basis.**

- Increase consumers' access to adaptive equipment as measured by the number served by the agency's Technology for the Blind Unit.
- Increase pre-employment transition, transition, and college students' access to educational materials, resources, and websites.
- Advocate for improved accessibility of federal and state government and private internet sites and documents.
- Improve communication and collaboration between MCB VR counselors and all other state, federal, contracted, and private agencies providing technology, vocational training, and employment services to MCB consumers, including eligible and potentially eligible pre-employment transition consumers.
- Provide appropriate after-school assistive technology and orientation and mobility services as pre-employment transition services to eligible and potentially eligible middle and high school students.

**3. The outreach procedures that will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities, as well as those who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.**

- The agency has long placed a high priority on outreach to minority and underserved persons. The agency has for some years had a Diversity Committee within the agency. The committee consists of the Commissioner (or designee), the Director of Communications, vocational rehabilitation counselors, Human Resources Liaison, representatives of the agency Staff Development Unit, and support staff. The goal of the committee is to increase access to services for multi-cultural and minority consumers. The Diversity Committee has participated in the development of the curriculum for agency diversity training and has promoted staff attendance at community conferences which address issues relevant to provision of services to specific groups such as immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and Cambodia.
- One strategy which the Diversity Committee uses is to invite the staffs of community groups with which the agency would like to develop closer relationships to attend brown bag events at MCB and share information and recommendations about outreach to minority group members who are legally blind.
- Regional staff identify agencies and associations serving minority communities throughout the state and attend health fairs, church groups and other community events relevant to members of minority communities. MCB is listed in the Boston Community Health Education Center Resource Guide which leads to invitations to attend events to promote the agency's services among Boston's minority communities.
- The agency's needs assessment studies and public hearings have for a number of years identified the lack of availability of ESL instruction for blind persons as a very serious problem since so many ESL programs use a picture-based methodology. A Massachusetts consumer group, the Association of Blind Citizens, has developed an audio (tape and CD) ESL course for blind and visually impaired persons. It has been shared with several ESL programs. MCB has continuously advocated for the availability of English as a Second Language instruction in accessible media. MCB advises ESL programs on resources for accessible instructional materials through organizations such as the American Printing House for the Blind. The agency believes that the increased partnership under WIOA with Adult Education and Literacy programs will facilitate cooperation to address this long-standing problem.
- The agency's Staff Development Unit has for a number of years worked to assist staff to better address the needs of traditionally underserved minority groups. A training program on cultural diversity and rehabilitation issues is offered to vocational rehabilitation staff. In addition, the Director of Communications continues to arrange periodic luncheon seminars for staff on topics relevant to provision of services to minority populations.

**4. The methods to be used to improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities, including the coordination of services designed to facilitate the transition of such**

**students from school to postsecondary life (including the receipt of VR services, postsecondary education, employment, and pre-employment transition services).**

Relevant strategies and methods:

- Develop and implement plans to increase training opportunities for transition and pre-employment transition consumers who are not going to college.
- Continue and expand the agency's internship program for legally blind students and youth who are attending college and high school graduates who are not going to college or out-of-school youth with the result that the number of students and youth who participate increases each year. Coordinate the agency's internship program with other pre-employment transition services.
- Expand and develop a wide range of pre-employment transition services to enhance transition and employment opportunities for students who are legally blind and for potentially eligible students with disabilities as mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).
- Increase pre-employment transition, transition, and college students' access to educational materials, resources, and websites.
- Improve communication and collaboration among MCB staff (VR counselors, children's service workers and social workers) in order to facilitate services to pre-employment transition consumers who have reached their fourteenth birthday and to identify on a case-by-case basis the most appropriate departments within MCB to meet these individuals' needs.
- Improve communication and collaboration between MCB VR counselors and all other state, federal, contracted, and private agencies providing technology, vocational training, and employment services to MCB consumers, including eligible and potentially eligible pre-employment transition consumers.
- Provide appropriate after-school assistive technology and orientation and mobility services as pre-employment transition services to eligible and potentially eligible middle and high school students.
- Provide appropriate job exploration and counseling pre-employment transition services such as mentorships and exposure to real life career information.
- Provide appropriate work readiness pre-employment transition services in areas such as financial management, budgeting, and social skills.
- The RC supported MCB's statewide event held in June 2018 for providers of Pre-ETS Services to come together and learn about PRE-ETS requirements. There is a lack of coordination of Special Education in the Commonwealth which is complicated by the fact that there are more than 350 local school districts, in addition to numerous independent private school organizations. On March 22, 2019 the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) held its fourth MCB Visions of Collaboration Conference for Teachers of the Visually Impaired, MCB VR counselors and supervisors, and other special education staff. One hundred



and fifty professionals attended - a 19% increase from the 2018 conference. The focus of the conference was on Skills for Success in Work and Life: Pre-Employment Transition Services for Students with Visual Impairments. The agenda included presentations on self-advocacy; employer needs; pre-employment programs and services offered by MCB; and preparing for college. Employers, special education staff, students, and MCB staff were among the presenters. The participant evaluations were very positive.

**5. If applicable, plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the State.**

Not applicable.

**6. Strategies to improve the performance of the State with respect to the performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA.**

Annually review the agency performance on RSA standards and indicators, performance accountability measures under section 116 of WIOA, and on other statistical measures of effectiveness and recommend actions to improve performance when appropriate.

**7. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals with disabilities.**

Relevant strategies:

Assist the other components of the statewide workforce development system in assisting individuals who are legally blind by: offering to provide all MassHire Career Centers with an evaluation of their accessibility to visually-impaired consumers; providing on-site VR services to legally blind consumers who have scheduled appointments at MassHire Career Centers; providing training about blindness and visual impairment to the workforce development agencies; providing consultation to workforce development staff; working with workforce development agencies to develop apprenticeship and on-the-job training opportunities for legally blind consumers; identify job-driven training opportunities for legally blind consumers; and developing an improved referral process among the partner agencies.

In 2017, MCB along with other WIOA partners entered into an MOU with MassHire Career Centers. Under the MOU, access to MCB programs, services, and resources will be made available at all MassHire Career Centers. Local areas will determine how MCB programs and services are accessed through the MassHire Career Centers based on the volume of customers and the availability of MCB staff. Legally Blind and visually impaired consumers will receive access to MCB services at the MassHire Career Centers in one or more of the following ways:

1. MassHire Career Center staff will be appropriately trained to provide information to legally blind and visually impaired consumers about programs, services, and activities available through MCB.

2. MassHire Career Center staff will make a direct link between the legally blind and visually-impaired consumer and MCB staff to schedule an appointment, or to receive useful information about programs and services.
3. Based on need, MCB staff will be physically present at the MassHire Career Center to provide services.

MCB will support an integrated service delivery strategy in which MassHire Career Center staff will provide Career Center services to legally blind and visually impaired customers by:

- Assisting the Local Boards with training MassHire Career Center staff to use assistive technology with visually impaired or legally blind consumers who seek career center services.
- Providing training to MassHire Center staff on accessibility requirements for legally blind and visually impaired consumers.
- Assisting with accommodations related to workshops for legally blind and visually-impaired consumers.
- Providing training to MassHire Career Center staff so that staff have basic knowledge of programs, services, and resources available through MCB.
- Ensuring that MCB Employment Services Representatives and MassHire Centers Business Service Representatives collaborate so that legally blind and visually impaired consumers receive appropriate job matching by reviewing consumers skills, communicating employer qualifications and organization culture, and sharing employer contacts.
- Providing sensitivity training to MassHire Centers staff.

MCB believes that these strategies will significantly improve consumer access and utilization of career center services.

Since apprenticeships have seldom been available to legally blind consumers, MCB continues to research information available through the Massachusetts Division of Apprenticeship Standards, the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, and other vocational rehabilitation agencies to learn more about apprenticeships for legally blind persons and how to access opportunities through the Massachusetts Apprenticeship Initiative (MAI) or other resources in Massachusetts and New England.

## **8. How the agency's strategies will be used to:**

### **A. achieve goals and priorities by the State, consistent with the comprehensive needs assessment;**

The Rehabilitation Council (MCB RC) has continued to review the consumer satisfaction studies conducted and the comprehensive needs assessment on a

routine basis and the members and the agency have used them in developing the goals and priorities.

**B. support innovation and expansion activities; and**

**C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State VR Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.**

The agency has long placed a high priority on outreach to minority and underserved persons. The agency has for some years had a Diversity Committee within the agency. The committee consists of the Commissioner, the Director of Communications, vocational rehabilitation counselors, representatives of the agency Staff Development Unit, and support staff. The goal of the committee is to increase access to services for multi-cultural and minority consumers. The Diversity Committee has participated in the development of the curriculum for agency diversity training and has promoted staff attendance at community conferences which address issues relevant to provision of services to specific groups such as immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa and Cambodia. One strategy which the Diversity Committee uses is to invite the staffs of community groups with which the agency would like to develop closer relationships to attend luncheons at MCB and share information and recommendations about outreach to minority group members who are legally blind.

The agency has two Rehabilitation Teachers who are fluent in Spanish, and another Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor who is fluent in both Albanian and Greek languages. One VR supervisor speaks French and the language of the Congo; one speaks Italian. MCB also has one staff member is fluent in Polish and another staff member is fluent in Kiswahili. MCB VR counselors who work with deaf-blind individuals are proficient in American Sign Language.

The agency has access to the Language Line interpreter service in all its offices to assist counselors in working with consumers who speak all languages, especially uncommon ones. Language Line offers interpretation of more than 140 languages. For home visits, MCB contracts with Catholic Charities for language interpreters in the community who can interpret languages such as Khmer, Chinese, French, Russian, Polish, Croatian, Vietnamese, and Spanish.

In 2017, MCB developed an electronic brochure of services. The list of services organized by topic was recorded and has been made available on a thumb drive as well as on a cartridge. In addition, the information is being recorded and will be made available on YouTube through a link on the MCB website. The goal is for prospective consumers to receive information on MCB services before they leave an eye professional's office after a diagnosis of legal blindness or visual impairment. MCB will distribute the thumb drives and cartridges statewide with special emphasis on targeted underserved regions of the state as well as on collaboration with minority organizations to distribute them to their members. By using different

avenues to get the information out, MCB anticipates attracting prospective consumers and getting them engaged in VR services and closing the information access gap. MCB has also developed a Request for Response (RFR) for a project of outreach to both consumers and employers. The RFR seeks a consultant with integrated marketing skills expertise to recommend and implement an ad campaign across various media to target employers, MCB consumers, and eye professionals. The multi-faceted goals of this are to reach employers who we can potentially partner with in the future to increase successful and rewarding employment for consumers. Additionally, we want to elevate awareness in the low vision and blind community of the services that we provide for our consumers and to encourage the legally blind to engage with MCB so that we can better assist them.

**p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals**

Describe:

**1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:**

**A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.**

p. Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals  
Describe:

**1. An evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals described in the approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan for the most recently completed program year were achieved. The evaluation must:**

**A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.**

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind worked with the Rehabilitation Council on the mutually-agreed upon goals and the use of Title I funds for innovation and expansion activities. The narrative interwoven with the goals below provides a report of progress in achieving the VR program goals. It describes factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities, to the extent they were not achieved, and provides a report on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized in the preceding year. One baseline for evaluation is a survey of MCB RC members' annual evaluation of progress towards the goals. All progress was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Goal I:** To have sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal. MCB and the RC are pleased to report that the agency has had more than sufficient resources for all of its programs, including vocational rehabilitation. The Massachusetts State Legislature has

markedly increased the agency's state funding. In addition, the agency has been able to secure substantial VR re-allotment funds.

#### Priorities:

- Monitor annually the budget and regularly advocate full funding of the VR program to ensure that in the years ahead the MCB can carry out its obligations to its many consumers. A measure for evaluation is the amount of state vocational rehabilitation funds appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature.
- Monitor annually the allocation of funds for the Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program and the Supported Employment Program. A measure for evaluation is the amount of state funds appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature for the agency state-funded Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program. Some of these funds are used for on-going supported employment services after VR services are completed.

**Report of Progress:** The agency has had sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals. The Massachusetts Legislature has continued to fund the agency's VR program sufficient to match federal funds. There is more than sufficient state match. The state appropriation for the state-funded Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program is enough to cover the need for more residential services for those consumers who are turning age 22. This program provides residential and day services, including on-going supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

MCB RC Evaluation: To be added.

**Goal II:** To develop more employment options for VR consumers, including supported employment, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

#### Priorities:

- Develop and implement plans to increase training opportunities for transition-age consumers who are not going to college.
- Continue and refine the agency's internship program for legally blind students who are attending college; explore ways to expand the program to include recent high school graduates who are not going to college with the result that the number of students participating increases each year.

#### Report of Progress:

- The development of increased training opportunities for transition-age consumers who are not going to college continues to be a major focus area.
- In PY2015, MCB partnered with Massachusetts Eye and Ear and Cambridge Health Alliance to become the first agency for the blind to launch Project SEARCH, a successful

national 9-month program for individuals with disabilities that provides internship experiences. The program was an outstanding success, resulting in a 70% employment outcome rate. In PY2018, drawing on this successful experience, the agency developed the Employment Now initiative which is similar to Project SEARCH but is locally managed by the agency. Initially, both partners participated in the Employment Now program. However, there has been a management change at the Cambridge Health Alliance that resulted in that hospital dropping out of the program. The Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary has remained a strong partner despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. The Employment Now initiative is a model that moves vocational rehabilitation consumers on a fast track to employment. The goal is to combine internships or work experiences with the support of an onsite job coach while conducting an active job search. Job development for the specific consumer takes place during internships or work experiences so that transition from the internship to a paying job will occur without long gaps of unemployment. MCB had had a goal to recruit partners in other industries since hospitals tend to have large, proprietary information systems that can be difficult to make accessible to all legally blind consumers. However, the pandemic constraints have resulted in other employers being reluctant to start a new employment program. The agency will continue to have recruitment of new partners as a major priority as the pandemic abates.

- The Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Unit has one counselor who provides specialized, intensive VR services to a group of multi-disabled consumers who are thought to be currently underserved; these are consumers who are not deaf or intellectually disabled but have very significant disabilities such as mental illness or brain injury in addition to blindness.
- During the past seven years, MCB has participated in several hiring events with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission that were sponsored by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). Federal contractors are required to set a hiring goal of having 7% of their employees drawn from qualified workers with disabilities. MCB continues, in conjunction with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, to maintain dialogue with OFCCP and has participated in several of its in-service training programs.
- In PY2017 and PY2018, with a technical assistance grant from RSA, the Job Driven Vocational Rehabilitation Technical assistance (JDVRTAC), MCB operationalized VisionWorks Consortium which consists of MCB, the Carroll Center for the Blind (CCB), and the Perkins School for the Blind. The three organizations that are a part of the consortium pooled their employer contacts into a centralized database to track the business partner engagement to increase employment opportunities for job seekers who are visually impaired. This grant has concluded. The Perkins School for the Blind has made a strategic decision to devote its efforts toward vocational training rather than job placement. It is offering training in customer service occupations. MCB has referred consumers to this training. The Carroll Center for the Blind and MCB have developed a program in which CCB provides individualized job placement services to MCB consumers. MCB pays CCB for the service once the consumer obtains an appropriate job placement. Several consumers have benefitted from this program. MCB continues to

partner with both the Perkins School and CCB to sponsor an annual Job Fair. The Job Fair was held virtually during 2021.

- For the past several years, agency staff has regularly conducted a four-hour course of soft skills training for prospective student interns and job-ready consumers. Soft skills are those interpersonal skills such as cooperativeness, politeness, and friendliness that enhance an individual's on-the-job interactions, job performance and career prospects. The training used to take place in regional offices; due to the pandemic the last several sessions have been held over Zoom on a statewide basis with staff from each region covering parts of the curriculum. The subjects covered are resumes and cover letters, interviewing, work place behaviors, personal grooming, networking, and disclosure of one's disability. In addition, for those job-ready consumers who do not need soft skills training, different courses are held for them such as networking and how to get onto LinkedIn. MCB has enhanced and expanded this training by developing soft skills training video course that can be taken by a consumer on-demand and on-line. This course includes quizzes for self-assessment. CCB also offers consumers training in generic work skills such as the use of Zoom, Dropbox, and LinkedIn.
- Recognizing that many employers are now using telephone interviews to screen applicants, the agency for a number of years has contracted with Phone Interview Pro, a company that provides consumers with a thirty-minute interview that simulates an actual interview with an experienced corporate evaluator. The consumer and the counselor are then provided with a detailed, personalized report of the interview that identifies strengths and areas that need improvement. A second interview is then arranged to give the consumer the opportunity to practice what he or she has learned from the first interview. The majority of the consumers find the experience to be very beneficial.
- MCB also provides Essential Skills Training for transition-age youth through several vendors. This training covers soft skills and other career development skills for younger consumers. Based on feedback from consumers and counselors, this training has been expanded to offer consumers more opportunities to interact with employers and to include other pre-employment transition components such as occupational information and career exploration.
- MCB's summer internship program is a long-established job preparation model that supports college-age and nontraditional students, all of whom are legally blind, to acquire work experience. In PY2020, the program reached its 18th year and involved 65 participants. MCB is very pleased that students and employers continued to participate in the program despite the pandemic. During the summer of 2021, about half of the interns worked on site and about half of them worked remotely. During the program's 18-year span, there have been more than 1,000 internship opportunities with approximately 400 private and public business partners.
- During the past year, MCB and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission has been working with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EHS) on an initiative to assist consumers with disabilities to obtain appropriate employment

with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. A meeting is held each month with the staff of the Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity and state agency ADA coordinators. MCB is able to bring two job-ready consumers to each meeting to be interviewed and to receive advice and leads for their job searches.

MCB RC Evaluation: To be added.

**Goal III:** To help legally blind persons to increase their independence, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

**Priorities:**

- Advocate and educate consumers and public officials on pedestrian safety issues which impact pedestrians who are legally blind and issues regarding laws pertaining to the white cane and the use of service dogs;
- Advocate for better access to, and improvement of, public transportation and paratransit systems throughout the Commonwealth.
- Increase consumers' access to adaptive equipment as measured by the number served each year by the agency's Technology for the Blind Unit.
- Increase students' access to accessible textbooks.
- Advocate for improved accessibility of federal and state government documents and internet sites.

**Report of Progress:**

- In recent years, MCB has collaborated with the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) around White Cane Safety Law, and as a result, the RMV included white cane and use of service dog flyers in separate recent mailings. MCB continues to promote white cane safety and the Massachusetts White Cane Law at its annual White Cane Day Awareness event and through its "What's Your Vision?" media outreach campaign.
- The agency has continued to work to increase consumers' access to both adaptive equipment and accessible textbooks. The agency's Technology for the Blind Unit serves approximately 1,200 VR consumers each year. The staff of the unit includes a technology specialist who is able to provide extended training in Word, Outlook, and basic navigation and eight rehabilitation engineers. During the pandemic, MCB technology specialists have greatly increased their ability to train and to assist consumers remotely.

In addition, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recently contracted with MCB to operate its Accessible Media Library (AIM) for school-age children in Massachusetts. Through managing the library, the agency believes that it both improve access to accessible textbooks for school-age children and to become better informed about the issues, problems, and solutions that may apply to both school-age and college students.



- The agency continues to enhance the independence and educational and vocational potential of blind children by providing adaptive equipment and software as needed to elementary and middle-school aged children under its state-funded social services program. These services enable these young consumers to transition to pre-transition employment and vocational rehabilitation services at age 14 with the same level of technical skill as their sighted peers. In addition, MCB provides adaptive equipment and training to pre-employment transition consumers to allow them to access and improve their work readiness, vocational, and independent living skills when they are not in school. Generally, MCB provides a laptop computer to high school seniors to use to prepare for college and to use when they transition to college.
- MCB has been working with providers to develop new options for pre-employment transition services. The Carroll Center for the Blind, Polus Center, Lowell Association for the Blind, Perkins, and Our Space, Our Place have developed work readiness programs to address several needs. New vendors such as New England Adaptive Sports have recently been added to increase consumer's options.

MCB RC Evaluation: To be added.

**Goal IV:** Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of vocational rehabilitation services delivery, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

**Priorities:**

- Review annually the agency performance on WIOA performance measurements, and on other statistical measures of effectiveness and to recommend actions to improve performance when appropriate.
- Improve communication among all MCB VR staff between VR counselors in MCB regional offices and VR counselors in the MCB Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Unit to enhance services to consumers who would otherwise not receive necessary services.
- Improve communication among MCB staff (VR counselors, children's service workers and social workers) in order to facilitate services to consumers who have reached their fourteenth birthday and to identify on a case-by-case basis the most appropriate department within MCB to meet these individuals' needs.
- Improve and maintain ongoing communication between MCB VR counselors and all other state, federal, contracted, and private agencies providing technology, vocational training and employment services to MCB consumers, including those individuals with other disabilities in addition to blindness.

**Report of Progress:**

- In PY2016, MCB migrated to a new case management system, AWARE which is currently used by over 38 VR state agencies and 24 tribal nations. This system has the capacity to generate statistical reports to help counselors, management, and Rehabilitation Council members to evaluate the agency's effectiveness. MCB continues to work with the vendor to develop improved specific statistical reports for both the MCB management

and the Rehabilitation Council, including those required for the new WIOA performance measurements and the new RSA-911 reporting requirements for PY2020.

- The MCB RC members currently annually review the agency's performance on statistical measures of effectiveness as well as the agency's consumer satisfaction studies.
- MCB has addressed the priority to facilitate services to consumers who have reached their fourteenth birthday and to identify on a case-by-case basis the most appropriate unit within MCB by developing a comprehensive assessment form for children's workers to complete. In addition, MCB and DESE have jointly developed a technical advisory to educate TVIs, O&M instructors and other special education representatives on eligibility requirements for Pre-ETS including for those who are potentially eligible, making these services accessible to all youth with disabilities.
- The agency holds several College Nights each year for students who are considering attending college. Their families are also invited. The purpose is to orient the students to MCB services, college disability services, etc. and to answer their questions. During the pandemic, these sessions have been held via Zoom.
- MCB has developed a transition form to improve services to adolescents and their transition to adult services and to improve communication among the involved staff when the child turns 14. MCB Children's Workers and the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors often make joint visits to the adolescent and parents to help the family to develop a roadmap for the child's services going forward. Consultations with agency rehabilitation teachers, mobility specialists, and technology specialists are also offered to the consumer and family.
- MCB has committed in the statewide Memorandum of Understanding to participate in teams to be established comprised of individuals who are empowered to represent the core partner agency for the purpose of developing and executing local MOUs, modeled on the state MOU.
- The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, in collaboration with MCB, has recently been awarded a \$16 million grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration for a five-year program to improve the timeliness and efficiency of the vocational rehabilitation process. Both agencies will collaborate and develop methodologies to speed up applications, eligibility determinations, and the provision of services. The Rehabilitation Council will be consulted for their recommendations about this initiative.

MCB RC Evaluation: To be added.

MCB has reviewed its performance on measures of effectiveness each year for many years. Analysis of the measures used has identified areas for improvement in the agency's performance. The agency is pleased to note that its rehabilitants earn one of the highest average wage levels of all the state vocational rehabilitation programs. The agency has attained one of the highest average wage levels for many years.

B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities

Long-standing problems and factors that impede the achievement of the goals and priorities include:

- public transportation systems and pedestrian safety issues which limit access to employment and some vocational rehabilitation services
- students' access to accessible textbooks
- accessibility of documents and internet sites needed to obtain and retain employment
- employer attitudes toward blindness
- inaccessible information systems used by many large employers

Report of Progress:

After a pilot program was successfully completed, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's has initiated a program between the Ride (the Ride service provides paratransit, or supplemental transportation, to disabled customers), Uber and Lyft. Those eligible for the Ride can opt to continue to use the traditional Ride service or to take part in the FlexRide program where they may use a ride-hailing service any time at a greatly reduced cost. In PY2017, a review showed that more than 10,000 rides covering 45,000 miles in 133 zip codes had been provided. In addition, the partnership had resulted in a 20% cost reduction for the transportation agency. The service, concentrated in the eastern part of the state, is benefiting many of MCB consumers.

In PY2017, a statewide mobility management initiative was started between EOHHS and MassDOT to develop an on-line One-Stop searchable directory of public, private and accessible transportation options in the state. This initiative should be of particular interest for consumers in the rural parts of the state that still experience a lack of reliable transportation. The MCB RC continues to support MCB's efforts on this issue.

In PY2015, The Braille Literacy Advisory Council (BrLAC) was charged with developing a plan for implementing Unified English Braille (UEB) in Massachusetts to present to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). In PY2017, the Braille Literacy Advisory Council proposed a plan for transitioning to a full implementation of UEB to ensure a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with vision impairments in Massachusetts. Some of the items on the implementation plan include:

- Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVIs) to receive professional development training in UEB.
- TVIs began to expose and instruct braille learners in non-technical UEB on an individual basis.
- Instructional Materials available in UEB, EBAE, UEB with Nemeth and/or EBAE/Nemeth.
- AIM Library accepted requests for instructional materials in the above-mentioned formats.

- School districts prepared to support requests for instructional materials in the above-mentioned formats.
- Statewide Assessments will be provided in EBAE/Nemeth for all statewide assessments
- Teachers-in-Training at UMass Vision Studies received braille instruction in UEB (technical and non-technical) and Nemeth.

The BrLAC has worked on Braille certification/testing of TVIs. An MCB vocational rehabilitation counselor is a member of the BrLAC. Another MCB staff member has been asked to make a presentation to the BrLAC on MCB's provision of braille instruction to consumers.

#### **B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.**

Long-standing problems and factors that impede the achievement of the goals and priorities include:

- public transportation systems and pedestrian safety issues which limit access to employment and some vocational rehabilitation services
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- employer attitudes toward blindness
- inaccessible information systems used by many large employers

#### **Report of Progress:**

- In 2016, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority's piloted a program between the Ride (the Ride service provides paratransit, or supplemental transportation, to disabled customers), Uber and Lyft. Those eligible for the Ride became eligible to take part in the program where they could use a ride-hailing service any time at a lower cost. In 2017, a review showed that more than 10,000 rides covering 45,000 miles in 133 zip codes had been provided. In addition, the partnership had resulted in a 20% cost reduction for the transportation agency. The service, concentrated in the eastern part of the state, is benefiting many of MCB consumers.
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- AIM Library accepted requests for instructional materials in the above-mentioned formats.
  - School districts prepared to support requests for instructional materials in the above-mentioned formats.
  - Statewide Assessments will be provided in EBAE/Nemeth for all statewide assessments
  - Teachers-in-Training at UMass Vision Studies received braille instruction in UEB (technical and non-technical) and Nemeth.
  - The implementation was planned for school year 2016 through 2020. More information can be found at:  
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=23936>

**2. An evaluation of the extent to which the Supported Employment program goals described in the Supported Employment Supplement for the most recent program year were achieved. The evaluation must:**

**A. Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.**

Monitor annually the allocation of funds for the Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program and the Supported Employment Program. A measure for evaluation is the amount of state funds appropriated by the Massachusetts Legislature for the agency's state-funded Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program. Some of these funds are used for on-going supported employment services after VR services are completed.

**Report of Progress:**

The agency has had sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals during FY 2020 and 2021. The Massachusetts Legislature has continued to fund the agency's VR program sufficient to match federal funds. The Rehabilitation Council has been very active in advocating for increased vocational rehabilitation funding at the state level. The SFY 2022 state appropriation for the state-funded Deaf-Blind Extended Supports Program is enough to cover the need for more residential and supported

services for those consumers who are turning age 22. This program provides residential and day services, including on-going supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities.

In addition, as also stated in previous sections: The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) have over the years worked cooperatively with MCB and provided extended services to a number of legally blind persons that have been provided supported employment services by MCB. MCB continues to collaborate with the DDS on plans to expand services to mutual consumers that includes an initiative to better identify consumers who could benefit from supported employment services and are not receiving them at this time. A new Memorandum of Agreement that includes provisions for use of joint agency resources to ensure quality service delivery and long term supports for supported employment was executed in November 2015. This includes a formal commitment of funding from MCB for appropriate supported employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long-term, ongoing employment support services when needed. The agreement also provides for cross-training of staff.

In accordance with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, MCB executed a WIOA Cooperative Agreement with MassHealth in January 2016. In addition, discussions with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) have clarified that MCB consumers who have been rehabilitated into competitive integrated supported employment will be eligible to receive funding for on-going supports under its state-funded Extended Ongoing Supports Program. MCB is very appreciative of the help and advice that the MRC Extended Ongoing Supports Program provided and expects that the availability of this resource will increase the opportunities for supported employment for legally blind consumers who have significant secondary disabilities but do not qualify for on-going supports from another state or private agency.

Over the years, the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) has worked cooperatively with MCB by providing extended services and other services to some legally blind persons that have received supported employment services and other services from MCB.

To address the problem of lack of adequate supported competitive integrated employment opportunities, MCB intends to hire a consultant to evaluate the viability of establishing a for-profit business enterprise that employs individuals who are blind and visually impaired in a competitive integrated supported employment environment. It is understood that such a business must be comprised of blind, visually impaired, and people both with and without disabilities so that the workforce and environment is fully integrated. The business is expected to generate positive, measurable social impact alongside a financial return. Business models that can be studied can involve potential ownership by employees and profit-sharing plans. Examples of potential business models for consideration include Medical

Billing/Coding, Information Technology Support, Contract Support, Sourcing, Cyber-Security, and 508 Assurance, etc.

**B. Describe the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.**

Long-standing problems and factors that impede the achievement of the supported employment goals and priorities include:

- public transportation systems and pedestrian safety issues which limit access to employment and some vocational rehabilitation services
- lack of funding for extended supports for consumers who are not eligible for funding from the Department of Developmental Services or the Department of Mental Health

**3. The VR program's performance on the performance accountability indicators under section 116 of WIOA.**

The RC is aware of and has discussed the new WIOA common performance accountability measures under Section 116 of WIOA and looks forward to using them more in its considerations of the effectiveness of the VR program. MCB will analyze the data and create a report for management and the RC on the common measures. MCB continues to track progress on many of the prior Standards and Indicators.

**4. How the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized.**

During FFY 2018 and 2019, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind worked with the Rehabilitation Council on the mutually agreed upon goals and the use of Title I funds for innovation and expansion activities.

Specific innovation and expansion (I&E) activities and initiatives include:

- In 2015, MCB partnered with Massachusetts Eye and Ear and Cambridge Health Alliance to become the first agency for the blind to launch Project SEARCH, a successful national 9-month program for individuals with disabilities that provides internship experiences. This program resulted in a 70% employment outcome rate. In 2019, drawing on this successful experience, the agency developed the Employment Now initiative which is similar to Project SEARCH but is locally managed by the agency and two non-profit providers. The Employment Now initiative is a model that moves vocational rehabilitation consumers on a fast track to employment. The goal is to combine internships or work experiences with the support of an onsite job coach while conducting an active job search. Job development for the specific consumer takes place during internships or work experiences so that transition from the internship to a paying job will occur without long gaps of unemployment. Of the eight consumers who have participated during 2019, six have achieved full-time employment. Massachusetts Eye and Ear and

Cambridge Health Alliance have remained as partners. MCB is also seeking to recruit partners in other industries since hospitals tend to have large, proprietary information systems that can be difficult to make accessible to all legally blind consumers.

- MCB's summer internship program is a long-established job preparation model that supports college-age and nontraditional students, all of whom are legally blind, to acquire work experience. In 2021, the program reached its 18th year and involved 65 participants. During the program's 18-year span, there have been approximately 1,000 internship opportunities with 400 private and public business partners. An agency study conducted in FY 2012 showed that 93% of the interns have had successful outcomes from the internship experience; that is, the intern either finished school and obtained a job or is on track with his or her individual plan for employment.
- The agency's Technology for the Blind Unit serves more than 1,000 VR consumers each year. The staff of the unit includes a technology specialist who can provide extended training in Word, Outlook, and basic navigation and eight rehabilitation engineers.
- The agency has been able to continue to enhance the independence and educational and vocational potential of blind children by providing adaptive equipment and software on a limited basis to elementary and middle-school aged children under its state-funded social services program. These services enable these young consumers to transition to pre-transition employment and vocational rehabilitation services at age 14 with the same level of technical skill as their sighted peers. In addition, MCB has revised its policies under the vocational rehabilitation program (in line with RSA regulations and guidance) to provide more adaptive equipment and training to pre-employment transition consumers to allow them to access and improve their work readiness, vocational, and independent living skills when they are not in school.
- MCB continues to work with providers to develop new options for pre-employment transition services. q. Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.

Include the following:

- 1. The quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.**

The purpose of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind's Supported Employment Program is to create and provide paid employment opportunities for legally blind persons with significant secondary disabilities within integrated work settings. Services include: an individual evaluation of rehabilitation potential via supported employment, provision of job development services (including job



analysis and appropriate engineering accommodation); intensive on-the-job training and job coaching, and provision or coordination of support services such as counseling or transportation. Services are provided within federal guidelines until the employment is secure and appropriate extended (non-VR) services are in place.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind remains committed to increasing the quality, scope and extent of Supported Employment Services to eligible consumers. There are a sufficient number of service providers who deliver supported employment in the state on a fee for service basis. The Commission for the Blind is fortunate that the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services provides on-going extended services to many consumers who are both intellectually disabled and legally blind. The agency is also fortunate to have some state funding available to provide extended services to consumers who are both deaf and legally blind.

During 2015, the agency collaborated with the DDS on plans to expand services to consumers including an initiative to better identify mutual consumers who could benefit from supported employment services and are not receiving them. In late 2015, MCB and DDS executed a new Memorandum of Agreement that includes provisions for use of joint agency resources to ensure quality service delivery and long term supports for supported employment. All work programs will be in integrated settings paying the minimum wage. The agreement includes a formal commitment of funding from MCB for appropriate supported employment services and a commitment from DDS for funding of the long-term, ongoing employment support services when needed. The agreement also provides for cross-training of staff.

In January 2016, MCB executed a WIOA Cooperative Agreement with MassHealth in accordance with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act.

In addition, in 2015, discussions with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) clarified that MCB consumers who have been rehabilitated into competitive integrated supported employment will be eligible to receive funding for on-going supports under its state-funded Extended Ongoing Supports Program. MCB is very appreciative of the help and advice that the MRC Extended Ongoing Supports Program has provided and expects that the availability of this resource will increase the opportunities for supported employment for legally blind consumers who have significant secondary disabilities but do not qualify for on-going supports from another state or private agency.

MCB looks forward to being allowed under the forthcoming WIOA regulations to extend the time that consumers may receive needed supported employment services before transition to extended services. There are some consumers who may need extra time, particularly pre-employment transition consumers.

## **2. The timing of transition to extended services.**

Once the individual has maintained stability on the job for an appropriate period of time, the funding for and provision of extended services transitions to an extended services provider. The rehabilitation counselor continues to track the individual's progress and job stability during the transition period. If the individual maintains stabilization for 90 days or more after transition to extended services, the case is closed successfully. If needed, post-employment services may be provided at any time after closure.

### **Certifications**

Name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate:  
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Name of designated State agency: Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Paul Saner

Title of Authorized Representative: Commissioner, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. The designated State agency or designated State unit (as appropriate) listed above is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA\*, and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act;\*\* **Yes**
2. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the designated State agency listed above agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan; **Yes**
3. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan\*, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;\*\* **Yes**

4. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; **Yes**
5. The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; **Yes**
6. All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law; **Yes**
7. The Authorized Representative listed above has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; **Yes**
8. The Authorized Representative listed above has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services; **Yes**
9. The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. **Yes**

#### **Footnotes**

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##### **Certification 1 Footnotes**

\* Public Law 113-128.

\*\* Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

##### **Certification 2 Footnotes**

\* All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

\*\* No funds under title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76,77,79,81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

##### **Certification 3 Footnotes**

\* No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

\*\* Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in

\*\*\* under Certification 2 footnotes

#### **Additional Comments on the Certifications from the State.**

## **Certification Regarding Lobbying - Vocational Rehabilitation**

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

(1) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

(2) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

(3) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

## **Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance**

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization: Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Paul Saner

Title of Authorized Representative: Commissioner

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>). If applicable, please print, sign, and email to [MAT\\_OCTAE@ed.gov](mailto:MAT_OCTAE@ed.gov).

### **Certification Regarding Lobbying — Supported Employment**

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements, the undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

1. No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
2. If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.
3. The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

### **Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance**

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of

Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Applicant's Organization: Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Full Name of Authorized Representative: Paul Saner

Title of Authorized Representative: Commissioner

SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (only if applicable)  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html>).

**Assurances:**

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances: The State Plan must provide assurances that:

**1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:**

The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

**2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:**

The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.

### **3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:**

**The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:**

- a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

- c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
- e. the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds:

**No**

- f. the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.

The designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs: No

- g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: No

- h. the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress

reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.

- l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.

#### **4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services:**

**The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:**

- a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?

Agency will provide the full range of services described above:

- d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.



- i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs
- j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State, has developed and will implement,
  - A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
  - B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(25)).

**5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:**

- a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
- c. The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.

**6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:**

- a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities,

who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.

## 7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:

- a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- b. The designated State agency assures that:

the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act

an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Figure 74: Vocational Rehabilitation Certifications/Assurance/Certifications

### Vocational Rehabilitation Certifications/Assurances/Certifications

States must provide written and signed certifications that:	
1.	The (enter the name of designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate,) is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, <sup>18</sup> and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act <sup>19</sup> ;
	The <b>Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission</b> is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, <sup>20</sup> and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act <sup>21</sup> ;
	The <b>Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind</b> is authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, <sup>22</sup> and its supplement under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act <sup>23</sup> ;

<sup>18</sup> Public Law 113-128.

<sup>19</sup> Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Public Law 113-128.

<sup>21</sup> Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Public Law 113-128.

<sup>23</sup> Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA, signed into law on July 22, 2014.

2.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the (enter the name of designated State agency) <sup>24</sup> agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan <sup>25</sup> , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations <sup>26</sup> , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the <b>Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission</b> agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan <sup>27</sup> , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations <sup>28</sup> , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of VR services, the <b>Massachusetts Commission for the Blind</b> <sup>29</sup> agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan <sup>30</sup> , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations <sup>31</sup> , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan
3.	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan <sup>32</sup> , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations <sup>33</sup> , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the

<sup>24</sup> All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

<sup>25</sup> No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>26</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

<sup>27</sup> No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>28</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

<sup>29</sup> All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

<sup>30</sup> No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>31</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3485; and the State VR Services Program regulations.

<sup>32</sup> No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>33</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

	provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the <b>Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission</b> agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan <sup>34</sup> , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations <sup>35</sup> , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan;
	As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, <b>Massachusetts Commission for the Blind</b> agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan <sup>36</sup> , the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations <sup>37</sup> , policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan
4.	The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
	The <b>Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission</b> has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
	The <b>Massachusetts Commission for the Blind</b> has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement
5.	The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
	The <b>Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission</b> legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
	The <b>Massachusetts Commission for the Blind</b> legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.
6.	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.

<sup>34</sup> No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>35</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

<sup>36</sup> No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

<sup>37</sup> Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 6.

	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Combined State Plan and its supplement carried out by the <b>Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission</b> are consistent with State law.
	All provisions of the VR services portion of the Combined State Plan and its supplement carried out by the <b>Massachusetts Commission for the Blind</b> are consistent with State law.
7.	The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement;
	The <b>Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission</b> has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement
	The <b>Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind</b> has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement
8.	The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;
	The <b>Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission</b> has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services
	The <b>Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind</b> has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services
9.	The agency that submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.
	The <b>Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission</b> submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.
	The <b>Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind</b> submits the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

## ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

Figure 75: Vocational Rehabilitation Assurances

<b>The State Plan must provide assurances that:</b>	
1.	<b>Public Comment on Policies and Procedures:</b> The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2.	<b>Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement:</b> The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a unified plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3.	<b>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:</b> The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (Option A or B must be selected):               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) is an independent State commission.</li> <li>(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act. The non-Federal share, as described in 34 CFR 361.60.</li> <li>the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).</li> <li>the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds, (No)</li> <li>the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs. (No)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency is requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan.</li> <li>○ the descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>○ all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>○ the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>○ the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>○ the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.</li> <li>○ the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> </ul>
4.	<p><b>Administration of the Provision of VR Services:</b> The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with section 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>• impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>• provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act? (Ye)</li> <li>• determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a) (5) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>• comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>• provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>• comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual review, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, as required by section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>• (i) meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs</li> </ul> <p>(j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State,</p> <p>(A) has developed and will implement,</p> <p>(i) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and</p> <p>(ii) strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and</p> <p>(B) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a) (15) and 101 (a) (25)).</p>
5.	<p><b>Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:</b></p> <p>The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>• The establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (option A or B must be selected): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(A) is an independent State commission.</li> <li>(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Consultation regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>• The financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of non-Federal share of</li> </ul>



	<p>the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds.(No)</li> <li>• The shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs. (No)</li> <li>• Statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency is requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portions of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan.</li> <li>• The descriptions for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>• All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>• The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>• The compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> <li>• The reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities.</li> <li>• The submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> </ul>
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:</b> The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5% of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10% of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose</li> </ul>

	<p>under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> </ul>
7.	<p>a. <b>Provision of Supported Employment Services:</b> The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.</p> <p>b. The designated State agency assures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act</li> <li>• an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 606(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.</li> </ul>

## VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

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### TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES PROGRAM (TANF)

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States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:

- a. Conduct a program designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner) that provides assistance to needy families with (or expecting) children and provides parents with job preparation, work, and support services to enable them to leave the program, specifically cash assistance, and become self-sufficient (section 402(a)(1)(A)(i) of the Social Security Act).*

#### Outline of the TAFDC Program's General Provisions

TAFDC is the state's principal TANF program. It is administered through the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and operates uniformly throughout the state.

The TAFDC program provides economic assistance, employment and training opportunities, and supportive services for families with dependent children and some expectant parents. The goal of the program is to help families achieve economic mobility through meaningful employment. TAFDC is also provided to children who are being cared for by a relative who is not their natural or adoptive parent.

The state statute governing the TAFDC program can be found in Title XVII, Chapter 118 of the Massachusetts General Laws, located at [MassGeneralLaws](#). The regulations can be found in 106 CMR 701 -708 located at [Department of Transitional Assistance regulations | Mass.gov](#). Procedural guidance can be found in DTA's online guide, [Online Guide \(state.ma.us\)](#).

#### Application

Financial eligibility for the program is determined by income limits. Income limits can be found [here](#). Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.000, et seq. Certain families, who are assessed as work ready, are connected to employment opportunities when applying for benefits through registering an account with [MassHire JobQuest](#). Once a family begins receiving benefits, they are introduced to free opportunities for employment, training, and education and supportive services.

#### Case Management and Employment Services

Each local DTA office has case managers and Full Engagement Workers (FEWs). Case managers carry a caseload and are responsible for eligibility determination, eligibility review, referral services and other case maintenance activities. FEWs are specialists in the employment, education, and training opportunities available to families receiving TAFDC. In partnership with the case manager, the FEW is responsible for connecting families to opportunities and supportive services. They serve as a resource to case managers, a liaison for employment and

training program providers and a point of both contact and support to families. They work on both initial engagement with education and training options and re-engagement for families who have stopped participating in an approved activity. FEWs maintain a presence in the MassHire Career Centers and work with other community partners such as shelters to reach and engage families regardless of their circumstances.

### Orientation and Assessment

All families receiving TAFDC are offered the opportunity to participate in an orientation and assessment. Case managers refer families who are either interested in participating or are required to participate to a FEW. The FEW conducts an orientation with families to introduce them to all available resources and provides an assessment that helps parents or caretakers decide on family, education, or employment goals on which they are motivated to work. The FEW then connects the parent or caretaker with a program that can help them achieve that goal. The FEW will also facilitate the enrollment process with the program provider and follow up with both the family and the program in the next few weeks to make sure the program is the right fit for the family.

### Employment Development Plan (EDP)

Every parent or caretaker who is required to participate in the work program must have an EDP. The EDP contains the parent or caretaker's employment goal, the schedule of Employment Service Program activities they must engage in, necessary support services and the requirements they must meet to avoid sanctions.

### Supportive Services

Families receiving TAFDC are offered supportive services to help them meet their goals. All families are eligible to receive domestic violence supports. Families who are participating in employment, education and training are eligible to receive fully subsidized child care and a transportation stipend. Relative caregivers are eligible to receive fully subsidized child care. In addition to these supportive services, parents and caregivers participating in the DTA Works Internship program receive mentoring.

### Child Care

DTA provides referrals to families that are eligible for a child care subsidy based on their TAFDC program participation and to all relative caregivers. A child care referral is provided to all clients with an approved EDP who need child care to accept or maintain employment or to participate in an employment, education, or training program. Case managers are required to inform families about the availability of child care at application and review. FEWs are required to inform families about the availability of child care whenever they are engaging with a family that does not already have subsidized child care. A child care fact sheet, [CCFS-English 2016.pub \(mass.gov\)](#), is provided to all families at least once a year. This fact sheet explains who is eligible for child care, how to get a child care referral, how to connect with the local child care agency, the types of child care available, how to find licensed child care and supports available when your TAFDC case closes.

Families who are working or are enrolled in an approved activity receive a referral for 12 months of fully subsidized child care. The referral remains active even if the parent or caregiver

loses employment or their activity ends. Families on TAFDC with child care authorizations from DTA receive a subsidy for the full cost of child care and are not charged a parent fee.

A family is eligible for a Transitional Child Care (TCC) referral for up to 12 months after their TAFDC case closes when they are employed for at least 20 hours a week or enrolled in an education or training program. Families receiving TCC may be required to pay a parent fee by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), which is based on their income and family size. Upon verification that a family is eligible, DTA provides a written authorization for the TCC referral to EEC. This voucher is evidence of family relationship for all children included in the authorization. Parents must also submit evidence of their income, service need, residence and their relationship to children or dependent grandparents not included in the child care authorization.

### Employment Incentives

To support employment and ease the 'cliff effect', a parent or caretaker who is working while receiving TAFDC receives a 100% earned income disregard for the first six months of employment as long as their earned income does not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). After six months the family receives a \$200 work related expense deduction and a 50% earned income disregard. In a two-parent family each parent or caretaker is eligible for the earned income disregards.

### Transitional Support Services (TSS)

When a TAFDC case closes due to earnings, an employed parent or caregiver will receive a stipend for four months to support their transition off TAFDC benefits into employment. The payments cover work related expenses and transportation costs and decrease over the four months.

Work-Related Expense Stipend	Transportation Stipend
Month 1 \$200	Month 1 \$80
Month 2 \$150	Month 2 \$60
Month 3 \$100	Month 3 \$40
Month 4 \$50	Month 4 \$20

### Special Requirements for Young Parents

The eligibility rules for parents under 20 can be found at 106 CMR 703.180 - 184. To be eligible for TAFDC as a parent under 20, you must have graduated from high school, received a high school equivalency certificate or be attending school or a certificate program full time. Parents under the age of 20 who do not have a high school degree or the equivalent who are attending school or a high school equivalency program full time also have the option of participating in an employment and training program part time while they work on their high school equivalency certificate. Parents under 20 are not required to attend school full time for three months after the birth of their child. You also must be living with your parents, another adult related to you, another adult related to your child, a foster parent, or a legal guardian. The other adult or legal guardian cannot be the child's other parent unless the parents are married. A parent under 20 can also be living in a structured teen living program or on their own under certain conditions

specified in 106 CMR 703.184. Parents under the age of 20 are eligible to receive fully subsidized child care.

Parents under 20 who do not meet school attendance requirements without good cause are removed from the grant. If they continue to not meet school attendance requirements, the grant is terminated.

#### Self-Sufficiency Specialists (SSS)

The mandate to have SSS case managers is found in Mass. Gen. Laws Chapter 18, section 5. The primary focus of the SSS case managers are young parents, ages 23 and younger. SSS case managers carry a reduced caseload in order to provide intensive case management to specialized populations. The target case load for a SSS case manager is 90; each local office has enough SSS case managers to cover their young parent population at that case load ratio. If a SSS has room in their caseload, they may also serve other specialized populations, such as those living in an emergency shelter or a domestic violence shelter.

SSS case managers work with families to develop a solid foundation, including establishing education, training, and employment goals, as well as strategies to help with any challenges the family may have as they advance their economic mobility.

SSS case managers maintain a weekly presence at young parent program sites where the families on their caseload receive services. This allows SSS case managers to work collaboratively as a team with the program and the young parent to monitor progress, celebrate success and address any concerns or barriers that have come up for the program or the young parent.

#### Work Requirements and Hours

The rules for the TAFDC Work Program are found at 106 CMR 703.150. Parents and caretakers are allowed a 60-day work search period in which to find a job of 20 hours for those with children under 6 and 30 hours for those with children 6 and older. If a parent or caretaker who does not have an exemption from the work requirement or good cause (as defined below) is not employed for the required number of hours by the end of the 60-day work search period, the parent or caretaker must participate in an education or training activity or work at a community service site. In two parent families, each parent or caretaker must meet the work requirement.

FEWs work with families from the time their case is opened to connect them to employment opportunities and connect them to programs that will help them meet their goals and find employment on a career track. At case approval, FEWs connect with families to let them know about all the resources available to them and explain the expectations of the program. FEWs then complete a series of activities including Orientation, Assessment, goal setting, facilitating referrals and providing supportive services. Once a family is employed or enrolled in a program, FEWs maintain regular contact with the family and the program to monitor progress and address any concerns before they become a barrier to employment or participation.

#### Work Activities

A parent or caregiver can meet their work program requirements by:

- Working a job for pay
- Working full time in the Full Employment Program (FEP) which provides individuals work experience needed to obtain an unsubsidized job. Participants are paid a subsidized wage in lieu of receiving TAFDC.
- Participating in an approved supported work program
- Participating in community service (hours limited by the federal Fair Labor Standards Acts)
- Participating in a DTA approved activity that is expected to result in employment
- Combining hours of work and an approved activity or community service
- Participating in a substance abuse treatment program while living in a substance abuse shelter
- Participating in an unpaid work study or internship program
- Providing child care to a teen parent's dependent child if both the teen parent and their child are living in their home so that the teen parent can meet their school attendance requirements
- Participating in an education or training activity including a certificate or degree program from a four-year institute of higher education, community college or certificate program provided the degree does not exceed a bachelor's degree
- Participating in a vocational or educational program for not more than 12 months; or
- Meeting housing search requirements while residing in emergency shelter

A complete list of qualified work activities can be found at 106 CMR 707.130 - 190.

### Exemptions

Exemptions from the work program requirement and time limited benefits can be found in statute in Chapter 5, Section 110 (e)(1) of the Acts of 1995 and in regulation at 106 CMR 703.100 (A)(1). The exemption reasons are:

- Disability
- Being essential to the care of a disabled child, spouse or child's other parent living in the home
- 33<sup>rd</sup> week or later of pregnancy
- Having a child living in the home under age 2, except for a teen parent's dependent child if the teen parent is living in the home
- Being a parent under the age of 20 who is meeting living arrangement and school requirements
- Being a relative caregiver who is not part of the assistance unit
- Age 66 or older

- Age 60 – 66 who is the primary caregiver for the child and retired prior to receiving TAFDC

### Good Cause

Parents or caregivers may claim good cause for failure to meet TAFDC work program requirements. These are found in regulation at 106 CMR 701.380 and include:

- Appropriate child care is not available
- Family crisis or emergency situation
- Health condition or illness that prevents participation
- Lack of affordable or reliable transportation
- Participation in housing search in an emergency shelter
- Lack of an available and appropriate community service site

### Sanctions for Non-Compliance

When a parent or caregiver is not engaged in work or an activity after 60 days or stops participating in work or an activity without good cause, they are removed from the grant and the grant is reduced to the lower household size until the parent or caregiver connects with the FEW and accepts a program referral. If the parent or caregiver does not participate after accepting a program referral, the grant is terminated for the whole family.

If a parent or caregiver does stop working or participating in a program, the FEW completes a number of outreach attempts to try and engage the parent or caretaker before the grant is reduced. These attempts include multiple phone calls, a letter, text messages and an alert on the DTACONNECT application.

### TAFDC Pathways to Work

TAFDC Pathways to Work is an integral part of DTA's efforts to move clients to work and provide meaningful career pathways that support economic mobility. Each year, the Legislature allocates funding for employment services for families receiving TAFDC through the Employment Services Program (ESP) line item. The primary goal of TAFDC Pathways to Work is to assist TAFDC clients obtain and maintain employment with career growth potential, resolve barriers to employment and provide families who receive TAFDC with education, training, and employment supports. FEWs assist families receiving TAFDC to achieve these outcomes through referral to and collaborative goal setting with programs appropriate for individual skill level and goals. In addition to employment education and training, learning disability assessments and high school equivalency testing support are also funded through the ESP line item.

### Young Parent's Program (YPP)

YPP is designed to serve pregnant and/or parenting teens from the ages of 12-24 who are currently out of school and do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent or who wish to enroll in post-secondary education or training on a pathway to employment. Both the custodial and non-custodial parent of a child receiving TAFDC are eligible to participate in YPP. It is a year-round, full-time program that seeks to reduce reliance on public benefits among young



parents by supporting outcomes across three domains: education and career, life and personal, and parenting and family.

Services offered through the YPP program include assessment and goal setting, academic support and curriculum, English for Speakers of Other Languages, life and personal skills, enhancing family relationships, community partnerships for any additional services and follow-up services.

YPP takes a two-generation approach to increasing economic stability for families by creating opportunities for both parents and children. The primary goals of YPP are to empower parents to pursue a path to economic mobility through education pathways and job readiness, actively engage participants to develop the skills necessary to advocate and care for their children and provide a sense of hope and aspiration to empower families to break the cycle of multi-generational poverty.

#### DTA Works Internship

The goal of the DTA Works internship program is to provide employment supports to parents or caregivers receiving TAFDC through mentorship, training, and exposure and to prepare them for successful re-entry into the workforce. The program targets parents or caregivers who are fluent in English, can pass a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check, have a high school diploma or its equivalent but have little to no work experience, professional networks, or current references. The program places parents or caregivers in state agencies or nonprofits where they complete a nine-month internship. While they are completing their internship, parents or caregivers receive one on one mentoring and a monthly education and training stipend that does not impact their TAFDC benefits.

#### Temporary Absence

Massachusetts continues to exercise its option under section 408, paragraph (10)(A), of the Social Security Act to continue payment of TANF financial assistance benefits for a minor child absent from the home for at least 30 but not more than 180 consecutive days.

#### Time Limits

Families receiving TAFDC are subject to time-limited benefits unless they are exempt from the time limit. Non-exempt parents and caregivers, including each parent in a two-parent family, are limited to 24 months of assistance in any continuous 60-month period. The 60-month period begins the first full calendar month a family receives TAFDC benefits. Once 60 months have passed, the family is eligible for a new 60-month period and another 24 months within that 60-month period.

#### Other TANF Funded Programs

*Income Eligible Child care:* Administered by Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), Income Eligible Child care provides subsidized child care for the children of low-income parents not receiving child care through TAFDC who are working, disabled, in an education or job training program, or who otherwise meet the activity requirement. Child care is provided for children under 13 and for older children with special needs. Parents who have a disability can also qualify for the subsidy in certain situations. The program pays a portion of the cost of care

and requires payments from parents on a sliding fee scale. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 606 CMR 10.04.

*Transitional and Post-Transitional Child Care:* Also administered by EEC, parents who have received TAFDC within the 12 months prior to their application for a child care subsidy and who obtain a child care referral from DTA have priority access to a child care subsidy, provided they meet EEC eligibility guidelines. Parents who seek eligibility following the parent's transitional TAFDC authorization will again receive priority access to a child care subsidy for one additional 12-month period provided they meet EEC eligibility guidelines. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 606 CMR 10.04.

*DHE Scholarship Reserve:* The Scholarship Reserve provides financial assistance to Massachusetts students enrolled in and pursuing a program of higher education in any approved public or independent college, university, school of nursing, or any other approved institution furnishing a program of higher education. The scholarship program covers the cost of tuition for courses as well as the standard cost of living at the institution. These costs include only costs of attending courses and pursuing higher educational attainment and excludes costs such as room and board.

*University of Massachusetts (UMASS) Scholarships:* UMASS provides needs-based financial assistance to Massachusetts students enrolled in and pursuing a program of higher education at one of the UMASS locations: Boston, Lowell, Worcester, Amherst, or Dartmouth. The scholarship program covers the cost of tuition for courses as well as the standard costs associated with attending school. These costs include only costs of attending courses and pursuing higher educational attainment and excludes costs such as room and board.

*Supplemental Nutrition Allowance (SNA):* Administered by DTA, this program offers a supplemental nutrition assistance benefit to certain SNAP clients who are not receiving TAFDC. Eligible families who are working and receiving SNAP or whose TAFDC cases close due to earnings and who are currently receiving Non-Public Assistance (NPA) SNAP benefits only and have an employment status that meets the work participation requirements as outlined in 106 CMR 705.250 will be provided a supplemental nutritional assistance benefit.

#### MOE Funded Programs

*TAFDC:* Administered by DTA, TAFDC is the cash assistance program for families with children and some pregnant women with little to no income. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.000, et seq.

*Employment Services Program (ESP):* Administered by DTA, ESP is an employment-oriented program that supports the goal of ending dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation and work. Regulations regarding TAFDC financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.000, et seq. and 106 CMR 707.000, et seq.

*Transportation in the TAFDC Account:* Administered by DTA, TAFDC and former TAFDC families who have an approved EDP, and an active activity or employment receive transportation payments to offset the cost of travel to and from the activity or worksite. Regulations regarding TAFDC financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.000, et seq.

*ESP Pathways to Self-Sufficiency (PSS):* Administered by DTA, PSS is used to assess work program required TAFDC families to help them set goals and develop a plan to meet those goals. Regulations regarding TAFDC financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.000, et seq.

*DTA Administrative Expenses:* This program covers the administrative activities related to TANF or MOE funded programs performed at DTA or other Massachusetts state government departments and entities that receive TANF or MOE funds through contracts with state government departments. Included under this program are the costs of payroll and fringe benefits, contracted employees, travel, office supplies, equipment, and office space.

*Income Eligible Child care:* Administered by EEC, income Eligible Child care provides subsidized child care for the children of low-income parents not receiving child care through TAFDC who are working, disabled, in an education or job training program, or who otherwise meet the activity requirement. Child care is provided for children under 13 and for older children with special needs. This subsidy primarily provides access to affordable child care for income eligible working families. It can also be utilized by parents in a training or education program. Lastly, parents with disabilities can also qualify for the subsidy in certain situations. The program pays a portion of the cost of care and requires payments from parents on a sliding scale based on income. Very low-income families and children in foster care or with a relative who is not legally responsible for them are exempt from sliding fee requirements. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 606 CMR 10.04.

*Emergency Assistance Contract Shelter:* Administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), this program provides temporary shelter to financially eligible homeless TAFDC families and assists them in finding permanent housing. The program also includes case management services. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 760 CMR 67.02.

*HomeBASE:* Administered by DHCD, HomeBASE is for families who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness and meet basic qualifications for the state's Emergency Assistance shelter program. HomeBASE provides families with flexible funding as an alternative to shelter placement. HomeBASE can provide funds for first and last month's rent and a security deposit, furniture, a monthly stipend to pay rent for up to one year, utilities, travel costs and other expenses that would otherwise prevent a family from accessing a new home. In addition, families receive case management support and additional resources such as education, workforce development and child care. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 760 CMR 65.03

*Emergency Assistance Alternative Housing Program:* Administered by DHCD, this program provides temporary shelter to financially eligible homeless families. Families are placed in hotels or motels while seeking other suitable housing. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 760 CMR 67.02.

*Emergency Assistance Case Management:* Administered by DHCD, this program provides case management services to financially eligible homeless families within the Emergency Assistance program. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 760 CMR 67.02

*Youth at Risk Grants:* Administered by the Department of Public Health (DPH), these grants fund after school programs that provide academic remediation, job development and community service skills for disadvantaged youth. The expenditures included in this MOE claim only include the portion of the expenditures associated with the TAFDC eligible population. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.010.

*Structured Teen Living:* Administered by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), this program provides a safe living situation for pregnant and parenting mothers under the age of 20. While living in the residential facility mothers must attend high school or a high school equivalent certificate program if they have not already received their diploma or equivalent certificate and participate in classes for basic parenting skills, pregnancy prevention and basic life skills. To be eligible a young mother must be receiving TAFDC. The regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.010.

*Family Stabilization Services:* Administered by DCF, this program provides services to stabilize intact families to prevent the need for home removal. The service recipients must have been eligible for benefits that require less than 85% of state median income. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 110 CMR 7.031.

*Safelink Domestic Violence Hotline:* Administered by a third party, Casa Myrna, Safelink is a 24/7 hotline to provide assistance to those experiencing domestic violence. The hotline can provide assistance in a crisis as well as resources for long term stabilization. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 110 CMR 4.00.

*Child Protective Services Investigations:* DCF is responsible for protecting children and strengthening and supporting families. DCF social workers investigate allegations of abuse or neglect and often provide services to help families care for children in their home. Investigations often lead to a referral of parents to services where they learn new skills to meet their own needs and to build relationships with their children. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 110 CMR 4.00.

*DCF Referrals to TANF Assistance:* DCF social workers refer families to DTA for public benefits including TAFDC. The expenditures included in this MOE claim only include the portion of expenditure associated with the TAFDC eligible population. Regulations regarding TAFDC financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.010.

*State Earned Income Tax Credit (SEITC):* Administered by the Department of Revenue, SEITC is a refundable tax credit that is equal to 30 percent of the federal earned income tax credit claimed by the filer in the same tax year. This applies to those who meet the TAFDC eligible requirements of 106 CMR 704.010.

*Youth Works Youth Employment Program:* Administered by the Executive Office of Workforce and Labor Development (EOLWD), Youth Works is a year-round employment program geared toward at-risk low-income youth. The program has made increasing efforts to serve dropouts and older youth to focus on serving the disconnected youth of the state. The expenditures included in this MOE claim only include the portion of expenditures associated with the TAFDC eligible population. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.010.

*Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Summer Jobs:* Administered by DCR, summer employment for youth is aimed at serving underprivileged populations especially in economic development areas. The expenditures included in this MOE claim only include the portion of expenditures associated with the TAFDC eligible population. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.010.

***b. Require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance to engage in work (defined by the State) once the State determines the parent or caretaker is ready to engage in work, or once he or she has received 24 months of assistance, whichever is earlier, consistent with the child care exception at 407(e)(2) (section 402(a)(1)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act).***

Parents or caregivers receiving TAFDC are assessed for their ability to work or engage in an employment, education, or training program once their TAFDC case is approved. Parents or caregivers who have received assistance for 60 days must work 20 hours per week if the youngest child in the assistant unit is between the ages of 2 and 6 or 30 hours per week if the youngest child in the assistant unit is six or older. Exceptions to this are parents or caregivers who are exempt, caring for a foster child in the home who is under age 2, caring for a foster child in the home whose needs exceed a standard level of care as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families or who have good cause. TAFDC work program rules are found in regulation at 106 CMR 703.150.

When a parent or caregiver is not engaged in work or an approved activity after 60 days or stops participating in work or an approved activity without good cause, they are removed from the grant and the grant is reduced to the lower household size until the parent or caregiver connects with the FEW and accepts a program referral. If the parent or caregiver continues not to participate the grant is terminated.

DTA continuously evaluates a family's readiness to participate in the work program at application, recertification, and every time a case manager engages with a parent or caregiver. FEWs engage with parents or caregivers and collaborate with employment service programs to identify and address challenges that may impact a parent or caregivers' ability to participate to prevent sanction, and to re-engage parents or caregivers as soon as possible when a sanction is in place.

***c. Ensure that parents and caretakers receiving assistance engage in work in accordance with section 407 (section 402(a)(1)(A)(iii) of the Social Security Act).***

In accordance with the Massachusetts Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plan, DTA works with the Department of Career Services (DCS) and the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) and other WIOA partner agencies to create dedicated partnerships that ensure parents and caregivers receiving TAFDC, who are often the individuals with the highest challenges to employment, are well served not just by DTA, but by all of the appropriate parts of the workforce development system.

The state's workforce development activities for parents and caretakers receiving TAFDC include the resources available through the Employment Services Program. The WIOA Steering Committee, policy makers and leadership at DTA regularly discuss the need to increase the available resources for education and training programs focused on career pathways that can help move the skill set of individuals receiving assistance into the range of employment that provides family-supporting wages. Successful strategies typically require multi-year education and training that leads to a credential along with family support (public assistance, child care, transportation), coaching at the education and training provider, on-the-job experience (subsidized or internships) and intensive job placement (unsubsidized) support upon completion (potentially through the MassHire Career Centers).

Before a TAFDC case is approved, a case manager helps parents or caretakers who may be 'work ready' register with the MassHire system through JobQuest. Registering with JobQuest allows someone to create a job match profile that matches their skills and experience against current job openings. A resume can also be attached, and profiles can be made visible to hiring employers. This is a critical first step for parents and caregivers to be positioned for hire. Once a TAFDC case is approved, the family is referred to the FEW who completes a welcoming phone call, an orientation and an assessment to help the family identify goals they want to work on. The FEW then helps to connect the family to a program that can help them meet their identified goal. A referral for fully subsidized child care is provided so that the parent or caretaker can participate in their chosen program. Young parents without a high school degree and not work ready participate in the Young Parents Program to achieve their high school equivalency degree.

DTA is also engaged in a partnership with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) to increase options for parents and caregivers who have a disability but want to engage in work. DTA has found that these partnerships are critical resources for families receiving TAFDC to not only gain additional skills but to receive the supports necessary to move from public assistance to employment.

FEWs maintain relationships with all of the ESP providers in their area. When a parent or caretaker stops participating in a program, the FEW and the program work collaboratively to re-engage the parent or caretaker in the activity quickly, before there is any reduction to the family's grant.

Massachusetts also encourages work through the earned income disregards described above under employment incentives. These disregards allow families to maintain access to benefits when they begin working so they can access all of the supports needed to maintain employment. The disregards also allow families to build assets and gain job experience so that they are better positioned to stay off public benefits once their TAFDC case closes. While

Massachusetts allows families to participate in activities that are appropriate for them and will help them meet their goals, Massachusetts only reports the activities and hours in the WPR as allowed under the Social Security Act and described in the Work Verification Plan.

***d. Take such reasonable steps as the State deems necessary to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government (section 402(a)(1)(A)(iv) of the Social Security Act).***

It is DTA's policy and practice that all client data and information be kept strictly confidential and protected in accordance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including but not limited to Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 66A: Fair Information Practices and Chapter 93H: Security Breaches. Chapter 64 of the Acts of 2017 established the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS); EOTSS' mission is ensuring the confidentiality, integrity and availability of Commonwealth of Massachusetts IT data, applications, and infrastructure. DTA communicates and enforces all security guidelines, standards, and policies among all of its employees and contractors.

***e. Establish goals and take action to prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies (section 402(a)(1)(A)(v) of the Social Security Act).***

Massachusetts historically has had one of the lowest teen birth rates in the country. In 1996, there were 5,758 births in Massachusetts to women between the ages of 15 through 19, representing 28.5 per 1,000 females in that age range. In 2019 the birth rate for women between the ages of 15 and 19 was 6.9 births per 1,000 women. This represents the second lowest teen birth rate in the country for 2019.

In order to reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock births, DTA works with the state Department of Public Health (DPH). DPH coordinates family planning and teen pregnancy prevention efforts throughout the Commonwealth. In addition, DPH works with local schools (K-12) to develop sex and health education curricula that incorporate pregnancy prevention efforts.

The Massachusetts Pregnant and Parenting Teen Initiative, administered by DPH, aims to increase life opportunities and enhance family stability among young families. Participating families receive services tailored to their individual needs, including health and social service assessments, case management, counseling, health education, referrals and infant/child services. Outcomes for this program include an increase in continuous contraceptive use, a decrease in unintended pregnancies and a reduction in reliance on public assistance.

***f. Conduct a program designed to reach State and local law enforcement officials, the education system, and relevant counseling services, that provides education and training on the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention***

***programs may be expanded to include men (section 402(a)(1)(A)(vi) of the Social Security Act).***

The Governor's Council to Address Sexual and Domestic Violence (the Council) is an interdisciplinary council of approximately 30 members representing advocates, health care, the Attorney General's Office, law enforcement, the courts and higher education as well as various state agencies. The Council works to enact best practices to combat issues of sexual assault and domestic violence in order to keep Massachusetts residents safe. The Council is committed to improving prevention efforts, enhancing support for those impacted by sexual assault and domestic violence, and to holding those who perpetrate sexual assault and domestic violence accountable. The full mission and scope of the Council can be found in Executive Order 563. DTA is represented on the Council by Crystal Jackson, Director of the DTA's Domestic Violence Unit.

Some initiatives of the Council that may prevent statutory rape are the Domestic Violence Toolkit and RESPECTfully. The Domestic Violence Toolkit provides local law enforcement with the tools to support survivors of domestic violence and to identify risk and re-assault factors. It has been implemented in municipal police departments in over 65 cities and towns.

RESPECTfully is a public awareness and prevention campaign to increase awareness about what constitutes a healthy relationship. The target audience for RESPECTfully is youth between the ages of 12 and 18 and those who serve or care for youth ages 12 through 18. Through Jane Doe, Inc., the Massachusetts White Ribbon Day Campaign promotes and encourages men and boys to be allies in the prevention of sexual and relationship violence.

In addition, the Department's Domestic Violence Unit, comprised of staff with expertise in domestic violence, is represented on the State's Roundtables on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, which operate through the state's District Attorneys and on local High-Risk Assessment Teams, which are comprised of public and domestic violence service providers, law enforcement, district attorneys' staff, probation staff, batterers' intervention programs and other stakeholders to better identify and respond to domestic violence cases that pose the highest risk of lethality.

DTA's Domestic Violence Specialists serve anyone who identifies as a survivor of domestic violence and/or sexual assault (including statutory rape), by developing safety plans and referring them to services in the community, including advocacy, counseling, shelter and Legal Aid, as appropriate. The Domestic Violence Specialists also assist survivors with DTA benefits and housing options, if homeless.

***g. Implement policies and procedures as necessary to prevent access to assistance provided under the State program funded under this part through any electronic fund transaction in an automated teller machine or point-of-sale device located in a place described in section 408(a)(12), including a plan to ensure that recipients of the assistance have adequate access to their cash assistance (section 402(a)(1)(A)(vii) of the Social Security Act).***



The Commonwealth has enacted a state law to prohibit the use of cash assistance, including TAFDC, in electronic benefit transfer (EBT) transactions at liquor stores, casinos, gambling casinos or gaming establishments, and retail establishment which provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment, as well as other establishments not identified in Section 408(a)(12). Retailers face fines from \$500 for a first offense, \$500 to \$2500 for a second offense and not less than \$2500 for a third offense. See M.G.L. c. 18, § J. In addition, the Commonwealth has prohibited the use of cash assistance held on EBT cards to purchase alcoholic beverages, lottery tickets, gambling, adult oriented material or performances and other items and services. See M.G.L. c. 18, § I. Parents or caregivers who violate the purchasing provisions must pay the Commonwealth back for the prohibited purchase. For a second offense, the parent or caregiver is disqualified from benefits for two months and must pay the Commonwealth back for the prohibited purchase. For a third offense, the parent or caregiver is disqualified from benefits permanently and must pay the Commonwealth back for the prohibited purchase.

Posters are displayed in all local offices informing families of the prohibited establishments and purchasing restrictions. The application for TAFDC benefits includes a penalty warning informing families of prohibited items and services as well as the penalties for violations. At application and redetermination, all families applying for or receiving TAFDC are provided a brochure that includes information on prohibited establishments, prohibited purchases and penalties. Retailers are notified about the law and its penalties. Local law enforcement agencies are notified about retailers who are found to have violated such law. In addition, the Department offers posters and training for retailers on the restrictions.

In an ongoing effort, the Department continues to work with its EBT vendor on blocking the use of EBT cards in prohibited establishments. The Department and its vendor are jointly researching potential prohibited establishments. The Commonwealth provides its EBT vendor with a final list of prohibited establishments monthly; the EBT vendor blocks the designated establishments' Point of Service (POS) device and ATMs on site.

***h. Ensure that recipients of assistance provided under the State program funded under this part have the ability to use or withdraw assistance with minimal fees or charges, including an opportunity to access assistance with no fee or charges, and are provided information on applicable fees and surcharges that apply to electronic fund transactions involving the assistance, and that such information is made publicly available (section 402(a)(1)(A)(viii) of the Social Security Act).***

The Commonwealth remains committed to ensuring that families have adequate access to their cash assistance. While most families access their benefits via EBT card, they have the option to receive TAFDC through direct deposit to checking or savings accounts or direct vendor payments for rent, utilities, etc. DTA affords all clients the right to designate an authorized payee to act on their behalf in accessing TAFDC when the parent or caregiver is unable to do so. All families receiving TAFDC who receive their benefits on an EBT card receive a brochure that advises clients about surcharge-free cash transactions and how to identify surcharge-free ATMs and POS devices. In addition, the brochure advises families that they are entitled to two free

ATM withdrawals in a calendar month, but that additional withdrawals are \$0.75 per transaction. This brochure, along with the EBT card itself, provides clients with a toll-free customer service line that is available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week regarding any questions they have about accessing their benefits.

DTA has also created an EBT cash withdrawal information sheet that is given to families applying for or receiving TAFDC in all local offices. This information sheet identifies Massachusetts banks that provide EBT cash withdrawals without surcharges. DTA continues to pursue the expansion of its current surcharge-free options and the availability of low- and no-cost banking options.

In addition, the Commonwealth has partnered with a nonprofit, full-service credit-counseling agency, funded through a large banking institution's nonprofit foundation, to offer financial literacy and credit counseling workshops. These workshops are available to families at no cost, statewide, to assist in their development of short and long-term financial planning. The workshop curriculum encompasses how families reduce or eliminate fees associated with using their EBT cards or otherwise utilize their TAFDC benefits through direct deposit or direct vendor payments for rent, utilities, etc. While families are instructed on how to better budget their TAFDC funds, they are also reminded of the prohibited items, services and establishments, identified under State law and the associated penalties.

***i. Indicate whether it intends to treat families moving from another State differently from other families under the program, and if so how (section 402(a)(1)(B)(i) of the Social Security Act).***

Families moving into Massachusetts from other states receive the same benefits from the TAFDC program as current residents.

***j. Indicate whether it intends to provide assistance to non-citizens, and if so, include an overview of the assistance (section 402(a)(1)(B)(ii) of the Social Security Act).***

Massachusetts provides assistance to U.S. citizens, nationals and certain qualified aliens pursuant to federal law. Provided they meet other TAFDC program eligibility criteria, Massachusetts provides TAFDC assistance to qualified immigrants who entered the United States prior to August 22, 1996; qualified immigrants who entered the United States on or after August 22, 1996 who have been in a qualified immigration status for five years; and qualified immigrants who entered the United States on or after August 22, 1996 who are exempt from the five-year bar. Those who are exempt from the five-year bar include asylees, refugees, parolees, certain battered non-citizens, victims of severe forms of trafficking, those whose deportation is being withheld, Amerasians, Cuban and Haitian entrants, Veterans, certain Veterans and members of the military on active duty and their spouses and unmarried dependent children. The regulations regarding eligibility of immigrants can be found at 106 CMR 703.430.

***k. Set forth objective criteria for the delivery of benefits and the determination of eligibility and for fair and equitable treatment, including an explanation of how it will provide opportunities for recipients who have been adversely affected to be heard in a State administrative or appeal process (section 402(a)(1)(B)(iii) of the Social Security Act).***

Massachusetts will continue to operate the TAFDC program based on objective criteria for determination of eligibility and delivery of benefits according to program rules and procedures. All DTA activities are conducted in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, and the Massachusetts Constitution. DTA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, religion, political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, creed, ancestry or Veteran's status in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its programs or activities.

Massachusetts will continue its current fair hearings process under 106 CMR 343.00 which provides an opportunity for a hearing before a hearings officer appointed by the Division of Hearings (DOH). The DOH is wholly separate and independent from all other offices and divisions of DTA and from all other personnel of DTA. An applicant/recipient has a right to a fair hearing as set forth in the Department's regulations at 106 CMR 343.000.

**(a)(1)(B)(v) The document shall indicate whether the State intends to assist individuals to train for, seek, and maintain employment (I) providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined under section 1397j of this title); or (II) in other occupations related to elder care determined appropriate by the state for which the State identifies an unmet need for service personnel, and, if, so shall include an overview of such assistance.**

Massachusetts does not intend to exercise the above options at this time.

**m. Provide for all MOE-funded services the following information: the name of the program benefit or service, and the financial eligibility criteria that families must meet in order to receive that benefit or service. In addition, for TANF MOE-funded services (co-mingled or segregated MOE) describe the program benefit provided to eligible families (SSP services do not have to include a description, but the Department of Health and Human Services encourages it) (§263.2(b)(3) and §263.2(c) preamble pages 17826-7).**

#### MOE Funded Programs

*TAFDC:* Administered by DTA, TAFDC is the cash assistance program for families with children and some pregnant women with little to no income. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.000, et seq.

*Employment Services Program (ESP):* Administered by DTA, ESP is an employment-oriented program that supports the goal of ending dependence of needy parents on government

benefits by promoting job preparation and work. Regulations regarding TAFDC financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.000, et seq. and 106 CMR 707.000, et seq.

*Transportation in the TAFDC Account:* Administered by DTA, TAFDC and former TAFDC families who have an approved EDP, and an active activity or employment receive transportation payments to offset the cost of travel to and from the activity or worksite. Regulations regarding TAFDC financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.000, et seq.

*ESP Pathways to Self-Sufficiency (PSS):* Administered by DTA, PSS is used to assess work program required TAFDC families to help them set goals and develop a plan to meet those goals. Regulations regarding TAFDC financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.000, et seq.

*DTA Administrative Expenses:* This program covers the administrative activities related to TANF or MOE funded programs performed at DTA or other Massachusetts state government departments and entities that receive TANF or MOE funds through contracts with state government departments. Included under this program are the costs of payroll and fringe benefits, contracted employees, travel, office supplies, equipment, and office space.

*Income Eligible Child care:* Administered by EEC, income Eligible Child care provides subsidized child care for the children of low-income parents not receiving child care through TAFDC who are working, disabled, in an education or job training program, or who otherwise meet the activity requirement. Child care is provided for children under 13 and for older children with special needs. This subsidy primarily provides access to affordable child care for income eligible working families. It can also be utilized by parents in a training or education program. Lastly, parents with disabilities can also qualify for the subsidy in certain situations. The program pays a portion of the cost of care and requires payments from parents on a sliding scale based on income. Very low-income families and children in foster care or with a relative who is not legally responsible for them are exempt from sliding fee requirements. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 606 CMR 10.04

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*HomeBASE:* Administered by DHCD, HomeBASE is for families who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness and meet basic qualifications for the state's Emergency Assistance shelter program. HomeBASE provides families with flexible funding as an alternative to shelter placement. HomeBASE can provide funds for first and last month's rent and a security deposit, furniture, a monthly stipend to pay rent for up to one year, utilities, travel costs and other expenses that would otherwise prevent a family from accessing a new home. In addition, families receive case management support and additional resources such as education,

workforce development and child care. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 760 CMR 65.03

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*Emergency Assistance Case Management:* Administered by DHCD, this program provides case management services to financially eligible homeless families within the Emergency Assistance program. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 760 CMR 67.02

*Youth at Risk Grants:* Administered by the Department of Public Health (DPH), these grants fund after school programs that provide academic remediation, job development and community service skills for disadvantaged youth. The expenditures included in this MOE claim only include the portion of the expenditures associated with the TAFDC eligible population. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.010.

*Structured Teen Living:* Administered by the Department of Children and Families (DCF), this program provides a safe living situation for pregnant and parenting mothers under the age of 20. While living in the residential facility mothers must attend high school or a high school equivalent certificate program if they have not already received their diploma or equivalent certificate and participate in classes for basic parenting skills, pregnancy prevention and basic life skills. To be eligible a young mother must be receiving TAFDC. The regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.010.

*Family Stabilization Services:* Administered by DCF, this program provides services to stabilize intact families to prevent the need for home removal. The service recipients must have been eligible for benefits that require less than 85% of state median income. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 110 CMR 7.031.

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*Child Protective Services Investigations:* DCF is responsible for protecting children and strengthening and supporting families. DCF social workers investigate allegations of abuse or neglect and often provide services to help families care for children in their home.

Investigations often lead to a referral of parents to services where they learn new skills to meet their own needs and to build relationships with their children. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 110 CMR 4.00.

*DCF Referrals to TANF Assistance:* DCF social workers refer families to DTA for public benefits including TAFDC. The expenditures included in this MOE claim only include the portion of

expenditure associated with the TAFDC eligible population. Regulations regarding TAFDC financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.010.

*State Earned Income Tax Credit (SEITC):* Administered by the Department of Revenue, SEITC is a refundable tax credit that is equal to 30 percent of the federal earned income tax credit claimed by the filer in the same tax year. This applies to those who meet the TAFDC eligible requirements of 106 CMR 704.010.

*Youth Works Youth Employment Program:* Administered by the Executive Office of Workforce and Labor Development (EOLWD), Youth Works is a year-round employment program geared toward at-risk low-income youth. The program has made increasing efforts to serve dropouts and older youth to focus on serving the disconnected youth of the state. The expenditures included in this MOE claim only include the portion of expenditures associated with the TAFDC eligible population. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.010.

*Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Summer Jobs:* Administered by DCR, summer employment for youth is aimed at serving underprivileged populations especially in economic development areas. The expenditures included in this MOE claim only include the portion of expenditures associated with the TAFDC eligible population. Regulations regarding financial eligibility can be found at 106 CMR 704.010.

Figure 76: TANF Certifications

**TANF CERTIFICATIONS**

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must provide a certification by the chief executive officer of that State, that during the fiscal year, the State will:	
1.	Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act);
	<b>Yes, administered by DOR</b>
2.	Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under the State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act);
	<b>Yes, administered by DCF</b>
3.	Specify which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)-  (A) have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and  (B) have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services;
	<b>Yes, administered by DTA</b>

4.	Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act);
	<b>Yes, administered by DTA</b>
5.	Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act);
	<b>Yes, administered by DTA</b>
6.	(optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act). Screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and</li> <li>• waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence.</li> </ul>
	<b>Yes, administered by DTA</b>

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#### **SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

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**(a) General Requirements 27: The State agency must prepare and submit an Employment and Training (E&T) Plan to its appropriate Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Office. The E&T Plan must be available for public inspection at the State agency headquarters. A State agency may include its plan for the SNAP E&T program in a Combined Plan under WIOA but will require FNS approval prior to implementation and must continue to make a copy of the plan available for public inspection. If a State includes SNAP E&T in a Combined Plan under WIOA, the State agency will detail the following for each year covered by the Combined Plan:**

**(1) The nature of the E&T components the State agency plans to offer and the reasons for such components, including cost information. The methodology for State agency reimbursement for education components must be specifically addressed;**

The mission of the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is to assist and empower low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, improve their quality of life, and achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency. Located within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, the Department ensures that the emergency and transitional needs of the individuals and families of the Commonwealth are met through a combination of federal- and state-funded programs.

DTA is the single state agency responsible for administering the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Massachusetts. As the designated SNAP agency, DTA manages the State's SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Program, SNAP Path to Work. The program operates statewide in 14 counties served by 21 DTA Local Offices and via 27 self-service kiosks located within partner organizations. SNAP clients not participating in the Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) program, the State's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program can access important employment services and work supports through the program.

Since 2006, DTA has partnered with Commonwealth Medicine, the consulting arm of the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School (UMass Chan) to offer under and unemployed SNAP-only participants meaningful opportunities to enhance employability through SNAP Path to Work participation. Program participation is voluntary. Services may be delivered in person, remotely, or via hybrid model.

Through an Interagency Service Agreement (ISA), UMass Chan assists DTA by recruiting, subcontracting with and monitoring SNAP Path to Work providers and provides assistance with the design and printing of SNAP Path to Work promotional material and the design and maintenance of [snappathtowork.org](https://snappathtowork.org). UMass Chan also assists SNAP Path to Work providers with maximizing and claiming reimbursement for services rendered under the SNAP E&T reimbursement project.

Contracted providers receive partial federal reimbursement of incurred costs related to serving eligible participants as approved by FNS via DTA's annual SNAP E&T State Plan. DTA monitors the successful operation of this program in coordination with UMass Chan.

DTA SNAP E&T staff, UMass Chan, and providers use [regional labor market blueprints](#), [dynamic labor market tools](#), and other sources to ensure that components offered under the SNAP Path to Work umbrella meet participant and State or local workforce needs.

As of October 1, 2022, the start of Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2022, 47 contracted SNAP Path to Work providers and the statewide network of MassHire Career Centers located across the state have the capacity to help as many as 4914 (duplicate count) low-income individuals gain valuable skills and increase employability through engagement in one or more of the following programs:



**Supervised Job Search (SJS)**

Supervised job search activity occurs statewide at State approved locations (contracted SNAP Path to Work Provider organizations and MassHire Career Centers) where participants have access to the support, tools and materials needed to perform a successful supervised job search, including but not limited to, access to computers and internet service, transportation support or virtual tools such as websites, portals, or web applications to access supervised job search services.

Typically, Supervised Job Search participants are expected to make at least 12 job contacts or demonstrate 12 hours of effort per month. Activities are supervised and tracked either remotely or in-person, by an individual who has the necessary knowledge and skills to guide and support the participant through a successful job search. The state requires at least monthly check ins but does not prescribe the specific method that providers must use to supervise and track client hours. Participation hours are reported to DTA (by the provider) monthly.

Job search assistance is also included as part of many SNAP Path to Work vocational skills training programs and is available statewide via WPP through MassHire Career Centers.

An estimated 583 work ready, job seeking SNAP applicants and recipients will engage in this component in FFY 2022.

FFY 2022 component cost: \$438,879 - Average cost per participant: \$753.

**Job Readiness (Job Search Training) (JST)**

Job Readiness activity strives to enhance the job readiness of participants by providing instruction in job seeking techniques and increasing motivation and self-confidence. This may include direct training or support activities such as skill assessments, training in techniques for employability, counseling, information on available jobs, occupational exploration, including information on local emerging and in demand occupations, mock interviews, job fairs, life skills, guidance, and motivation for development of positive work behaviors necessary for the labor market, or job placement services. Participants learn behaviors associated with job seeking success (e.g., Identification of skills/interests, obtaining interviews, updating resumes, and developing good work habits).

Job search training is also included as part of many SNAP Path to Work vocational skills training programs and is available statewide via WPP\* through MassHire Career Centers. See page XX of this plan for a description WPP services.

An estimated 1661 motivated job seeking SNAP applicants and recipients will engage in this component in FFY 2022.

FFY 2022 component cost: \$2,486,859 - Average cost per participant: \$1,497.

\*WPP is partially supported by SNAP E&T funds, increasing WPP capacity and SNAP client access to job focused education and training activity and job search support. This relationship also allows eligible WPP participants to access SNAP E&T transportation and job retention supports.

### **Job Retention (JR)**

Job Retention services include regular face to face and/or virtual check ins with the working participant and may include employer consultation, job coaching and supports such as transportation assistance, based on the needs of the client. To qualify for job retention services under the SNAP Path to Work umbrella, the participant must have:

- secured employment after or during SNAP E&T participation; and
- received SNAP in the month of or the month prior to enrolling in Job Retention services.

An estimated 492 employed current and former SNAP E&T participants will engage in this component in FFY 2022.

FFY 2022 component cost: \$199,159 - Average cost per participant: \$405.

### **Basic/Foundational Skills Instruction (including HiSet/GED) (EPB)**

These programs are offered statewide and provide educational programs or activities that improve basic skills or otherwise improve employability or employment advancement potential including literacy training, high school equivalency test preparation (HiSET/GED), remedial education, and alternative education, college readiness and career preparation, and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs. Enrollment into an educational component will be based on an assessment that a lack of education is the primary barrier to employment or job advancement. At the completion of the component, the participant may be assigned to job search training or supervised job search to facilitate immediate job entry.

The high school equivalency preparation classes prepare clients to take the HiSET/GED test, either taken directly through the provider or through a third-party source approved to administer the exam.

With improved basic skills, many participants will move on to other SNAP E&T programs and/or higher education upon program completion. Most of these programs also include elements of job readiness as the development of skills is focused around improving workforce opportunities.

State education funds do not cover all secondary and post-secondary education and training programs. SNAP E&T funds are not used to supplant existing educational services. SNAP E&T funds are not used for costs that exceed the normal costs of service provided to persons not participating in the SNAP E&T program or to support training that is normally available to the public at no cost.

An estimated 160 SNAP applicants and recipients seeking HiSet/GED, improved reading, and/or math skills will engage this component in FFY 2022.

FFY 2022 component cost: \$673,345 - Average cost per participant: \$4,208.

### **English Language Acquisition (EPEL)**

As they are independently operated by SNAP Path to Work providers, the English Language Acquisition programs vary in duration and focus depending on the immediate goals of the participant. For example, some programs focus on refugees with an immediate need for basic English skills and cultural competencies that will allow them to secure employment quickly. Several programs are made up of different levels with attainable and reasonable goals for the client to complete in the time allotted based on their current skill level. While a diploma or certificate may not always be attained upon completion of intermediate level classes, client progress can be measured through advancement from level to level. The majority of programs focus on English language for the workplace and the language skills needed to advance out of entry-level positions or combine EPEL and skills training, allowing the client to market themselves as a multi-lingual worker with the required job skills.

An estimated 328 SNAP applicants and recipients seeking to learn English as a second or other language will engage this component in FFY 2022.

FFY 2022 component cost: \$918,070 - Average cost per participant: \$2,798.99.

### **Integrated Education and Training (IET)/Bridge Programs (EPIE)**

In FFY 2022 two community colleges and one community-based organization offer college transition programs designed to equip adult learners with the academic, college-going and life skills necessary to enter college and complete a post-secondary degree or certificate program and establish a career path. The duration of these programs varies.

An estimated 21 non-traditional adult learners will engage this component in FFY 2022.

FFY 2022 component cost: \$103,450 - Average cost per participant: \$4,926.

### **Career/Technical Education or other Vocational Training (EPC)**

Vocational Skills Training programs aim to improve the employability of participants by providing academic and technical knowledge and skills needed to move into subsequent education or training or directly into employment.

A variety of occupational, remedial, and entry-level job skills training, customized training, institutional skills training; upgrade training, and vocational education programs are available through the SNAP Path to Work network of providers.

The individual Vocational Skills Training programs to be offered through the SNAP Path to Work program are operationally independent and vary in duration. Many are offered in multiple locations or offer multiple tracks based on client interest and aptitude. Vocational Skills training participants will prepare for a variety of careers, in fields including but not limited to, Pharmacy Technician, Certified Nursing Assistant, Personnel Care Attendant, Culinary Arts, Hospitality, Medical Administration, Construction and Skilled Trades, Human Services and Information Technologies. Most programs result in a certification or license. For fields for which there is no specific industry recognized certification, supporting certifications are provided so that a client is fully prepared to apply for the position—e.g., CPR/First Aid for Early Childhood careers, ServSafe for culinary careers and OSHA certifications for Skilled Trade, Construction and Weatherization. Some programs also provide the opportunity for participants to earn college credits that can be applied if the participant elects to pursue a degree. All providers assist with finding jobs at the completion of the program via either job search and/or job search training, referrals to MassHire Career Centers or other training provider, community partnerships, internships, apprenticeships and/or job placement. Skills trainings programs typically include at least some job readiness and preparation for applications through a formal secondary program or built into the skills training program itself.

An estimated 1206 SNAP applicants and recipients will engage in this component in FFY 2022.

FFY 2022 component cost: \$7,257,020 - Average cost per participant: \$6,017.

### **Work Experience (WE)**

Work experience is divided into two subcomponents per 7 CFR 273.7(e)(2)(iv): Work activity (WA) and Work-based learning (WBL). WBL activities like internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training, among others, may provide wages subsidized by the E&T program.

### **Internship (WBLI) and Internship – Subsidized by E&T (WBLI-SUB)**

SNAP Path to Work internships are planned, structured, learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period. Internships help the participant gain the competencies and experience to meet local employer demands. Internships must be related to a career choice or career exploration and provide learning through work-based projects. Program participants may be paid or unpaid and must:

- not provide any work that has the effect of replacing the employment of an individual not participating in the employment or training experience program; and
- provide the same benefits and working conditions that are provided at the job site to employees performing comparable work for comparable hours.

Participant wages not subsidized by E&T: An estimated 70 SNAP applicants and recipients who are motivated to work will engage in this component in FFY 2022.

FFY 2022 component cost: \$82,100 - Average cost per participant: \$1,173.

Participant wages subsidized by E&T: An estimated 25 SNAP applicants and recipients who are motivated to work will engage in this component in FFY 2022.

FFY 2022 component cost: \$378,110 - Average cost per participant: \$15,124.

**Pre-Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship (WBLPA) and  
Pre-Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship – Subsidized by E&T (WBLPA-SUB)**

SNAP Path to Work apprenticeships combine on-the-job training with related instruction that enables participants to master the practical and technical skills required for a skilled occupation.

SNAP Path to Work pre-apprenticeship programs are designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in an apprenticeship program.

These programs may be paid or unpaid.

Participant wages not subsidized by E&T: An estimated 5 SNAP applicants and recipients who are motivated to work but lack the practical and technical skills required for a skilled occupation will engage in this component in FFY 2022.

FFY 2022 component cost: \$12,500 - Average cost per participant: \$2,500.

Participant wages subsidized by E&T: An estimated 3 SNAP applicants and recipients who are motivated to work but lack the practical and technical skills required for a skilled occupation will engage in this component in FFY 2022.

FFY 2022 component cost: \$65,099 - Average cost per participant: \$21,700.

**Transitional Jobs (WBLTJ)**

A transitional job is one that provides a time-limited, paid work experience in the public, private or non-profit sectors. 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.

An estimated 326 SNAP applicants and recipients who lack the work history and work habits needed to maintain unsupported employment will engage in this component in FFY 2022.

FFY 2022 component cost: \$625,189 - Average cost per participant: \$1,918.

DTA is committed to assisting SNAP participants with education and skills training necessary to increase their ability to obtain unsubsidized employment. To this end, DTA will continue to work with contracted E&T Providers and other workforce development agencies to identify and increase qualifying opportunities (activities that have a direct link to employment) and supports to assist SNAP participants in achieving self-sufficiency.

**(2) An operating budget for the Federal fiscal year with an estimate of the cost of operation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan. Any State agency that requests 50 percent Federal reimbursement for State agency E&T administrative costs, other than for participant reimbursements, must include in its plan, or amendments to its plan, an itemized list of all activities and costs for which those Federal funds will be claimed, including the costs for case management and casework to facilitate the transition from economic dependency to self-sufficiency through work. Costs in excess of the Federal grant will be allowed only with the prior approval of FNS and must be adequately documented to assure that they are necessary, reasonable, and properly allocated. A State must submit a plan amendment to request budget adjustments at least 30 days prior to planned implementation;**

As of January 27, 2022, Massachusetts' FFY 2022 SNAP E&T plan is federally funded as follows:

Figure 77: Massachusetts' FFY 2022 SNAP E&T Plan

<b>E&amp;T 100% Grant</b>	\$1,936,959.99
<b>ABAWD Pledge Funds</b>	\$0.00
<b>Additional E&amp;T Administrative Expenditures</b> (federally reimbursed 50% of incurred costs)	
50 Percent Federal	\$3,128,731.25
Additional 50 Percent Federal (pending FNS approval)	\$3,164,995.62
<b>Participant Supports for Transportation and Other</b> (federally reimbursed 50% of incurred costs)	
50 Percent Federal	\$348,330.75
<b>Participant Supports for Dependent Care</b> (federally reimbursed 50% of incurred costs)	
50 Percent Federal	\$116,120.00
<b>Total Approved Federal 50% Reimbursement</b>	\$3,593,182.00
<b>Total Pended Federal 50% Reimbursement</b>	\$3,164,995.62
<b>Total Planned FFY 2022 Costs</b>	\$15,453,315.22

**(3) The categories and types of individuals the State agency intends to exempt from E&T participation, the estimated percentage of work registrants the State agency plans to exempt, and the frequency with which the State agency plans to reevaluate the validity of its exemptions;**

SNAP Path to Work is a voluntary program that serves all eligible SNAP participants throughout the state in partnership with the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) and the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS),

UMass Chan and contracted SNAP Path to Work provider organizations. Regardless of whether they are subject to SNAP work requirements described in DTA regulations at 106 CMR 362.300-362.340, DTA clients are not penalized for failure to participate in the SNAP Path to Work Program.

**(4) The characteristics of the population the State agency intends to place in E&T;**

All SNAP applicants and recipients (including those whose SNAP is active at \$0) who do not also receive TAFDC and who can work following job focused education or training, job readiness, job search assistance and/or work experience participation may voluntarily participate in the SNAP Path to Work program.

SNAP clients who are subject to work rules for Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) will have the opportunity to meet the ABAWD Work Program requirement by participating in qualifying programs offered through the SNAP Path to Work program, as well as comparable community-based education and training programs, including WIOA job search, education and training activity, or self-initiated workfare placements. ABAWD participation in education and training programs offered outside of the SNAP Path to Work program are not supported by SNAP E&T funds.

Because SNAP Path to Work providers are independently operated, target varied populations, and are in different labor market areas, the State relies on the expertise of its provider organizations to determine who is a good fit for their individual programs.

If the potential participant meets SNAP E&T eligibility criteria, is motivated to work, and meets basic program prerequisites as described in the program description submitted to the State by the provider, the State will refer the client to the provider for assessment.

SNAP E&T Providers perform a comprehensive assessment of each interested SNAP participant using educational, skills, and career assessment tools to determine appropriateness for the particular E&T component and service needs. The assessment includes occupational interests, vocational skills and aptitudes, educational attainment levels, English proficiency; basic literacy skills, prior work experience, barriers to employment, and need for support services.

Assessment tools include but are not limited to: TABE Tests, HiSET, Pre-test, ESL Placement Test, Testing of Applied Mathematics, SOLOM (Student Oral Language Observation Matrix), Skills Inventory, and Myers-Briggs.

All completed assessment results are shared with DTA Central Office SNAP E&T staff via DTA's online Partner Activity Tracking Hub (PATH system). After review of the assessment information and the activity plan, eligible SNAP participants are approved for SNAP Path to Work participation.

Assessment costs are included in the costs of training program components.

**(5) The estimated number of volunteers the State agency expects to place in E&T;**

As of October 1, 2022, forty-seven contracted SNAP Path to Work providers and the statewide network of MassHire Career centers located across the state have the capacity to help as many as 4914 (duplicate count) low-income individuals gain valuable skills and increase employability through engagement in SNAP Path to Work program activity.

**(6) The geographic areas covered and not covered by the E&T Plan and why, and the type and location of services to be offered;**

SNAP Path to Work programming is offered statewide. That said, there are parts of the state where there is little to no activity outside of the WPP program which is offered through the statewide network of MassHire Career centers (for example, Western Massachusetts and the Cape Cod areas). DTA will continue provider recruitment efforts, targeting community colleges statewide and additional community-based organizations (CBOs) in these E&T desert areas. New providers will be invited to begin participating in the program as monetarily and programmatically feasible.

**(7) The method the State agency uses to count all work registrants as of the first day of the new fiscal year;**

DTA is required to establish the number of work registrants (or those subject to General SNAP Work Rules) on the SNAP caseload on October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The work registrant count is extracted from DTA's BEACON eligibility system data base based on individual SNAP recipient coding.

**(8) The method the State agency uses to report work registrant information on the quarterly Form FNS-583;**

27 CFR § 273.7(c)(6).

To determine the unduplicated count of new work registrants in Massachusetts during the federal fiscal year:

1. The total number of work registrants on the first day of the federal fiscal year are identified by:

- determining the total population of SNAP participants (applicants and recipients) between the ages of 16 and 59 (including 16 and 59), excluding those who meets exemption criteria identified at 7 CFR 273.7(b)(1).

2. On the last day of each month thereafter the total number of new work registrants for the month is determined by:

- determining the total population of SNAP participants (applicants and recipients) between the ages of 16 and 59 (including 16 and 59), excluding those who meets exemption criteria identified at 7 CFR 273.7(b)(1); and



- comparing to the resulting list to the previous lists for the fiscal year, filtering out anyone who appeared previously, to ensure that individuals who register more than once during the program year are counted only once.

DTA provides an unduplicated count of new SNAP work registrants on the FNS-583 Quarterly Program Activity Report form

**(9) The method the State agency uses to prevent work registrants from being counted twice within a Federal fiscal year. If the State agency universally work registers all SNAP applicants, this method must specify how the State agency excludes those exempt from work registration under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(b)(1). If the State agency work registers nonexempt participants whenever a new application is submitted, this method must also specify how the State agency excludes those participants who may have already been registered within the past 12 months as specified under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(a)(1)(i);**

Methodology has been described in response to previous question.

**(10) The organizational relationship between the units responsible for certification and the units operating the E&T components, including units of the Statewide workforce development system, if available. FNS is specifically concerned that the lines of communication be efficient and that noncompliance by the participant be reported to the certification unit within 10 working days after the noncompliance occurs;**

All SNAP certification activity is conducted by First Available Worker (FAW) SNAP case managers. SNAP FAW staff conduct eligibility functions, including determining work registration and ABAWD status and sharing introductory information about the availability of voluntary SNAP E&T services for eligible clients. Information collected by FAWs as part of the application, recertification and case maintenance processes is recorded in the BEACON system, where it is accessible to SNAP E&T and other DTA staff.

The Central Office SNAP Employment and Training Unit is made up of SNAP E&T management and four SNAP E&T Specialists, supported by one SNAP case manager who conducts eligibility work as needed. SNAP E&T Specialists, supported by local office Full Engagement Workers (FEWS) answer client and FAW questions about E&T program participation and refer participants to SNAP Path to Work providers for training. SNAP E&T Specialists also serve as the primary DTA contacts for and provide support to contracted SNAP Path to Work providers.

As Massachusetts operates a voluntary SNAP E&T program, there are no penalties for failing to participate in the SNAP Path to Work program. However, SNAP recipients who are subject to and choose to meet the ABAWD Work Program Requirement through program participation may become ineligible for SNAP if they fail to meet the work rules for any three months in a three-year period.

When a SNAP E&T Specialist approves SNAP Path to Work program enrollment for a person subject to the ABAWD rules, s/he records their participation within DTA's BEACON eligibility system and indicates whether or not the planned activity meets the ABAWD requirement. Each month, BEACON automatically assigns "Strikes" and ineligibility status (if applicable) to those subject to the rules who are not known to be meeting via hours worked, E&T participation, or verified workfare (volunteer) hours.

SNAP Path to Work providers report the participation status and hours of enrolled clients to DTA monthly. When the participation hours of a participant who is subject to the ABAWD rules fall below 20 hours per week, a Strike is applied unless the provider or the client has reported good cause.

**(11) The relationship between the State agency and other organizations it plans to coordinate with for the provision of services, including organizations in the Statewide workforce development system, if available. Copies of contracts must be available for inspection;**

DTA maintains an Interdepartmental Service Agreements (ISA) with UMASS Chan, who assists DTA with the administration of the SNAP E&T program, providing technical assistance, recruiting new providers, maintaining [snappathtowork.org](http://snappathtowork.org), and subcontracting with most SNAP Path to Work providers. UMASS Chan provides technical support and assists providers with claims for partial federal reimbursement of incurred costs and monitors provider compliance with federal and state E&T requirements.

DTA also maintains an ISA with the MassHire Department of Career Services, through which WPP services are funded and administered to eligible SNAP participants via the statewide MassHire Career Center network.

**(12) The availability, if appropriate, of E&T programs for Indians living on reservations after the State agency has consulted in good faith with appropriate tribal organizations;**

DTA has consulted with the two federally recognized ITOs in Massachusetts regarding the availability of Employment and Training (E&T) opportunities through DTA's SNAP Path to Work program.

The WIOA Program Manager of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Community and Government Center and an Education Program Specialist for the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) have been contacted regarding DTA's wish to expand the availability of SNAP Path to Work opportunities that are accessible and responsive to the special needs of tribal members. DTA plans to remain in contact with both tribal representatives as the State's E&T program expands to ensure that the needs of tribal members are met and to continue discussion about the possibility of the tribes

partnering with DTA to receive federal reimbursement for eligible E&T services that they provide to tribal members.

**(13) If a conciliation process is planned, the procedures that will be used when an individual fails to comply with an E&T program requirement. Include the length of the conciliation period; and**

N/A

**(14) The payment rates for childcare established in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant provisions of 45 CFR 98.43, and based on local market rate surveys.**

Childcare payment rates can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/daily-reimbursement-rate-for-early-education-and-care-programs>.

**(15) The combined (Federal/State) State agency reimbursement rate for transportation costs and other expenses reasonably necessary and directly related to participation incurred by E&T participants. If the State agency proposes to provide different reimbursement amounts to account for varying levels of expenses, for instance for greater or lesser costs of transportation in different areas of the State, it must include them here.**

SNAP Path to Work participation is supported on an as needed basis when available by provision of participant supports (participant reimbursement) including:

- Transportation;
- Dependent Care;
- Educational/Credential Test Fees;
- Books and Supplies; and
- Clothing/Uniforms.

The amount budgeted for participant supports as part of this plan does not reflect all supports that SNAP Path to Work participants may receive. Supports that are paid for using funds that do not qualify for federal reimbursement (e.g., Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) administered childcare subsidies funded by TANF monies and the Child Care Development Fund and transportation assistance that may be provided to certain E&T participants through the MBTA Youth Pass Program) are not reflected in the budget. Additionally, some providers provide things that might qualify as supports under other circumstances but issue these benefits to all program participants (included in their standard cost of program operation). For example, if books were to be included in the standard tuition for a program for all participants, regardless of SNAP status or individually identified need, this assistance would not be considered an E&T reimbursement.

SNAP Path to Work participants' need for program supports are addressed by SNAP Path to Work providers on a case-by-case basis as part of the assessment process and as the need arises thereafter. Some SNAP Path to Work participant supports reflected in this plan's budget are funded and issued directly through a SNAP Path to Work provider. Providers with the capability to do so may be partially reimbursed for issued supports, as long as supports are reasonable, necessary, and directly related to participation in the program. DTA does not impose a limit on provider issued participant support costs or dictate the method by which supports must be administered but must approve provider budgets and plans for issuing these supports for the provider to receive E&T reimbursement for these expenditures.

Beginning in February of 2019, SNAP Path to Work Providers began requesting State funded transportation supports on behalf of SNAP Path to Work participants who need it. Contracted providers assess each participant's need and record the request within the PATH system. Approved transportation supports requested on behalf of eligible program participants are made available to participants via the household's EBT card and are based on the county in which the participant lives (ranging from \$90 to \$149 per month, as determined by the average cost of transportation for each county).

The state will continue to explore ways in which we might fund additional supports and to connect E&T participants with existing barrier removing supports that are available outside of the SNAP Path to Work program.

**(16) Information about expenses the State agency proposes to reimburse. FNS must be afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed reimbursements before they are implemented.**

The participant supports described above have been approved by FNS as part of the FFY 2022 SNAP E&T State Plan.

**(b) Able-bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD)28: A State agency interested in receiving additional funding for serving able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) subject to the 3-month time limit, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. §273.7(d)(3), must include the following for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA:**

**(1) Its pledge to offer a qualifying activity to all at-risk ABAWD applicants and recipients;**

While Massachusetts is not a Pledge state at this time, DTA is committed to the economic mobility of its clients and will continue to invite SNAP-only clients, including those subject to the ABAWD work rules, to participate in Work Participant Program (WPP) through the statewide network of MassHire career centers (American Job Centers) or E&T activity through other contracted SNAP Path to Work providers. SNAP clients who are subject to the work rules for Able Bodied Adults without Dependents

(ABAWDs) will have the opportunity to meet the requirement by participating in qualifying programs offered through the SNAP Path to Work program, as well as comparable community-based education and training programs, including WIOA job search, education and training activity or self-initiated workfare placements. ABAWD participation in education and training programs offered outside of the SNAP Path to Work program are not supported by SNAP E&T funds.

**(2) Estimated costs of fulfilling its pledge;**

N/A

**(3) A description of management controls in place to meet pledge requirements;**

N/A

**(4) A discussion of its capacity and ability to serve at-risk ABAWDs;**

N/A

**Information about the size and special needs of its ABAWD population; and**

N/A

**(5) Information about the education, training, and workfare components it will offer to meet the ABAWD work requirement.**

N/A

**(c) Optional Workfare<sup>29</sup>: State agencies or other political subdivisions must describe in detail in the plan how the political subdivision, working with the State agency and any other cooperating agencies that may be involved in the program, will fulfill the provisions of 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m). If a State opts to operate an optional workfare program or modify an existing optional workfare program, through a Combined Plan under WIOA, it must provide the following: (1) State agencies or political subdivisions submitting a workfare plan must submit with the plan an operating budget covering the period from the initiation of the workfare program's implementation schedule to the close of the Federal fiscal year for each year covered by the Combined Plan. In addition, an estimate of the cost for one full year of operation must be submitted together with the workfare plan for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan.**

N/A. Massachusetts operates a comparable workfare program.

**(2) If workfare plans are submitted by more than one political subdivision, each representing the same population (such as a city within a county), FNS will determine which political subdivision will have its plan approved. Under no circumstances will a SNAP recipient be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program. If a political subdivision chooses to operate a workfare program and represents a population which is already, at least in part, subject to a SNAP workfare program administered by**

another political subdivision, it must establish in its workfare plan how SNAP recipients will not be subject to more than one SNAP workfare program.

29 7 CFR § 273.7(m)

30 7 CFR § 273.7(m)(8)

N/A. Massachusetts operates a comparable workfare program.

**(d) Voluntary Workfare<sup>30</sup>:** State agencies and political subdivisions may operate workfare programs whereby participation by SNAP recipients is voluntary. In such a program, the penalties for failure to comply, as provided in 7 C.F.R. §273.7(f), will not apply for noncompliance. The number of hours to be worked will be negotiated between the household and the operating agency, though not to exceed the limits provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(5)(ii). In addition, all protections provided under 7 C.F.R. §273.7(m)(6)(i) shall continue to apply. Those State agencies and political subdivisions choosing to operate such a program shall indicate in their workfare plan how their staffing will adapt to anticipated and unanticipated levels of participation for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA. FNS will not approve plans which do not show that the benefits of the workfare program, in terms of hours worked by participants and reduced SNAP allotments due to successful job attainment, are expected to exceed the costs of such a program. In addition, if FNS finds that an approved voluntary program does not meet this criterion, FNS reserves the right to withdraw approval.

N/A. Massachusetts operates a comparable workfare program.

**(e) Comparable Workfare<sup>31</sup>:** The State agency or political subdivision must provide a description of its program, including a methodology for ensuring compliance with 7 C.F.R §273.7(m)(9)(ii) for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA.

- 31 7 CFR § 273.7(m)(9)
- 32 7 CFR § 273.7(c)(8)
- 33 7 CFR § 273.7(c)(8)

DTA operates a self-directed (comparable) workfare program that is not supported by E&T funds. A SNAP recipient who is subject to the ABAWD rules may elect to meet the work requirement by volunteering at a non-profit, public, or quasi-public organization for a number of hours equal to the ABAWDs portion of the household's monthly SNAP grant divided by Massachusetts' minimum wage. Clients are encouraged to contact Central Office SNAP Path to Work staff prior to starting volunteer work to confirm that the selected organization qualifies as a workfare site. One way that a client may elect to show proof of compliance with the ABAWD Work Program Requirement is by submitting verification of completed volunteer hours. Volunteer work that is completed without prior approval must be validated before ABAWD Work Program compliance is recorded.

DTA has established relationships with nearly 100 non-profit, public, or quasi-public organizations that have agreed to host ABAWD volunteers. Those seeking volunteer opportunities may locate potential organizations via [snappathtowork.org](http://snappathtowork.org), contact Central Office SNAP Path to Work staff via the SNAP Path to Work Line for assistance. Workfare placements recommendations are made based on the client's location, language, experience, transportation needs, and Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) status.

**(f) Process32:** The State agency must submit amendments to the SNAP E&T segment of the Combined Plan for FNS approval at least 30 days prior to the planned implementation in order to receive federal SNAP E&T funding for the activities not covered by the approved Combined Plan.

**(g) Plan Modifications33:** If FNS determines that the performance of a State agency with respect to employment and training outcomes is inadequate, FNS may require the State agency to make modifications to the State E&T plan to improve the outcomes.

***Funding Disclaimer: Funds may not be available when SNAP E&T portions of a Combined State Plan under WIOA are approved. FNS's obligation after approving a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is contingent upon the availability of an appropriation from which payment can be made. Any FNS funding resulting from an approval of a SNAP E&T plan submitted as part of a Combined State Plan is subject to FNS receiving sufficient funds (in the Program Financial Control System for FNS) to fund this and all prior approved SNAP E&T plans submitted as part of a Combined State Plan in their entirety in the time and date order received. Federal reimbursement to States for 50 percent of State administrative expenditures and for participant reimbursements is subject to the above conditions.***

29 7 U.S.C. 2025(h)(5)(E) as amended by Agricultural Act of 2014.

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#### TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

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5. The TAA program is a required partner in the MassHire delivery system, established under section 121 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Therefore, given that the TAA program is part of the broader workforce system and a key goal for the TAA program is to ensure that trade-affected workers are able to successfully return to work, ETA strongly encourages States to integrate their TAA program activities in concert with other workforce system core and partner programs that may also address the needs of trade-affected workers. WIOA Sec. 103(3)(A)(B). Consistent with the Governor-Secretary Agreement, the States agree to use funds obligated under the TAA Annual Cooperative Financial Agreement (CFA), to carry out the TAA program, including: 1) ensuring integration of the TAA program into its MassHire delivery system; 2) using the centers in this system or network as the main point of participant intake and delivery of TAA

program benefits and services; and 3) ensuring the terms of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the Local Workforce Investment Boards, as established under WIOA section 121(c) will apply to the assistance provided by other MassHire partners to TAA participants. (Trade Act Sec. 239 (a) as amended by WIOA section 512 (hh))

Describe the State's process for operating the TAA program that ensures coordination and integration with WIOA core and partner programs. Provide examples, if available, of how the co-location of Wagner-Peyser in MassHire centers and the addition of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), have improved access to these services for trade-affected workers.

Since July 2007, the Trade Programs have been integrated into the customer flow of a career center. In Massachusetts TAA individuals are identified as dislocated workers and are treated as such.

TAARRNEG, a component of the MOSES database, assists in tracking benefits and services to potential and eligible TAA workers. Referrals are made to the career center of choice upon layoff date. The state also compiles a list of those workers who have filed UI claims against the company from the impact date to present through interfaces with the Massachusetts UI Online system and receives updates to those lists to provide notice to individual workers regarding the TAA Program.

Training is regularly conducted for all career center staff. All Trade policies are disseminated to staff and posted through Workforce Issuances for the career centers and the public to research and obtain.

The Massachusetts Trade Unit operates on a team concept that promotes statewide consistency in the provision of TAA services. The Trade Unit's business plan includes process improvements on a number of existing initiatives as well as the review of existing and the development of new processes and procedures. All services and processes are continually evaluated and improved as part of a continuous improvement strategy. This strategy continues with core and required partners under WIOA.

6. States must develop and manage resources (including electronic case management systems) to integrate data, including co-enrollment data, provided through different agencies administering benefits and services to trade-affected workers in order to ensure consistent program administration and fiscal integrity, as well as reliable fiscal and performance reporting. (WIOA section 103(b)(3))

Describe how the State will use TAA funding for infrastructure, other shared costs, and the promotion of the development of integrated intake, case management and reporting systems.

The Trade Unit oversees and monitors the timeliness of local MassHire Career Center assistance to customers with the application process for UI benefits, training services,



and other related program allowances provided in conjunction with other federal and state programs including access to services, (i.e., testing and initial and comprehensive assessment) and case management services consistent with state policy.

The following services are offered to all Trade Adjustment Assistance eligible customers:

- Rapid Response services
- Trade information and services follow up (Trade Orientations either onsite at the company or at the MassHire Career Center locations)
- Individual career counseling, use of assessment tools (i.e., TORQ) and testing (Career Ready 101/WorkKeys)
- Case management  
A full menu of workshops and access to LMI type resources (i.e., O\*Net, MassCIS),
- Training assistance
- Proactive job development services

Trade will continue to utilize and allocate case management and reemployment funds to local areas. As directed to local areas, in addition to covering staffing costs for career counselors, the “employment and case management services” funding may also be used for: assessment tests, skills transferability analysis, peer counselors, development and provision of labor market information, maintenance and enhancement of electronic case management systems to allow for improved case management services, information on available training, including provider performance and cost information; and, any other staff costs related to case management. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive.

7. Except for States covered by the regulatory exemption 20 CFR 618.890 (c) or to perform non-inherently governmental functions, States must engage only State government personnel to perform TAA-funded functions undertaken to carry out the TAA program, and must apply to such personnel the standards for a merit system of personnel administration applicable to personnel covered under 5 CFR part 900, subpart F. (20 CFR 618.890)

Describe how TAA program-funded benefits and services are approved by merit-staffed employees in accordance with 20 CFR 618.890.

Although Trade customers flow through and receive access to benefits and services at the local career center level, all applications, and requests for benefits, both TAA training, waivers from training, job search and relocation allowances, RTAA and TRA, are submitted via MOSES or UI Online and a determination is issued by central merit-based staff located at MDCS or DUA, respectfully. There are also multiple interfaces between the two systems to allow accurate and timely processing.

**Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program Assurances**

The State Plan must include assurances that:	
1.	On an annual basis, the CSA will execute TAA Cooperative Financial Agreements and UI Funding Agreements for each fiscal year during the four-year State planning cycle.

**Massachusetts Response:**

On an annual basis, MDCS and DUA, respectively, will continue to execute and adhere to the conditions within the TAA Cooperative Financial Agreements and UI Funding Agreements for each fiscal year during the four-year State planning cycle.

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## **JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS**

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The Jobs for Veterans' State Grants (JVSG) are mandatory, formula-based staffing grants to 54 State Workforce Agencies, (including DC, PR, VI and Guam) to hire dedicated staff to provide Individualized Career Services to Veterans and eligible persons with significant barriers to employment (SBE); and to assist employers fill open positions with veteran job candidates.

The JVSG Program supports the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist, (DVOP) and Local Veteran Employment Representative, (LVER) positions. DVOP Specialists provide Individualized Career Services to Veterans with significant barriers to employment, (SBE) prioritizing services to veterans who are; homeless, service-connected disabled, Vocational Rehabilitation Program participants, and Veterans that are economically and educationally disadvantaged. The JVSG Program is funded annually in accordance with a funding formula determined by the total number of Veterans seeking employment in Massachusetts compared to the total number in all states. The JVSG Program operates on a fiscal funding year, (not program year) basis, however, performance metrics are collected and reported using the ETA-9173 Report quarterly (using four "rolling quarters") in a Program Year basis. The JVSG Program is part of the Massachusetts Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined Four Year State plan. JVSG grant recipients are required to provide Priority of Service to Veterans and covered persons in accordance with 38USC 4215. Massachusetts Proudly Serves those who served by providing Priority of Service to Veterans. The term qualified job-training program means any workforce preparation, development, or delivery program or service that is funded in whole or in part by Department of Labor. The term Priority of Service means with respect to any qualified job training program, that Veterans and covered persons receive priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services. As a condition to receive funding, 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c)(2) also requires States to submit an application for a grant that contains a Combined State Plan narrative, which includes:

### **(a) How the State intends to provide employment, training and job placement services to Veterans and eligible persons under the JVSG;**

All customers who appear for services at the Career Center, either online or in person are asked if they are a Veteran. If the customer identifies as a Veteran, they are immediately informed of their Priority of Service status. Career Center staff first offer the Veteran a spot in the next Career Center Seminar (orientation) the main portal into the Massachusetts Workforce Development and Career Center System.

This orientation provides all customers including Veteran's information on, and access to, the full array of services, programs and activities available at or accessible from the Career Center. As part of the orientation the Veteran will complete a self-assessment of their work search strategies, if appropriate, complete the Career Readiness 101 assessment, complete a job profile with a career counselor and establish the next appropriate steps in their Career Plan. If it is determined that the Veteran has an SBE

during the initial assessment or triage, the Veteran is referred to the DVOP for Individual Career Services.

If the Veteran customer prefers not to attend a CCS, they are provided with information on the full array of services available and scheduled for the next appropriate service. If they asked to speak with a Veteran representative (DVOP), they are also be referred to that Veteran representative.

**(b) The duties assigned to DVOP specialists and LVER staff by the State; specifically implementing DVOP and LVER duties or roles and responsibilities as outlined in 38 U.S.C. § 4103A and 4104. These duties must be consistent with current guidance;**

The primary role of the DVOP staff is to guide Veterans with significant barriers into employment who are most in need of Individualized Career Services. Refer to VPL 03-19 Designation of Additional Populations Eligible for DVOP Services, 03-14 changes 1 and 2, Expansion and Clarification of Significant Barriers to Employment, VPL 03-14 JVSG Program Reforms and Roles and Responsibilities of staff serving veterans. For those Veteran customers who do not face significant employment barriers, the Commonwealth relies heavily on its WIOA partners (particularly Wagner-Peyser) to provide the services typically sought by such “job ready” individuals.

All eligible Veterans seeking employment receive Individualized Career Services from DVOP or Career Center staff, through the framework of Career Planning, which is consistent with NVTI training. The responsibility of serving these “most in need” Veterans falls primarily on grant funded DVOP staff. Massachusetts will continue to “case manage” Veterans from the above categories by a DVOP whenever possible (based on the state staffing plan and taking into consideration the best interests of the individual Veteran).

According to the Massachusetts One-Stop Career Center Activity Report (OSCCAR) for PY21, approximately 46% of the Veterans receiving an approved service at the MassHire Career Centers either service-connected disability or were economically or educationally disadvantaged; or had an SBE as defined by DOL/VETS. Prioritizing services to these targeted Veteran categories is facilitated by specifically “flagging” such “at risk” Veteran customers within the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) database.

LVER staff advocate for employment and training opportunities with business, industry, and community-based organizations in order to secure gainful employment for SBE and Veteran customers. The LVER will establish regional job fairs and job search workgroups that include veterans; promote credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans, and job driven apprenticeship opportunities for veterans. The LVER is responsible for improving access into the appropriate employment and training service for all veterans within our employment service delivery system. The Commonwealth’s LVER will work closely with efforts of the Governor’s Workforce Skills Cabinet, MassHire BizWorks and Core Partners to advocate for employment and

training opportunities with business, industry and community-based organizations, and conduct job development activities in order to secure gainful employment for Veteran customers. This association can also assist with marketing and support of the Department of Labor VETS Hire Vets Medallion Program, (HVMP) throughout Massachusetts. The LVER will outreach to federal contractors and training providers, and coordinate with the Office of Federal Contracting Compliance (OFCCP), to ensure that Veterans are receiving priority in employment opportunities by federal contractors.

**(c) The manner in which DVOP specialists and LVER staff are integrated into the State's Employment service delivery system or MassHire delivery system partner network;**

The Commonwealth's Career Centers are fully and seamlessly integrated with the full array of WIOA Title I, Wagner-Peyser and other key workforce partner services co-located under one roof. The goal is to as quickly as possible deliver the desired and appropriate services. Integration also means that initial services provided to eligible Veterans are primarily provided by staff other than DVOPs.

The initial assessment identifies the individual's "job readiness". If the Veteran is not disadvantaged, (SBE) services are provided on a priority basis by Career Center staff. If individualized services are appropriate, a case plan is developed, and the Veteran is assisted directly by the DVOP or referred to supportive services as appropriate.

As an example of integration, a Veteran in need of additional training/schooling to be more employable is "fast tracked" through the eligibility determination and enrollment process. In such a situation, the Veteran's primary case manager may well be another Career Center staff member that will provide case management rather than the DVOP.

This integration applies to other Career Center partners as well, including Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, state colleges and universities. At the state level, and working throughout the system, key partnerships exist with Veterans Administration hospitals and counseling centers. The VA is represented at local Career Center Veteran events (job fairs, information sessions). DVOP staff also outreach to VA hospitals and centers on a regular basis. The Commonwealth has designated a DVOP as the Individualized Services Coordinator for the Vocational and Rehabilitation Program (VR&E). This individual is co-located with VA's state level VR&E coordinator. The VR&E/ISC team conducts regional training sessions for all DVOP staff and additional training for regional VA counselors on the VR&E regulations and reporting requirements, as needed.

A second key partnership exists with the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Services (DVS). Through this agency, each Commonwealth town and municipality has an assigned Veterans' Services Officer to provide a wide range of benefits and services to Veterans. Cross training and relationship building at the state and local level have

enhanced our ability to quickly address the needs of Veterans. Both the VA and the DVS regularly participate in local, regional, and statewide Veterans' programs, events, and training sessions.

Outreach and linkage to those Veterans most in need of individualized services is an ongoing top priority. Local DVOPs have direct contact and coordination with homeless Veteran shelters (HVRP grantees) to provide direct services and training program opportunities leading to gainful employment and self-sufficiency. Included in these outreach efforts are broad-based marketing and promotion of Veteran-oriented events, job fairs and education/training programs.

Linkage to employers occurs because our LVER is regionally aligned with our robust Career Center business services teams to address Veterans' employment opportunities in an integrated, full-service manner. Utilizing available tools such as Work Opportunity Tax Credit and state training grants, the teams promote the benefits of hiring Veterans. There is a direct focus on federal contractors as well, assisting them with posting their openings through the Career Center system.

Massachusetts makes a concerted effort at the regional and local level to link training vendors, employers, and Veterans. Programs in in demand careers such as "bio-medical" and advanced manufacturing are being designed and run specifically for Veterans.

**(d) The Incentive Award program implemented using the 1% grant allocation set aside for this purpose, as applicable;**

Massachusetts will utilize the 1% set-aside Performance Incentive Award funding for this four-year period. The incentive will be used to reward MassHire Career Centers that lead the state in demonstrated services to Veterans. Application for the nominations for the incentive awards begins in August of each year. Nominations are reviewed and winners are selected in September. All funds are obligated by September 30, of each year and funds are expended by December 31 of each year. Incentive Award report is submitted in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter each year.

The award recognizes the entire staff of a Massachusetts MassHire Career Center, not just a Veterans' unit or Veterans' staff, which demonstrates excellence and dedication in the provision of quality employment, training and placement services to United States Veterans and other eligible persons.

The award recognizes a Career Center that has made a substantial contribution or effort to:

- Improve and modernize employment and placement services, as well as training opportunities for Veterans and other eligible persons.
- Reward and celebrate excellence in the provision of "Priority of Service" and integration of services to Veterans and other eligible persons at the Career

Center.

- Improve performance outcomes for Veterans and other eligible persons.
- Establish strong working partnerships with other Veteran organizations and/or the community at large to improve services to Veterans and other eligible persons and;
- Design and develop innovations, approaches, and supportive services etc., in short best practices that demonstrate the Career Centers commitment to excellence in provision of quality employment and training services to Veterans and other eligible persons.
- Strong Veteran Career Planning and counseling techniques leading to employment outcomes.

Completed nominations are reviewed and ranked by Veteran Employment, Training, and Central Program Units. Monetary Incentive Awards are made annually to the highest scoring Career Centers that made a concerted, measurable effort to attain high standards in the provision of services to Veterans most in need. The individual amounts may be divided as in the following example:

GOLD:	\$11,000
SILVER:	\$9,000
BRONZE:	\$6,000
RISING STAR:	\$3,000

Funds are awarded to the lead operators of the recognized MassHire Career Centers for specific center needs such as computer hardware/software; resource room or library materials; transfer to training accounts; or other office-wide uses.

A portion of the Incentive Awards supports MDCS awardee attendance at the National Association of State Workforce Agency Veterans Conference.

**(e) The populations of Veterans to be served, including any additional populations designated by the Secretary as eligible for services, and any additional populations specifically targeted by the State Workforce Agency for services from MassHire delivery system partners (e.g., Native American Veterans; Veterans in remote rural counties or parishes);**

Under this plan, service priority for JVSG staff will be targeted to:

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities;
- Veterans Between the Ages of 18-24;
- Recently-separated Veterans who Exited Military Service within the last 36 months and have not worked for the last 27 weeks
- Homeless, as defined in Section 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11302(a) and (b) as amended;

- An offender, as defined by WIA Section 101(27), who is incarcerated or has been released from incarceration;
- Lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate;
- Low-income (as defined by WIA at Sec. 101(25)(B)).
- Wounded Warriors in military treatment facilities and their family caregivers,
- Vietnam and Vietnam-Era Veterans

**(f) How the State implements and monitors the administration of priority of service to covered persons;** *Per Grant Officer Memorandum 01-20, a response to this section is not required.*

**(g) How the State provides or intends to provide and measure, through both the DVOP and MassHire delivery system partner staff: (1) job and job training individualized career services, (2) employment placement services, and (3) job-driven training and subsequent placement service program for eligible Veterans and eligible persons;** *Per Grant Officer Memorandum 01-20, a response to this section is not required.*

**(h) The hire date along with mandatory training completion dates for all DVOP specialists and LVER staff; and Per 38 USC 4102A(c)(2);(iii) For each employee of the State who is assigned to perform the duties of a disabled veterans' outreach program specialist or a local veterans' employment representative under this chapter- (I) the date on which the employee is so assigned; and (II) whether the employee has satisfactorily completed such training by the National Veterans' Employment and Training Services Institute as the Secretary requires for purposes of paragraph (8).**

A copy of the VETS 501 listing DVOP and LVER staff and vacancies including mandatory training completion dates can be found in attachment O.

**(i) Such additional information as the Secretary may require.**

*Per Grant Officer Memorandum 01-20, a response to this section is not required.*



**MASSACHUSETTS STATE QUALITY SERVICE PLAN  
OCTOBER 1, 2018 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2020  
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Please also refer to the following documents in Attachment N:

- SQSP Corrective Action Plan
- Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance Organizational Chart
- SQSP Signature Page
- SF424
- SQSP Transmittal Letter

**STATE PLAN NARRATIVE**

**A. OVERVIEW**

**B. FEDERAL EMPHASIS (GPRA GOALS)**

- Improving State Capacity to Administer and Operate the UI Program Effectively
- Improving Prevention, Detection and Recovery of UI Improper Payments
- Improving Program Performance
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- Reemployment of UI Claimants
- Addressing Worker Misclassification
- Strategic Goal– Make Timely Benefit Payments
- Strategic Goal - Detect Benefit Overpayments
- Strategic Goal - Establish Tax Accounts Promptly
- Strategic Goal– Employment Rate at 2nd Quarter After Exit

**C. PROGRAM REVIEW DEFICIENCIES**

**D. PROGRAM DEFICIENCIES**

**E. I. REPORTING DEFICIENCIES**

**F. CUSTOMER SERVICES**

**G. OTHER**

## **ASSURANCES**

### **Assurance of Contingency Planning**

### **Assurance of Automated Information Systems Security**

## **STATE PLAN NARRATIVE**

### **A. OVERVIEW**

In July of 2013 Massachusetts launched UI Online, a web-based, self-service benefits system designed to improve the customer service experience and overall service delivery to UI customers. For the last five years, we have been working to improve and enhance the UI Online system in order to deliver on its promise. Much of the improvement we have seen is attributable to both more effective incorporation of the system into our business processes and improvement in the functioning of the system. While we have benefitted from our staff becoming more accustomed to these changes and improved communication with our claimants, including in their primary language, more work must be done. During FY19, we will be conducting an internal review of our online system to determine, over the long-term, the best pathway forward for our program and the services we deliver to our customers. While that work is underway, in parallel, we will be executing to our strategic plan.

#### **This Plan focuses on:**

- a. Improving the Measurement and Management of our CAPS;**
- b. Focusing on the core UI program fundamentals;**
- c. Maintaining the progress we have made; and**
- d. Targeted, prioritized plans to get better**

**Mass DUA's values, philosophy, and vision are captured in our Mission Statement:**

***Our job is to get it right the first time, and to do so timely, while:***

- Delivering friendly and professional service to all of our customers;***
- Protecting the UI Trust Fund, and combating fraud in all forms;***
- Reliably assisting claimants with temporary income replacement and re-employment efforts;***
- Helping businesses grow and prosper in Massachusetts; and***
- Equipping our team with tools and training to empower our staff and challenge them to be the best.***

Like many UI programs nationally we are faced with reduced resources due to a strong economy. In March of 2016, we announced a reduction in force and closed two of our

call center offices. During that time, DUA engaged Accenture to assist in the review of our call center operations, tax processes and UI system operations. Their work helped quantify needed remedies, advocate for service delivery changes and gave the agency a roadmap for ongoing improvement and planning for a more flexible workforce.

Today, we continue to implement a number of the recommendations made by Accenture. However, by the end of calendar year 2018, we anticipated closing a third call center location, as the lease agreement in that location is expiring. The recent reduction of our administrative funding, and unclear funding future, has presented us with some challenging financial and management decisions. We will continue to operate two call center locations, and are pleased to be begin working with Zelus, who will be assisting us with a business process redesign and call center optimization effort. This work began in September of 2018 with the intent of implementing additional strategies in FY19.

In March of 2017, our organization experienced the sudden and unexpected passing of our former UI Director. This loss impacted the DUA team in a profound way both personally and professionally. After taking the time to mourn this loss, we have since regrouped, changes have been made at key leadership positions, and the important work that we do is moving forward. DUA has a new UI Director as well as new senior leadership in the Benefits, Tax, and Legal areas. The reconstituted leadership team is working together as a cohesive unit and delivering results. DUA has had two large project successes to build from.

November of 2017, DUA migrated its UI Online system and Data Warehouse to the cloud, becoming the first state with a comprehensive tax and benefits system to do so. The migration was highly successful, with only minimal disruption to our customers during a planned and communicated cutover window. We now provide our users with a more reliable and secure platform to conduct business and deliver services.

Second, in the Spring of 2018, DUA implemented a new state mandated employer tax called the Employer Medical Assistance Contribution Supplement assessment. The new assessment required the drafting and filing of new regulations as well as the building of new functionality in the UI Online system. This work was completed on time and, in line with our Mission Statement, was done right the first time. Our collections are strong and our successful customer service delivery model in this area is being replicated across the UI Tax teams. This project, while complicated and challenging, presented an opportunity for our newly restructured team to work on a project with a tight statutorily defined timeline and show that by working together we can deliver results.

Going forward, by working together, we are confident that we can improve our program performance to a level that the people of Massachusetts both deserve and expect. We have no intention of continuing on as a high priority state. We have the experience, commitment, and plan to become a high performing state. Changes have been made, and more are coming. Business process redesigns to make timely first

payments and timely non-monetary determinations have been implemented with further optimization, increasing scrutiny, and deeper evaluation imminent. Significant projects are already underway in the Revenue Enforcement and Program Integrity areas. A brand-new building to house call center and hearings operations is being designed for our Brockton location, with construction scheduled in late calendar year 2019. We are optimistic about our future, both in the near and long term. We have a plan to achieve and sustain success. It is outlined herein.

**FY 2020 Update:**

As we begin the second year of the two-year cycle and continue all of the work outlined in our year one submittal, we take this opportunity to provide an update on four major initiatives underway at DUA.

**First**, DUA has completed the internal review of our online system referenced above. During that exercise, we discovered that the opportunity exists to streamline the user experience for our customers and thus, we have embarked on a new strategic direction. On August 16, 2019, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development published a Request for Information (RFI) to begin the process of examining future possibilities. The purpose of the RFI is to gather information from consultants and advisors in the following areas: a) strategically redesigning business processes to maximize effectiveness; b) delivering a recommendation for a customer-focused multi-agency technology system; and c) creating a data management strategy and plan that results in valid data on an ongoing basis. A copy of the RFI was shared with members of both the USDOL National and Regional offices shortly after publishing.

**Second**, DUA is nearing the completion of a major technology project in our existing UI Online system that will significantly improve our Revenue Collections and Enforcement effort. These improvements include the implementation of both the Federal and State Tax Intercept programs, among a number of other functionality upgrades. Most of the work on this project was completed in August, with remaining items scheduled for deployment in early Autumn 2019.

**Third**, DUA began a new UI Online technology improvement project aimed at improving our timely first payment and time lapse metrics via smarter workflow assignment logic. The intent of this work is to align system workflow assignment logic with state and federal performance goals, increase visibility into and accountability for the completion of tasks, and to provide improved reporting to support management decision making. It is anticipated that this project will be completed by the end of FY 2020.

**Fourth**, DUA is deeply engaged with the NASWA Integrity Center in a combined effort to reduce the UI Improper Payment Rate in Massachusetts. Members of the Integrity Center have made multiple on-site visits with the DUA team and have delivered an extensive set of recommendations for consideration. These recommendations range

from policy changes to training initiatives to technology improvements. These recommendations were formulated into an action plan to be executed in the upcoming year. Final signoff of the plan is complete, and the project work is underway.

## **B. FEDERAL EMPHASIS (GPRA GOALS)**

### **Improving State Capacity to Administer and Operate the UI Program Effectively**

We have a mission statement at DUA which drives our priorities. Timely First Pay, Timely Hearings, Employer Registration, Overpayment Detection, and Collections Metrics are a few of the many agency-wide standards for success included in the Management Goal and Performance Reviews for every manager at DUA. All Managers are all being measured based on the success of the whole, as well as their individual contributions.

To emphasize the importance of program performance, in Massachusetts, the Director of our UI Performs Department was reassigned and that department now reports directly to the UI Director. The UI Performs Department is responsible for leading our BAM, BTQ, TPS, and Data Validation effort. In addition, a new Director of Benefit Performance, with many years of UI program experience, was hired from the USDOL Regional Office to bring a new perspective to our team. These two departments now conduct regular and mandatory crosswalk meetings to evaluate program performance, make effective use of available data sets, and provide program improvement recommendations to the UI Director.

In addition, DUA quickly and enthusiastically embraced the UI State Self-Assessment Tool. We have dedicated an experienced and knowledgeable full-time supervisor to this work and embedded this person within our UI Performs Department. We are well on our way to completing all fifteen functions by the April 2019 deadline, with nearly half of the work already submitted. The Self-Assessment work was made a priority by senior leadership with full cooperation and expectation. Operational improvements have already been identified, particularly in the initial claims functions, and more good work is anticipated. We have invested in this tool, and results are already being realized.

In 2016 DUA worked with Accenture to develop a capacity model of claims-taking and adjudication, so we can use flexible staffing in the future, to better deal with seasonal needs. This capacity model has been helpful during the annual peak periods in our business cycle and we will continue to use it in the foreseeable future. In September of 2018 we began working with Zelus to add onto the work already done with Accenture and further examine how we can do more with less in a dwindling funding environment. We continue to emphasize the importance of making payment when due, and our upcoming business process redesign initiative will be conducted with that goal at the forefront.

In August of 2017, at our request, we engaged with the NASWA UI Integrity Center and asked members of their team to perform on site Integrity Services. Four experienced UI subject matter experts visited with our team over the course of four days to examine our BPC and Tax Collection departments. At the end of calendar year 2017, the NASWA team delivered a comprehensive report to the UI Director complete with actionable and realistic goals for program improvement. We have since turned that report into a project plan, with items prioritized and implementation timelines determined. Today, we are marching forward with this plan, with the recent implementation of a credit card payment option for claimant overpayments a notable success.

We communicate regularly with other states and we will continue to collaborate with peers to find best practices across our organization. This continuous expansion of our professional networks and contacts has led to a recent partnership with the states of Florida and New Mexico on a disaster recovery agreement where, in the event of a disaster, we have agreed to assist one another with claim intake. A copy of this agreement has been shared with the USDOL Regional Office and we would be pleased to discuss with others how we arrived at this agreement. These collaborations are often inspired by and initiated through conversations and conferences with NASWA, the UI Integrity Center, ITSC, the Regional Office and others. They are invaluable and DUA will continue to be engaged in these opportunities.

Staff training continues to be an area of much discussion and we are exploring different ways to be successful. An internal, fully comprehensive, centralized training department continues to be our need and our vision. Much of our internal training has historically been focused on initial claims and adjudication training programs and we are in the process of fully updating our adjudication handbook. While those trainings are important, the UI program is made up of many interconnected parts, and training should be offered in all areas. In June of 2017 we hosted on site Fraud Investigator training offered by the UI Integrity Center, and earlier this year sent additional team members to the in-person Fraud Investigator training in New Hampshire. We are pleased to see more online course offerings through the National Integrity Academy and expect to continue to take advantage of those certificate programs.

As agencies evolve, staffing changes are needed and retirements inevitable. DUA has begun the process of identifying junior leaders, providing them with project leadership and promotional opportunities. Rosalin Acosta, Secretary of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, implemented a “Chat on 21” initiative where, on a monthly basis, her agency heads are asked to select a member of their organization to meet with the Secretary for an informal chat, ask her about the Secretariat vision, and so on. DUA has leveraged the Chat on 21 initiative to provide junior level performers with executive level exposure. This initiative has been very well received and provides potential junior leaders with an opportunity they might not otherwise experience for many years down the road.

### ***Improving Prevention, Detection, and Recovery of UI Improper Payments***

Massachusetts is deeply engaged with the NASWA UI Integrity Center and views the UI Integrity Center as a critical partner to our success in this area both in the immediate as well as on a going forward basis. We are in regular attendance at the NASWA National Integrity Conference, have participated on the planning committee for the conference, and recently were asked to be a guest panelist. As stated previously, we have already taken advantage of on-site Integrity Services, have both hosted and attended Academy classroom trainings, and were an early sign on state for the Suspicious Actor Repository, or Data Hub. We are very much at the table for all UI Integrity Center conversations and enjoy regular contact and communication with our regional liaison.

In addition to our work with the UI Integrity Center, we are in the process of reviewing and implementing updates to the weekly certification questions offered online and via the IVR. Claimant compliance with our states work search requirements is an area of focus, and our expectation is that reworking some of the language in the questions will capture more results and diminish overpayments.

Recent outreach efforts with organizations like the Association of Unemployment Tax Organizations, ADP, Equifax, and others have opened lines of communication and provided opportunities to reintroduce important topics like adequacy and failure to timely respond. We have had some recent success with Equifax in particular with respect to timely response, and future conference calls are scheduled with members of AUTO to spread a broader message, provide opportunities for feedback and the exchange of ideas. Massachusetts is not currently participating in the State Information Data Exchange System but remains open to a dialogue on that subject as we evaluate our online system in the coming year.

Revenue Enforcement has been prioritized as the major area of focus for our organization during the second half of calendar year 2018 and into 2019. The tax portion of the UI Online system was implemented in December of 2009. Since its inception, there have been pieces of that functionality that have required improvement. We will be investing significant agency resources to this area and have set out a ten-part project plan to improve enforcement overall. These include a major upgrade to the tax UI Online system functionality, participation in both the State and Federal tax intercept programs, multiple licensing enforcement partnerships within the Commonwealth, and a number of other critical projects designed to improve collections and accounts receivables. We have already implemented a credit card payment option, instituted a court judgement program through our legal department, and partnered with multiple sheriff counties on an incarceration data initiative.

### ***Improving Program Performance***

DUA believes in accountability and we share our results routinely with the Regional Office, as well as the Mass Secretary of Labor, to show where we are in our metrics.

We report these metrics to our team often, including some on a daily basis in stand-up meetings across the claim centers.

As stated above, DUA is also a strong proponent of the UI Performs programs. We have both invested in those programs and raised their profile within our organization. There is a natural connection between the BAM program and BPC. Leadership in those areas now meets regularly to improve our program. We have a Data Validation Steering Committee which includes the UI Director. Bi-weekly meetings are held, DV progress is tracked, and numerous enhancements relative to DV have been implemented in the UI Online system in recent months. We have a strong appreciation for the Data Validation program and are committed to being measured so we know how to get better.

Importantly, we incorporate learning from the BAM and BTQ programs, as well as TPS and DV, into our operations. BTQ is linked to our Policy, Training and Call Monitoring programs, to ensure a full picture to best learn and train. We have placed an importance on the UI State Self-Assessment Tool where we are both proud of our progress are actively using the tool to improve.

DUA acknowledges its current high priority status and cares very deeply about program performance improvement. The State Quality Service Plan, and the Corrective Action Plans in particular, are compiled through the efforts of many people across the organization. To validate its investment in the SQSP process, Massachusetts participated as a pilot state for the new CAPS workbook when it was introduced several years ago. Our quarterly CAP updates are routinely submitted on time and we welcome additional technical assistance from our colleagues at the regional office as we work on our joint commitment to performance excellence.

### ***Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)***

DUA is party to every local workforce MOU on WIOA and has signed onto the Combined Plan for Massachusetts. While admittedly challenging to participate actively in all the planning sessions of the 16 Workforce Boards, DUA is working to ensure both our voice is heard and our concerns are met in these discussions. We are dedicated to the program and will continue to be a primary partner in all the MassHire Career Centers.

We worked with our partners to ensure we met the requirements of wage matching for their WIOA reporting, in accordance with Federal and Massachusetts law and regulation. DUA signed MOUs with WIOA partners for data sharing and ensured we provided the data needed for our partners to comply with WIOA reporting requirements.

DUA has a long history and a current continued commitment to provide walk-in service across the Commonwealth, within career centers. Beyond the requirements of WIOA, UI services are available at career centers plus one UI-only walk-in center in Boston.

This year, we reduced the amount DUA funded to those career centers and our future funding levels are uncertain due to recent administrative funding reductions. Our



existing service delivery model is under review, with important conversations upcoming during the fall of 2018. We continue to believe that a deeper integration between UI and Reemployment Services is needed and are excited about some of the innovative ideas that are on the table for discussion internally.

We are continuing our work with the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) and other WIOA partners on a common intake system, which will allow registration for work along with the beginning of the claims process. With nearly 80% of our initial claimants using UI Online, we are prime candidates to integrate our claimants with MDCS for an electronic registration and assessment system. In the coming year, we anticipate introducing online resume builder job matching software to UI claimants.

A law change in 2016 allowed DUA to more freely share information with MDCS, to help them achieve their goals. While confidentiality rules apply, this strengthened our partnership with our sister agency, and makes collaboration with MDCS for WIOA much smoother. The career centers in Massachusetts are currently in the midst of an exciting and game changing rebranding initiative. Under the new brand, called MassHire, all career centers will have a singular name bringing unity and a joint vision to a large and integral workforce system.

Other places we have and will continue to partner with MDCS in the spirit of many of our joint programs include: Workshare, RESEA, TRA/TAA, Rapid Response, and the Training Opportunities Program (Section 30) that provides extended UI benefits in conjunction with MDCS approved trainers. We continue to employ a DUA/MDCS Integration Manager, who co-leads bi-weekly DUA/MDCS meetings, further underscoring the value of our partnership and recognizing the important work we can only achieve together.

### ***Reemployment of UI Claimants***

Massachusetts has a strong RESEA program and we are expanding our efforts in this area, as referenced above. Our work in a common intake system, while available for WIOA, is inspired by our desire to get job seekers connected with MDCS immediately, as part of an integrated benefit process.

A recent law change in Massachusetts extended the application period for Section 30, to 20 weeks from 15. This highlights a work-around which we want to remedy. A redraft of the Section 30 regulations is nearly complete, with approval from the DUA Advisory Council anticipated as of the fall of 2018.

Claimants should not wait 15 or 20 weeks to understand if they need training to close a skills gap, but the best way to get them into training or back to work fast is to reduce the amount of time it takes to move from DUA to MDCS and into the training or job market. Online skills assessments, integrated resume development, and immediate LMI are just a few of the ways we are looking to expand services for UI job seekers. We are also taking a secretariat wide view of our reemployment goals, and in the last year

engaged the American Institute for Full Employment. They performed an on-site visit, interviewed team members working on the RESEA program, and delivered a report containing program recommendations. That report is under review at the secretariat level with a review of our UI and career center service delivery model underway.

### ***Improving Data Validation and Federal Reporting***

As mentioned above, DUA has placed a high level of importance on the work being performed by our UI Performs Department. The Director of the UI Performs Department reports directly to the UI Director, and the UI Director attends bi-weekly Data Validation Steering Committee meetings to track DV progress.

DUA understands the value of having clean and reliable data, not only for internal but also for external stakeholder use. In the last year, we have hired additional resources to work on system updates required by and discovered through the Benefits and Tax Data Validation programs. A new project manager was brought in to facilitate improvements to the UI Online system and our Data Warehouse. With the recent retirement of our SUN System Coordinator, we are considering new and innovative ways to backfill that position to better leverage the work that the UI Performs Department is producing and the significant amount of data that is being processed.

DUA is fulfilling its duty to implement a DV program and report results.

### ***Addressing Worker Misclassification***

Massachusetts participates in CUE (Council on the Underground Economy) activities, with a sole focus on uncovering and remedying worker misclassification. DUA works on referrals from a number of sources, including the IRS, OSHA and RMV. Further, our focus on this over the years has yielded excellent results in our tax audits.

We have undergone changes in leadership in our tax area, including a new Boston Audit Supervisor, a new Manager of Audit and Revenue Enforcement, and a new Director of Revenue. Through all these changes, we continue to improve the efficiency of our audits, and have provided our audit staff with updated laptops and other equipment. We are proud to have achieved a level of sustained success in this area.

### ***Strategic Goal – Make Timely Benefit Payments***

**Target:** 87.0 percent of intrastate first payments for full weeks of unemployment compensation will be made within 21 days from the week ending date of the first compensable week.

This is a fundamental tenet of UI and making payment when due remains our primary goal. The Accenture recommendations, stated earlier, offered a service delivery model focused on TFP teams with adjudicators empowered to work all the issues on the claim. By moving to this model, DUA saw gains in our timely first payment metric, and sustaining these gains is the top item on our agenda. We will continue to tweak our model while continuing to make long term investments in our existing online system.

We are excited about our upcoming business process redesign engagement, where timely first payment will be the objective, and additional procedural recommendations to achieve our goals are anticipated.

In our call center environment, where most of our non-monetary issue resolution work is being performed, we have placed a renewed emphasis on the role of the call center supervisor. Each call center supervisor is responsible for running a team, and the supervisor is being held accountable for the overall performance of their team. Important duties like coaching and teaching have been re-prioritized and are no longer being left to subordinate junior supervisory staff. One on one coaching sessions, remedial development plans, and the use of other such tools are part of the expectations we have for our call center leadership.

While we focus on timeliness, we are committed to preserving our improvements in quality. Any sustainable process to ensure timeliness must also ensure quality standards are met. There must be a balance. To that end, we are overhauling our adjudication handbook in order to provide our adjudication staff with current, updated policy information and clear instruction. The BTQ process will continue to be used as a tool for adjudication quality improvement and improved communication around that program is a must.

We instituted a policy change to our pre-date processes, which was identified as a cause for missing a timely first payment. We also implemented robo-calls reminding claimants to certify for weekly benefits, as we found at one point that more than 10% of timely failures were attributable to people not claiming the weeks. While some of those have helped, there is more to do.

More specifics of our Plan can be found in the Corrective Action Plan and Narrative for First Payment Promptness.

#### **FY 2020 Update:**

We are pleased to share two notable and significant updates on our progress from last year.

First, while continuing to maintain an eye toward future possibilities, DUA has indeed kept its commitment to continue to invest in our existing online system. In June, we signed a new Task Order with our maintenance contract vendor to begin a project aimed at improving our Timely First Payment and Time Lapse metrics. The original design of the UI Online adjudication issue assignment logic prioritizes the oldest unassigned issues first. This design makes it challenging to achieve the 87.0 strategic goal. Today, and in line with the recommendations previously received via our engagement with Accenture, our team manually reassigns work to our adjudication staff, fighting the original design of the system, in order to meet Timely First Payment and Time Lapse dates. While this has led to gains, it comes with switching costs and inefficiencies. The Automated Issue Assignment project will update the UI Online system to enhance the business logic to classify an adjudication issue in defined categories. This

project will change the current logic to ‘drop’ ready-to-work issues into an adjudicator’s inbox based on date-driven categories. This will allow DUA to automatically align work assignments with State and Federal goals and will help ensure that issues are assigned to the most qualified adjudicators. Additionally, all issues on a given claim will be assigned to the same adjudicator, bringing a claim-based, versus issue-based, approach to claim processing.

Second, we completed our Call Center Optimization engagement with Zelus Consulting, and currently are in various stages of implementing some of their recommendations. Our focus, initially, and due to an expiring lease, was on successfully relocating our Call Center team from our Lawrence location to our Boston location. This transition is complete and, while the move was difficult, today our call center operation is more cohesive and less siloed than before. Once behind us, we began filling long-needed positions on our adjudication teams, which we believe will increase our ability to make timely benefit payments over the long term. Zelus recommended building out a forecasting model and defining our long-term forecasting goals. The forecasting model will help us annualize seasonal patterns and staffing alignment, assist with staff out-of-office time management, and help us strategize for the mitigation of workflow item buildup during seasonal volume spikes. This work is underway, and the first iteration of the model is expected to be delivered in October. Also underway is the development of a contact center management fundamentals training program for supervisors and managers. This work is being spearheaded by the Massachusetts Human Resources Division and has a deliverable target date of early calendar year 2020.

### ***Strategic Goal - Detect Benefit Overpayments***

**Target:** Overpayments established will be at least 61.9 percent of the estimated detectable, recoverable overpayments.

Like most states, detectable overpayment failures are most frequently worksearch failures, and as such Massachusetts is taking steps to remedy this problem. Nearly 80% of claimants use UI Online to file claims. Most also use UI Online to claim benefits each week. DUA is interested in behavioral science, and specifically the use of nudging, and will be bringing in a User Journey resource effective October of 2018 to begin an effort in this area. We are also in the midst of reviewing our weekly certification questions, as we believe changes to the phrasing of our questions will reduce overpayments.

As mentioned throughout, DUA will continue to remain engaged with the UI Integrity Center on future offerings while we implement the many recommendations, they made in their report delivered in December of 2017. Please see our Integrity Action Plan for additional insights.

### **FY 2020 Update:**

DUA has been heavily engaged with the NASWA Integrity Center and views them as a critical partner to our success in this area. As noted in the Overview section above, the NASWA Integrity Center has been on-site at our invitation on multiple occasions during

the last year. The Center has recently delivered over twenty recommendations that we believe will improve our UI program, including reducing overpayments. As part of this engagement, we have been working with a Behavioral Insights vendor. Current behavioral intervention recommendations under discussion include claimant email reminders about weekly work search requirements, tailored advice on earnings requirements, and emphasizing work search requirements and engagement with material in our claimant guide. Our plan will be finalized in September, with some recommendations targeted for completion as early as October.

We have completed our review of our weekly certification questions. System changes are in development and were promoted into the UI Online and IVR systems before the end of calendar year 2019.

We also completed several User Journey mapping exercises for jobseekers, employers, and Third-Party Agents. User Journey mapping means charting, step by step, everything a person has to go through in order to achieve an objective. The User Journey work is being used to inform DUA in many ways, including our agency future state vision, but so far has led to the development and implementation of two products. First, we developed benefit calculators to assist claimants with accurate reporting of wages as well as helping them estimate potential benefits. Second, we developed a Quick Guide for claimants to use as an immediate resource upon job separation. The Quick Guide uses clear and plain language to inform claimants of the work search and weekly certification requirements. Both the benefit calculators and the Quick Guide can be accessed on the Mass.gov website. We will also be providing a printed version of the Quick Guide in our Walk-In Center as well as all of the MassHire Career Centers. Since both products are new, it is too early to determine whether or not they have impacted this measurement. To read more about our User Journey work, please visit the Massachusetts Digital Service blog at <https://medium.com/massgovdigital/mapping-user-journeys-for-a-better-workforce-system-in-massachusetts-6080b1d07006>.

It should be noted that our performance level is not currently being truly measured due to the reporting deficiencies relative to the ETA 227 report. Please see the Reporting Deficiencies section for a further update on our progress on the ETA 227.

### ***Strategic Goal - Establish Tax Accounts Promptly***

**Target: 89.0 percent of status determinations for new employers will be made within 90 days of the end of the first quarter in which liability occurred.**

Massachusetts has failed to reach the target of 89% of new employer status determinations resolved within 90 days of the first quarter in which liability occurred largely due to employers failing to register in a timely manner. We have implemented several strategies designed to prompt employers to register with DUA and begin paying contributions when they are due.

DUA utilizes the following cross-matches with other state agencies to obtain information on possible employers subject to registration:

- Newly registered corporations (and LLC's) from the Secretary of State's office
- All new and transferred liquor licenses issued by the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission
- Corporations with active licenses from the Department of Licensure
- Quarterly reviews to identify employers that have filed withholding tax with the Department of Revenue, but are not registered with DUA
- DUA has an agreement with the Massachusetts Lottery Commission to cross reference the list of current lottery vendors to verify registration as an active employer if subjectivity applies
- DUA is working towards an agreement with the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles to cross-reference the list of current businesses holding commercial license plates to verify registration of an active employer if subjectivity applies.

DUA has new leadership in place at multiple levels within our tax department, including a new Director of Revenue. While establishing tax accounts promptly is an important goal, and our performance numbers are a notch below where we want them to be, our initial effort in our tax area will be centered on making long overdue improvements to our revenue enforcement and collections area. DUA has embarked on a ten-point plan to improve our accounts receivable, which includes a significant financial and resource investment into repairing revenue enforcement functionality in the UI Online system. We will be improving the UI Online system, implementing the Treasury Offset Program for employers, a State Tax Intercept program for employers, and a number of other tools aimed at improving our bottom line. These projects were expected to be completed in early calendar year 2019.

While this work is ongoing, DUA will also be working on improvements to the Employer Registration process to reduce downstream manual work in our Economic Research and Finance departments to ensure these are accurately and efficiently handled by DUA.

**FY 2020 Update:**

The Massachusetts *Percent of Employer Tax Liability Determinations Made Timely* is currently at 88.08% compared to the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) Targeted Level of 89.6%, a variance of 1.52%. Employers register their accounts in the UI Online system and are issued a tax liability determination at the time of registration, provided that they indicate that they have met the thresholds for tax liability.

If the employer indicates that they have not met the threshold at the time of registration, they do not receive a determination of liability at the time of registration. Once the employer submits wages, and provides notification that they have met the threshold, a liability determination would be issued. In the event an employer does not

provide notification, a quarterly review of all non-liable accounts that submitted wages is manually completed by staff and determinations are issued to those accounts that have met the threshold. Since this review process is manual it can impact the timeliness of our Employer Tax Liability Determinations.

Massachusetts will continue to strive to increase our percentage of Timely Employer Tax Liability Determinations to the meet or exceed the targeted goal of by implementing the following steps:

- Introduce a monthly review of non-liable accounts that have submitted wages and issue determinations to those accounts that have met the liability threshold.
- Continue with the quarterly review of non-liable accounts that have submitted wages and issue determinations to those accounts that have met the liability threshold.
- Continue working toward an online automatic system validation of Employer Liability Determinations post registration.

#### ***Strategic Goal – Employment Rate at 2nd Quarter After Exit***

**Target:** TBD

Massachusetts DUA and MDCS agencies are working together to maximize success in this area. Directionally we are aligned, and DUA is committed to helping drive some practices and policies which encourage the robust interaction of our claimants with MDCS and their nearly 30 career centers, as early as possible in the claim. Further, we want to see technology leveraged to make that interaction efficient and focused for both the staff and the claimant – to minimize paperwork and maximize re-employment assistance.

Our long partnership in the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program and REA programs have demonstrated the commitment we share in getting job seekers back to work. DUA has taken a larger role in that, helping ensure the program is truly owned by both agencies, and sanctions for failure are meaningful.

We are working together on a common electronic front door, allowing, and encouraging claimants to get registered for work immediately. With nearly 80% of claimants filing online, we feel strongly that large segments of our population can be well-served by a more rigorous electronic system, not just for registration, but for assessment, resume development, labor market information and job matching. Much of this can and is done today, but a common intake between MDCS and DUA will ensure ease of access for those able to leverage the technology.

We are also working to transition to a profiling model, and away from a screening process, and have requested assistance from both the Regional and National Offices in order to achieve this goal. A profiling model, appropriately weighted and measured,

allows us to deliver a more targeted approach to identifying those requiring more intensive services in order to return to work.

#### **C. PROGRAM REVIEW DEFICIENCIES**

N/A

#### **D. PROGRAM DEFICIENCIES**

N/A

#### **E. REPORTING DEFICIENCIES**

1. ETA 227 - The coding changes needed to make the ETA 227 report tie correctly remain outstanding. DUA acknowledges the importance of this report and the seriousness of the report deficiency. Over the course of the last year, DUA has engaged with both the USDOL Regional and National Offices, as well as colleagues in the State of Florida, to explore interim solutions until the programming changes could be implemented. Those discussions did not result in a successful transmission of the missing reports by DUA. Significant programming changes are needed to our UI Online system in order to accurately report the ETA 227 data. DUA hired a developer to assist with this effort and the work needed to make the ETA 227 accurate should be completed during the strategic plan period.

**FY 2020 Update:** With the assistance of the USDOL National Office, the ETA 227 reports for Q3 of 2015, Q4 of 2015, Q1 of 2016, and Q2 of 2016 were recently successfully loaded into the Sun System. The loading and submission of all subsequent reports are now imminent and were expected to be completed by the end of September 2019.

##### **Additional FY 2020 Report Deficiency:**

2. ETA 191 - Financial reports are completed by the Finance Department, a shared services unit within the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). The ETA 191 reports were not prompt on various occasions due to EOLWD transitioning to a new bank during the year, which required the realignment of data collection points as well as data quality checks. The bank transition is over, and the process has fully stabilized. Reporting is now being done timely.

##### **Additional FY 2020 Report Deficiency:**

3. ETA 2112 - Financial reports are completed by the Finance Department, a shared services unit within the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). The ETA 191 reports were not prompt on various occasions due to EOLWD transitioning to a new bank during the year, which required the realignment of data collection points as well as data quality checks. The bank transition is over, and the process has fully stabilized. Reporting is now being done timely.



## **F. CUSTOMER SERVICES**

N/A

## **G. OTHER**

N/A

## **ASSURANCES**

The State Administrator, by signing the SQSP Signature Page, certifies that the state will comply with assurances as outlined in ET Handbook 336, 18th Edition: Unemployment Insurance (UI) State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) Planning and Reporting Guidelines, Chapter 1, Part VII: Assurances.

### ***Assurance of Contingency Planning***

In 2012 an independent consultant was engaged to modify the IT Contingency Plan. This modification took into account the changes to contingency planning with the new system architecture. This work was completed in June of 2012. This plan is reviewed and updated to reflect system modifications and personnel changes; the most recent update was in April, 2017.

### ***Assurance of Automated Information Systems Security***

In 2011, an independent consultant was engaged by DUA to perform a risk assessment. This assessment was completed in July 2012 and consisted of an assessment of the UI Benefits system, an assessment of the UI Online Revenue system, an assessment of the EOLWD Telephony system, and an assessment of the UI Fraud Prevention and Detection System involving National Directory of New Hires.

DUA also reviews the SSP and updates accordingly. DUA last reviewed and updated the plan in September of 2017.

## SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

### Introduction

Under the designation of Governor Charles D. Baker, the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) is responsible for the development and submission of the Massachusetts Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) 2020-2024 State Plan. The State Plan presents an opportunity for the Commonwealth to build new partnerships as well as strengthen existing ones, create additional employment opportunities, and establish enhanced employer-outreach partners and training locations in the state.

This State Plan aligns closely with the blueprint recommendations of the Governor's Council to Address Aging in Massachusetts submitted in December 2018. These recommendations include increasing awareness of the value of older workers and encouraging employers to support older workers and working family caregivers.

- **Recommendation 1.** Partner with employers to strengthen businesses' support of family caregivers in the workplace
- **Recommendation 2.** Educate older adults on the benefits of working longer
- **Recommendation 3.** Introduce an auto-IRA program to increase retirement savings
- **Recommendation 4.** Establish an Age-Friendly Employer Designation program
- **Recommendation 5.** Promote value of older workers with businesses
- **Recommendation 6.** Support training for career centers to better serve older job seekers

In Massachusetts, SCSEP is a partnership of the state SCSEP program (MA-SCSEP), national SCSEP grantees located in Massachusetts, and MassHire, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development's workforce development system.

MassHire Career Centers provide career guidance, training, and job referrals, as well as assistance to businesses in finding qualified workers, applying the principles of a person-centered system of practice. It aims to align service resources that give customers access to the full benefits of MassHire and WIOA partnership and ensure they receive services in a way that may help them achieve individual goals.

There are three national SCSEP grantees in Massachusetts: Operation A.B.L.E., Inc., National Asian Pacific Center on Aging with set-aside slots Center for Workforce Inclusion, Inc. EOEA currently operates MA-SCSEP in Berkshire, Essex, Hampden, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk and Worcester counties through three subgrantees. All Massachusetts SCSEP programs support its two-fold goal, as conveyed in the Older Americans' Act:

1. Enable older low-income job seekers to develop the skills and self-confidence to obtain unsubsidized jobs, become financially self-sufficient and increase quality of life.
2. Provide meaningful community service at on-the-job training sites, as a means to improve a participant's self-sufficiency, perform meaningful civic service, and to strengthen communities.

EOEA envisions a broader supportive role for SCSEP and the aging services network in advancing the interests of older workers in their local economies.

In 2022 EOEA will re-evaluate current program delivery.

## **1. Economic Projections and Impact**

1. Discuss long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities for older workers. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

Overall Trends in Based on the LMI data COVID-19 had a profound impact on the Massachusetts economy. The older workers enrolled in SCSEP were some of the most vulnerable job seekers and there was significant impact to their ability to seek jobs and attend in-person on the job training. . Please refer to the LMI data section of the State Plan.

COVID-19's effect in 2020-2021 on SCSEP enrollments level were also significant and caused major challenges for the recruitment of new SCSEP-eligible individuals into the programs. Most Host Agencies remained closed for in-person work or at a limited capacity, and many SCSEP grantees and sub grantees were unable to offer in-person Community Service Assignments. Many participants were placed on emergency paid sick leave, and others were offered remote training opportunities.

Older Workers in Massachusetts:

There are approximately 200,000 people - 29% of the population-age 55 and older in Massachusetts, up from 26% in 2010. This percentage is projected to rise to 34 percent by 2025.[\[1\]](#) Over 15% (32,000) of these individuals were unemployed and seeking assistance from the MassHire system in 2019, comprising 24% of its case load.

The chart below demonstrates the projected Massachusetts population by age group.

Figure 78: Projected Massachusetts population by age group

While the median household income (\$74,167) remains higher than the national median (\$61,937), the cost of living in Massachusetts is significantly higher.[\[2\]](#) According to the University of Massachusetts Gerontology Institute's Elder Economic Security Standard Index (Elder Index), 60% of older adults living alone, and 30% living in two-person households, cannot afford the basic necessities of life such as food, housing in a safe community and health care. While most rely on Social Security benefits as a key component of their incomes, the Elder Index finds that Social Security alone is not sufficient to meet their basic needs. [\[3\]](#)

Figure 79: Projected number of older adults, ages 75+

The population age 75 and over is rapidly growing in Massachusetts, from 7% in 2015 to 11% projected for 2030. [\[4\]](#) According to the Elder Economic Security Index, this age group faces the greatest difficulty in meeting basic needs, so it is not surprising that they comprise a growing segment of Massachusetts' workforce system. Based on MassHire data, there has been a growing participation rate of job seekers over the age of 75 that use the MassHire Career Centers over the course of the last three fiscal years.

See Figure 79. Job Seeker ages 75+ (by numbers)

2. Discuss how the long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained and the types of skill training to be provided. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

SCSEP participants' characteristics:

Massachusetts SCSEP participants are over 60% female (see Figure 90). Less than 70% have a college degree (See Chart 5). Additionally, Chart 7 describes the U.S. Department of Labor's identified barriers to employment with poverty being the most predominant factor (88%). [\[5\]](#)

Figure 80: PY21 Gender by numbers YTD.

Figure 81: Education Level of Participants (by percent).

8th grade and under	14
9th grade – 11th grade	8
High School diploma or equivalent	30
1 – 3 years college	18
Post-secondary certificate	3
Associate's degree	3
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	20
Some graduate school	1
Master's degree	4
Doctoral degree	0

Figure 82: Enrollment Age of SCSEP Participants in Massachusetts (by numbers).

Figure 83: Barriers to Employment (percent).

92% of Massachusetts SCSEP participants are individuals with low employment prospects. The majority lives at or below the federal poverty rate and relies on public assistance.

	Percent
Family income at or below the poverty level	92
Individuals with disabilities	37
Individuals with limited English proficiency	27
Individuals with low literacy skills	4
Individuals residing in rural areas	6
Individuals with low employment prospects	92
Individuals who failed to find employment after using WIOA Title I	56
Individuals age 75 and over at date of report	9
Individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness	16
Displaced homemakers	3
Veterans (or eligible spouse of Veteran)	5
Post-9/11 era Veterans	0
Individuals receiving public assistance	80
Individuals with severe disability	1
Individuals who are frail	0

\*As identified by the U.S. Department of Labor

While the majority of SCSEP participants are highly motivated to find employment, this motivation may be compromised as full-time employment may limit eligibility for public benefits. The loss of subsidized housing, for example, may create a need for a participant to move to an unsubsidized housing in a location further away from work. Stable, affordable housing and employment have been found to be closely linked, with individuals who live closer to their jobs being more likely to maintain employment.<sup>[6]</sup> Cost of transportation is another common barrier to job retention. SCSEP helps participants navigate these confusing and conflicting incentives by providing guidance and referrals to a wide network of public benefits specialists and options counselors for decision support and information regarding eligibility and available resources to facilitate their employment.

MA-SCSEP participants often have gaps in their work histories or outdated job skills. Typically, participants with gaps in work history combined with low educational attainment are assessed and placed in entry-level positions. Many require basic skills training to be eligible or competitive for these positions.

Other participants have been unable to find employment due to barriers that may include age discrimination, physical limitations, or limited access to the MassHire system due to lack of public or private transportation.

SCSEP staff report the following typical skill profiles for SCSEP participants:

1. *Computer illiteracy and lower level of education.* SCSEP helps with low levels of computer skills by referring them to low-cost or free computer literacy classes in

addition to their community service assignment. Workers with low levels of education are referred to adult basic education and GED completion assistance programs.

2. *Late-onset physical limitations.* Participants who may have been previously employed in labor, construction, and production industries may have physical or other health limitations that prohibit or impair their performance of physical duties. These participants are assessed and placed for training on jobs that are less physically demanding.
3. *Cognitive, mental, or behavioral health needs.* Participants with more complex mental or behavioral health needs, cognitive impairment or traumatic brain injuries have additional barriers to employment. These people are referred to the host agencies that provide more individualized supportive services to help them realize their full potential.
4. COVID-19 had a significant impact on SCSEP population. Many participants are now less interested in direct service and other public-facing roles and prefer remote assignments. However, their current experience and technology skills can make it difficult to be competitive in these sought-after roles. Moreover, many training resources are limited to on-line offerings, and thus creating an additional barrier to employment.
5. Discuss current and projected employment opportunities in the State (such as by providing information available under §15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 491-2) by occupation), and the types of skills possessed by eligible individuals. (20 CFR 641.325(c))

While many jobs across Massachusetts require a college degree, many positions in the healthcare industry may be flexible to offer positions based on work experience. EOEA will continue to work with MassHire and National grantees to:

1. Identify available jobs and training or certificate needed;
2. Identify the most effective training providers;
3. Identify interested participants and place them into the relevant training;  
Increase on-the-Job training assignments with private industry.

Given the educational and work experience of MA-SCSEP participants and the projected occupational growth, the most likely unsubsidized jobs will still be entry-level positions. The following table identifies key occupations areas that hold promise for employing MA-SCSEP participants and the types of skills training that could prepare them for unsubsidized employment.

Figure 84: Occupations and Skill Training.

Occupation	Example Training
Customer service	Remote customer service skills training
Health and Human Services Case Management and Peer Support Jobs	Training on peer support programs
Healthcare support	Medical coding and billing; health insurance customer service

## 6. Service Delivery and Coordination

a. A description of actions to coordinate SCSEP with other programs.

- i. Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA MassHire delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older. (20 CFR 641.302(g), 641.325(e))

Coordination with MassHire:

On the statewide level, EOEA has been leading the MassHire efforts to provide services to older workers since 2016. The umbrella WIOA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed by fourteen state agencies outlining the provision of services and coordination of efforts to serve most-in-need individuals. A copy of it is included with this Plan. The programs that serve the largest numbers of older job seekers through MassHire are the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service, Adult and Dislocated Worker Act programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance and Unemployment Insurance Program, all of which are co-located at MassHire Career Centers. In the past two years, EOEA has also been working closely with the MassHire Career Centers to raise awareness of mature workers' assets and challenges and the capacity of SCSEP to train and place qualified workers. EOEA will continue to work closely with MassHire and all WIOA partners to address the needs of mature workers in the state.

In the next two years, EOEA will develop and provide current information and training for MassHire staff regarding facts and myths surrounding older adults in the workforce, and the value they bring both to the workplace and the economy. In addition, EOEA will continue developing materials on how to promote the advantage of multigenerational work environment.

While MassHire services become more automated or web-based, many older workers may still need in-person and intensive staff-assisted services that include job coaching and employment services. To help increase job seekers' supportive services, EOEA will work with MassHire to develop new types of workshops for older customers to address their unique skills, such as reliability, loyalty, and dedication to the job.

On the local and regional level, MA-SCSEP and National grantees developed MOUs, shared infrastructure cost agreements and became active members of all 16 MassHire Workforce Boards (MWB) in their service areas. MA-SCSEP and National Grantees work closely with the WIOA MassHire delivery network. Since the beginning of WIOA implementation in 2016, the following major accomplishments were achieved on the local level:

Local MOUs were designed and developed to outline customer flow and identify shared customers for all local areas. SCSEP staff is actively engaged with MassHire Workforce Boards and established close working relationships with all MassHire Career Centers.

In the next two years EOEA will continue to deploy the most effective strategies to help MA-SCSEP participants obtain unsubsidized employment.

EOEA will also support and promote local practices, and help organize virtual Job Fairs and similar events, aiming at older workers and the local employers.

Coordination with other training services:

Because most older workers are not SCSEP-eligible and there is a waiting list for SCSEP slots, EOEA will support local efforts to provide job training for high demand, high return occupations. Workers who have been laid off but have extensive experience, for example, may not be eligible for SCSEP, but may benefit from retraining through an apprenticeship. MA-SCSEP will join efforts with MassHire to help identify and refer eligible individuals to apprenticeship programs.

EOEA will continue to support and promote training programs designed specifically for older learners. For example, University of Massachusetts (UMass) is the first university system to join the Age-Friendly University (AFU) Global Network that originated at Dublin City University, earning the designation for its campuses in Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth, Lowell, and the UMass Medical School in Worcester. UMass provides an age-friendly campus and supports adults who want to pursue second careers and other learning opportunities. EOEA will help refer older workers to



these and other similar institutions for on-line and in person training opportunities.

- ii. Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with the activities being carried out in the state under the other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(h))

Coordination with Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and Aging Services Access Points (ASAPs):

Access to the full array of supportive services available through other OAA programs is ensured for all program participants. EOEA will continue to work with the AAAs, ASAPs, and other service providers to coordinate access to the full array of social services. MA-SCSEP sub-grantees will continue to refer participants to the local AAA and ASAP information and referral specialist and/or caregiver specialist, State Health Insurance Information Program (SHIP) program, and other services. Several ASAPs are also SCSEP host agencies.

EOEA recently conducted a short survey of AAAs regarding older adult employment needs. The survey specifically analyzed if AAAs provide work- or training-related transportation and indicates that AAA planners receive few or no requests for transportation of older workers to their jobs or training. Several expanded notes indicate that transportation services today are mostly provided for medical appointments.

In the next two years, EOEA will increase collaboration with AAAs to assess and understand the employment needs of communities they serve. EOEA will begin to cultivate to a possible role in assisting elder workers in attaining transportation to training and employment-related activities through AAA networks.

EOEA will work with the Massachusetts Department of Corrections and local AAAs to better understand the needs of older re-entry population, and how SCSEP can help with employment and training services.

In addition, EOEA will share information, develop connections and referral mechanisms between AAA and the MassHire offices.

- iii. Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. (20 CFR 641.302(i))

### Coordination with Councils on Aging (COA):

EOEA will continue to work with other state-wide networks that support older job seekers. For example, the Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging (MCOA) oversees job seekers networking groups throughout the state. A skilled group facilitator/career specialist leads these eight-session workshops. EOEA will continue to work with MCOA to further connect their efforts with the MassHire system. In particular, EOEA plans to coordinate with COAs to:

1. Promote job openings at COAs.
2. Promote the employment of older workers to local businesses, both public and private, and promote their use of MassHire to post jobs and recruit workers.
3. Write and speak about the benefits of hiring older workers in their newsletters and public events.
4. Include older workers' issues in their marketing and outreach efforts.
5. Ensure that the information and referral staff at COAs are aware of MassHire training programs and can make appropriate referrals to employment and training programs there.

### Coordination with the Massachusetts Lifespan Respite Coalition:

Composed of 22 state and community service providers, the Massachusetts Lifespan Respite Coalition (MLRC) provides education and training to professional and informal caregivers, and advocates for resources for caregivers. Many MLRC member agencies provide training and access to the respite worker jobs. EOEA will continue to participate in regular MLRC meetings to ensure that SCSEP participants have access to respite companion training and respite companion job opportunities.

As the number of individuals needing assistance increases, there is higher demand for respite companions and direct care providers. To address the needs of older adults and people with disabilities to remain in their own homes, Massachusetts Rewarding Work, a member of MLRC, maintains a respite directory that can match caregivers with clients. Referrals to the Rewarding Work directory will be made for those trained SCSEP participants interested in becoming a respite companion or respite worker.

According to the recent analysis of surveys done by McKinsey Group<sup>[7]</sup>, the need for childcare and care for older people were two of the top barriers to getting workers back into the office. Providing caregivers with resources on care for older people will be a priority to EOEA in 2022-2024.

### Coordination with Dementia Friendly Massachusetts:

Dementia Friendly Massachusetts is a grassroots movement to make public and private services and spaces more accessible and welcoming to people with dementia and their caregivers. Some people living with dementia continue to work and volunteer in their communities. As part of their efforts to retain valuable older workers, workplaces are now challenging the idea that

nothing can be done to support people working with this condition. In fact, there are excellent examples around the world of “dementia friendly” workplaces where simple adjustments have been made to jobs to accommodate people working with dementia.<sup>[8]</sup>

Dementia Friendly Massachusetts will develop a plan to educate MassHire staff and Massachusetts employers about dementia and the caregivers’ needs. The goals are to spread awareness of the signs of dementia among recruiters and employers; educate employers on how to redesign jobs to support people working with dementia; and inform employers of community supports and services available for both caregivers and employees concerned about memory loss. As organizations work to ensure that they benefit from the life experience of their older workers and retain their employed caregivers, employers establishing dementia-friendly workplaces will be part of the solution.

These efforts will be continued as the caregivers’ needs may become more complex in the remote employment environment of the future.

iv. Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives. (20 CFR 641.302(j))

EOEA will continue to engage with the local universities and research institutions to better understand the economic trends and best practices that support community development in low- and moderate-income communities.

There are several other agencies in Massachusetts that provide meaningful part-time jobs to older job seekers. EOEA will work with Encore Boston Network and Empower Success Corps (ESC Discovery). A new strategy to provide a co-referral of older job seekers will be further explored and established.

v. Actions to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner in the MassHire delivery system and the steps the state will take to encourage and improve coordination with the MassHire delivery system. (20 CFR 641.335)

In 2020-2024, EOEA will continue to work with the MassHire Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Centers to increase the percentage of older job seekers provided with skill-based training. This will allow for higher job attainment.

EOEA will provide technical support and guidance on how to increase referrals of MassHire consumers over the age of 55 to intensive job development and coaching services.

EOEA will develop a referral system to other agencies that can assist with obstacles to employment to those job seekers that have caregiving responsibilities, including the Family Caregiver Support Program, Lifespan Respite Coalition, and others.

EOEA will lead state-wide efforts to use the person-centered approach and enhance staff ability to help all customers. EOEA will continue to promote a number of specific tools, such as Motivational Interviewing and Coaching for older job seekers. Within the person-

centered framework, EOEA will identify data needed to measure achievement of goals through monitoring the performance of MassHire Career Centers on the services to older workers on:

- Worker's assessments (skills, personal preferences, work history)
- Individual service planning and program referrals
- Service monitoring by case management
- Quality reviews of MassHire customer survey results
- Access to MassHire employer surveys and focus groups to determine benefits of working with MassHire (trained workforce, tax benefits, bond, etc.)
- Older workers durational time of unemployed

As needed, EOEA will develop new strategies in response to low performance findings and incorporate these plans into the local MOUs and other strategic planning.

vi. Efforts to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.

Massachusetts has areas of the state with low density of population, limited public transportation services, limited public housing, low access to health services and scarcity of jobs. EOEA will work with other state and regional agencies to help identify best practices for equity and improve access to employment and training services for older low-income job seekers living in these areas, especially access to remote employment.

- b. The state's long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment. (20 CFR 641.302(e)) (May alternatively be discussed in the State strategies section of strategic plan.)

EOEA will work with MassHire system to develop better strategies for linking the older worker population with businesses that are searching for skilled workers by arranging for increased outreach efforts. A key step will be to work with MassHire Biz Works, an employer services team. MassHire Biz Works offers businesses resources, guidance, and connections to all state-wide resources in order to help them grow and thrive. EOEA and MassHire Biz Work will partner to help businesses recruit mature workers.

EOEA will also develop a way to provide information for businesses on how to consider adopting alternative work arrangements and phased retirement programs to attract and retain mature workers.

EOEA will continue to provide feedback to the public workforce development system about quality of referrals and services received at the local MassHire Career Centers.

- c. The State's long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP. (20 CFR641.302 (c))

EOEA through its aging network and partner agencies, serves all residents of the Commonwealth, reaching out to minority communities through local community service agencies, minority newspapers, and faith-based organizations. The new immigrant populations in the Commonwealth include, but are not limited to, Hispanic, Portuguese, Somali, Haitian, and Vietnamese.

EOEA will continue to collaborate with the Office of Refugees and Immigrants to increase awareness about the resources of the agencies that have culturally competent and linguistically diverse staff to help MA-SCSEP sub-grantees by:

1. Identifying and recruiting Host Agencies that serve minority populations;
  2. Intensify efforts in reaching out to minority- and immigrant-owned businesses that would provide unsubsidized placements for the participants.
- d. A list of community services that are needed and the places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and location of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs. (20 CFR 641.330)

The most effective way to ensure best service to MA-SCSEP participants is finding an appropriate Community Service Assignment. A good match between the individual participant and a host agency strengthens the individual's civic engagement as well as their ability to become self-sufficient, provides much needed support to organizations which benefit significantly from increased civic engagement, and strengthens the communities that are served by such organizations.

Community service needs are met in a variety of ways that include providing services to the general community and the senior community.

Figure 85: Community Service Assignments for all SCSEP participants in the state

DATA FROM PY21	PARTICIPANTS
Services to the General Community	256
Services to the Elderly Community	119

Although SCSEP participants provide a valued service to communities throughout Massachusetts, the unmet community service needs change, and new challenges still exist.

To address the issue of unmet community service needs, EOEA will strengthen relationship with the Massachusetts Service Alliance to better understand and serve those needs. Massachusetts Service Alliance provides federally and state funded volunteer services and has up-to-date data on the areas of the greatest community need.

MA-SCSEP and national sub grantees will explore the possibility of convening a workgroup to identify unmet community needs, share best practices in recruitment of host agencies to meet those needs. This type of effort is anticipated to result in a positive impact for all involved.

MA-SCSEP and the representatives of national sub grantees will work collaboratively to complete the following activities:

1. Gather information from assessment reports which identify unmet needs for community service in different areas of the Commonwealth, specifically addressing designated populations in particular locations. These reports may come from such sources as AAAs, county assessment reports, and regional planning.
2. Compile and analyze research results and develop a plan of action which will be disseminated to all SCSEPs.
3. Initiate and execute the plan of action to recruit host agencies and place participants at host agencies to meet community service needs.
4. Massachusetts' long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program. This may include recommendations to the Department as appropriate. (20 CFR 641.302(k)).
5. Massachusetts' strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants' entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). (20 CFR 641.302(f)) MA-SCSEP will maximize and improve the level of performance by closer collaboration efforts with all WIOA partners, and by developing a stronger Person-Centered System. EOEA will prioritize information sharing and developing a cross knowledge distribution and skill development with all partners. The goal will be to establish a consistent communication between all WIOA partners and MassHire front line staff that work with and serve older workers.
6. **Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution**
  - a. A description of the localities and populations for which projects of the type authorized by title V are most needed. (20 CFR 641.325 (d))
  - b. A list of cities and counties where the project will be conducted. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate where the positions changed from the prior year. Describe current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution. The State's long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:

1. Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365.
  2. Equitably serves rural and urban areas.
  3. Serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(a), 641.365, 641.520)
- c. The ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the State. (20 CFR 641.325(a)).
- d. The relative distribution of eligible individuals who:
- i. Reside in urban and rural areas within the State
  - ii. Have the greatest economic need
  - iii. Are minorities
  - iv. Are limited English proficient
  - v. Have the greatest social need. (20 CFR 641.325(b))
- e. A description of the steps taken to avoid disruptions to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365; when new Census or other reliable data become available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason. (20 CFR 641.325(i), 641.302(b))

Figure 96 shows a profile of Massachusetts General Population the distribution of eligible individuals who are afforded priority service as provided under the Older Americans' Act, section 518(b): the relative distribution of—“(i) eligible individuals who are individuals with greatest economic need;“(ii) eligible individuals who are minority individuals; and“(iii) eligible individuals who are individuals with greatest social need;

Figure 86: Massachusetts: Profile of General Population 2010. *(Based on the U.S. Census Bureau)*

<b>Total Population</b>	<b>6,789,319</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
55 - 64 Years	901,717	13.3%
65 - 84 Years	894,411	13.2%
85+ Years	155,340	2.3%
<b>Veteran Status</b>		
Civilian Population - 18+ Years	5,075,535	
Civilian Veterans	325,299	6.4%
<b>Disability Status of the Civilian</b>		
Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized	6,713,702	
With a Disability	781,740	11.6%
Population 18 - 64 Years	4,321,499	
With a Disability	389,450	9.0%
Population 65+ Years	1,012,172	

With a Disability	330,631	32.7%
<b>Language Spoken at Home</b>		
Population 5+ Years	6,426,464	
Speaks Only English	4,940,967	76.9%
Language Other Than English	1,485,497	23.1%
Speaks English "Less Than Very Well"	582,948	39.2%
Spanish	564,401	8.8%
Speaks English Less Than "Very Well"	231,354	41.0%
Other Indo-European Languages	562,877	8.8%
Speaks English Less Than "Very Well"	196,256	34.9%
Asian and Pacific Islander Languages	267,678	4.2%
Speaks English Less Than "Very Well"	126,622	47.3%
Other Languages	90,541	1.4%
Speaks English Less Than "Very Well"	28,716	31.7%
<b>Percent of Families and People Whose Income in the Past 12 Months is Below the Poverty Line</b>		
Total Population	727,546	11.1%
Under 18 Years	198,980	14.6%
Related Children Under 18 Years	193,444	14.3%
Related Children Under 5 Years	57,700	16.2%
Related Children Under 5 - 17 Years	141,280	13.6%
Population 18+ Years	528,566	10.2%
18 - 64 Years	437,834	10.5%
65+ Years	90,732	9.0%
People In Families		8.0%

Figure 87: PY19 Equitable Distribution

County	Total Population	SCSEP eligible number of people	State Grantee	National Grantees
Barnstable	215,769	7,220	0	35
Berkshire	129,288	5,380	22	22
Bristol	548,922	17,960	0	86
Dukes	16,766	655	0	3
Essex	748,930	23,360	24	99
Franklin	71,599	2,445	0	11
Hampden	463,783	17,995	27	77
Hampshire	157,822	3,860	0	16
Middlesex	1,518,171	35,120	41	156
Nantucket	10,142	405	0	1



Norfolk	675,436	14,360	16	94
Plymouth	497,579	11,315	13	46
Suffolk	730,932	32,225	14	163
Worcester	801,227	21,935	20	93
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>6,586,366</b>	<b>194,235</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>902</b>

Source U.S. Census Bureau: State and County QuickFacts. Data derived from Population Estimates, American Community Survey, Census of Population and Housing, State and County Housing Unit Estimates, County Business Patterns, Non-employer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits, Consolidated Federal Funds Report Last Revised: Thursday, 07-Jun-2012 13:34:52 EDT

EOEA will continue to work with the National Grantees to analyze the Low/Moderate Income (LMI) data, SCSEP population needs, underserved locations in the state, rural and urban areas populations and their specific challenges to obtain and retain unsubsidized employment.

Figure 88: SCSEP Assurances

### SCSEP ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:	
1.	Where SCSEP is included in the Combined Workforce Plan, the State established a written policy and procedure to obtain advice and recommendations on the State Plan from representatives of the State and area agencies on aging; State and local boards under WIOA; public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the State, except as provided under section 506(a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b); Social service organizations providing services to older individuals; Grantees under Title III of OAA, Affected Communities, Unemployed older individuals, Community-based organizations serving older individuals; business organizations; and labor organizations.
	The Massachusetts Senior Community Service Employment Program (MA-SCSEP) has been an active member on the Commonwealth's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Steering Committee tasked, in conjunction with the State Board and Governor's office, to participate fully in the development of the Combined State Plan that provides the framework for the State's strategic and operational vision of the workforce system specifically as it relates to provision of quality employment and training opportunities for Older Workers. Each committee member has been asked to assure that "their network" of customers, providers, vendors, and advisors are made fully aware of the public comment process which will include three to four public meetings throughout the Commonwealth. Those comments will be reviewed and added as appropriate into the plan and responses to the comments will be published as well.

	<p>The Commonwealth assures that the draft combined plan will be fully vetted by the public and each core required partner, including representatives of the area agencies on aging, State and MassHire Boards under WIOA, public and private nonprofit agencies and organizations providing employment services, including each grantee operating a SCSEP project within the State, except as provided under section 506(a)(3) of OAA and 20 CFR 641.320(b), social service organizations providing services to older individuals; grantees under Title III of OAA; affected communities, unemployed older individuals, community-based organizations serving older individuals, business and labor organization.</p>
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<sup>[1]</sup> UMass Donahue Institute Economic and Public Policy Research, retrieved from <http://pep.donahue-institute.org/> on November 8, 2019

<sup>[2]</sup> US Census data

<sup>[3]</sup> [https://www.umb.edu/demographyofaging/elder\\_economic\\_security](https://www.umb.edu/demographyofaging/elder_economic_security)

<sup>[4]</sup> University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute, Massachusetts Population Projections. Retrieved from <http://pep.donahue-institute.org/> on November 13, 2019.

<sup>[5]</sup> DOLETA SPARQ PY18 Data for State and National Grantees

<sup>[6]</sup> Matthew Desmond and Carl Gershenson. 2016. Housing and Employment Insecurity among the Working Poor. *Oxford Journal*.

<sup>[7]</sup> *The future of work after COVID-19 Report*

<sup>[8]</sup> Tamkin P (ed) (2017), Darkening skies? IES Perspectives on HR 2017, Report 510, Institute for Employment Studies.

## APPENDIX I: PERFORMANCE GOALS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS

Title I – Adult Program				
Core Partner: MassHire Department of Career Services				
Performance Indicator	Program Year:	PY 2022	Program Year:	PY 2023
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	79.0%		79.0%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	78.0%		78.0%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$6,200		\$6,200	
Credential Attainment Rate	73.5%		73.5%	
Measurable Skill Gain	40.0%		40.0%	

Title I – Dislocated Worker Program				
Core Partner: MassHire Department of Career Services				
Performance Indicator	Program Year:	PY 2022	Program Year:	PY 2023
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	83.0%		83.0%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	83.0%		83.0%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$8,800		\$8,800	
Credential Attainment Rate	66.0%		66.0%	
Measurable Skill Gain	40.0%		40.0%	

**Title I – Youth Program**  
**Core Partner: MassHire Department of Career Services**

Performance Indicator	Program Year:	PY 2022	Program Year:	PY 2023
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment* (Second Quarter after Exit)	75.0%		75.0%	
Employment* (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	72.0%		72.0%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$3,600		\$3,600	
Credential Attainment Rate	65.0%		65.0%	
Measurable Skill Gain	45.0%		45.0%	

\* For Title I Youth programs, employment, education or training

**Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program**  
**Core Partner: Adult Community Learning Services**

Performance Indicator	Program Year:	PY 2022	Program Year:	PY 2023
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	42.0%		43.0%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	43.0%		44.0%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$6,000		\$6,250	
Credential Attainment Rate	25%		26%	
Measurable Skill Gain	Pending		Pending	

**Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Program**  
**Core Partner: MassHire Department of Career Services**

Performance Indicator	Program Year: PY 2022		Program Year: PY 2023	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	63.0%		63.0%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	65.0%		65.0%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)	\$6,800		\$6,800	
Credential Attainment Rate <sup>2</sup>				
Measurable Skill Gain <sup>2</sup>				

**Vocational Rehabilitation Program**  
**Core Partner: Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

Performance Indicator	Program Year: PY 2022		Program Year: PY 2023	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) <sup>1</sup>	51%		53%	
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) <sup>1</sup>	48%		50%	
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) <sup>1</sup>	\$4,500		\$4,650	
Credential Attainment Rate <sup>1</sup>	22.5%		27%	
Measurable Skill Gain	40.0%		47.5%	

**Vocational Rehabilitation Program**  
**Core Partner: Massachusetts Commission for the Blind**

Performance Indicator	Program Year: PY 2022		Program Year: PY 2023	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit) <sup>1</sup>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit) <sup>1</sup>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit) <sup>1</sup>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Credential Attainment Rate <sup>1</sup>	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Measurable Skill Gain	25.0%		25.0%	

Expected Levels are TBD

**All WIOA Core Programs**

Performance Indicator	Program Year: PY 2022		Program Year: PY 2023	
	Expected Level	Negotiated Level	Expected Level	Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving <u>Employers</u>				
Retention with Same Employers in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarters After Exit Rate <sup>1</sup>	79.0%		79.0%	
Repeat Business Customers Rate <sup>1</sup>	35.0%		35.0%	

Establishment of Performance Goals:

Proposed (Expected) levels of performance must be submitted by each partner agency as part of the State Plan. Proposed expected levels will be negotiated with the relevant federal agencies (Department of Labor and Department of Education) to determine the approved

performance goals for Program Year 2022 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023) and Program Year 2023 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024).

Notes:

1. Baseline indicators are those for which the partner agency will collect and report data but are not required to propose an expected level of performance: all Partners are required to propose expected levels in PY 2022 and PY 2023.
2. The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skills Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program.
3. The Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. States are not required to submit an expected level of performance for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 and beyond.
4. States may identify additional indicators of performance in their plans. Each partner agency will collect data on these indicators and results will be reported quarterly.

**Attachment List:**

**Attachment A:** Cost of Living and Affordability

**Attachment B:** Occupations: Typical Education Categories

**Attachment C:** Knowledge Skills and Abilities: O\*NET Definitions and Occupation Profile Example

**Attachment D:** Massachusetts Industry Profiles

**Attachment E:** MassHire Charter

**Attachment F:** Universal Design Principles

**Attachment G:** Draft High-Quality Youth Program Elements

**Attachment H:** WIOA State Plan Metrics Definitions

**Attachment I:** Statewide Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

**Attachment J:** Listing of MassHire Career Centers and Locations

**Attachment K:** 2017 Census of Agriculture State Profile for Massachusetts

**Attachment L:** Integrated, technology-based job seeker flow chart at for Career Centers (with Core Program partners)

**Attachment M:** EOLWD/MDCS Staff Training and Professional Development Overview

**Attachment N:** Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA)

**Attachment O:** JSVG Staffing Directory



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**ATTACHMENT A: Cost of Living and Affordability**

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The Council for Community and Economic Research measures cost of living based on a composite of price information from participating cities and metropolitan areas in each state. In each state, median housing prices were compared with median family incomes and mortgage interest rates, an analysis made by Moody's Analytics using U.S. Census Bureau data.

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**ATTACHMENT B: Occupations: Typical Education Categories**

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The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides the typical education requirement for hundreds of occupations. In this document, the assignments for this category are grouped as follows:

**BA+:**

1. Doctoral or professional degree
2. Master's degree
3. Bachelor's degree

**Sub-BA:**

- Associate's degree
- Postsecondary non-degree award
- Some college, no degree

**High School or Below:**

- High school diploma or equivalent
- No formal educational credential

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## ATTACHMENT C: Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: O\*NET Definitions and Occupation Profile Example

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### Knowledge, Skills and Abilities: O\*NET Definitions

#### *O\*NET Knowledge Descriptions*

Knowledge	Knowledge Description
Administration and Management	Knowledge of business and management principles involved in strategic planning, resource allocation, human resources modeling, leadership technique, production methods, and coordination of people and resources.
Biology	Knowledge of plant and animal organisms, their tissues, cells, functions, interdependencies, and interactions with each other and the environment.
Building and Construction	Knowledge of materials, methods, and the tools involved in the construction or repair of houses, buildings, or other structures such as highways and roads.
Chemistry	Knowledge of the chemical composition, structure, and properties of substances and of the chemical processes and transformations that they undergo. This includes uses of chemicals and their interactions, danger signs, production techniques, and disposal methods.
Clerical	Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.
Communications and Media	Knowledge of media production, communication, and dissemination techniques and methods. This includes alternative ways to inform and entertain via written, oral, and visual media.
Computers and Electronics	Knowledge of circuit boards, processors, chips, electronic equipment, and computer hardware and software, including applications and programming.
Customer and Personal Service	Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction.
Design	Knowledge of design techniques, tools, and principles involved in production of precision technical plans, blueprints, drawings, and models.
Economics and Accounting	Knowledge of economic and accounting principles and practices, the financial markets, banking and the analysis and reporting of financial data.
Education and Training	Knowledge of principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.
Engineering and Technology	Knowledge of the practical application of engineering science and technology. This includes applying principles, techniques, procedures, and equipment to the design and production of various goods and services.
English Language	Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
Fine Arts	Knowledge of the theory and techniques required to compose, produce, and perform works of music, dance, visual arts, drama, and sculpture.

Food Production	Knowledge of techniques and equipment for planting, growing, and harvesting food products (both plant and animal) for consumption, including storage/handling techniques.
Foreign Language	Knowledge of the structure and content of a foreign (non-English) language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition and grammar, and pronunciation.
Geography	Knowledge of principles and methods for describing the features of land, sea, and air masses, including their physical characteristics, locations, interrelationships, and distribution of plant, animal, and human life.
History and Archeology	Knowledge of historical events and their causes, indicators, and effects on civilizations and cultures.
Law and Government	Knowledge of laws, legal codes, court procedures, precedents, government regulations, executive orders, agency rules, and the democratic political process.
Mathematics	Knowledge of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics, and their applications.
Mechanical	Knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance.
Medicine and Dentistry	Knowledge of the information and techniques needed to diagnose and treat human injuries, diseases, and deformities. This includes symptoms, treatment alternatives, drug properties and interactions, and preventive health-care measures.
Personnel and Human Resources	Knowledge of principles and procedures for personnel recruitment, selection, training, compensation and benefits, labor relations and negotiation, and personnel information systems.
Philosophy and Theology	Knowledge of different philosophical systems and religions. This includes their basic principles, values, ethics, ways of thinking, customs, practices, and their impact on human culture.
Physics	Knowledge and prediction of physical principles, laws, their interrelationships, and applications to understanding fluid, material, and atmospheric dynamics, and mechanical, electrical, atomic and sub-atomic structures and processes.
Production and Processing	Knowledge of raw materials, production processes, quality control, costs, and other techniques for maximizing the effective manufacture and distribution of goods.
Psychology	Knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.
Public Safety and Security	Knowledge of relevant equipment, policies, procedures, and strategies to promote effective local, state, or national security operations for the protection of people, data, property, and institutions.
Sales and Marketing	Knowledge of principles and methods for showing, promoting, and selling products or services. This includes marketing strategy and tactics, product demonstration, sales techniques, and sales control systems.

Sociology and Anthropology	Knowledge of group behavior and dynamics, societal trends and influences, human migrations, ethnicity, cultures and their history and origins.
Telecommunications	Knowledge of transmission, broadcasting, switching, control, and operation of telecommunications systems.
Therapy and Counseling	Knowledge of principles, methods, and procedures for diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of physical and mental dysfunctions, and for career counseling and guidance.
Transportation	Knowledge of principles and methods for moving people or goods by air, rail, sea, or road, including the relative costs and benefits.

### ***O\*NET Skills Descriptions***

Skill	Skill Description
Active Learning	Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.
Active Listening	Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
Complex Problem Solving	Identifying complex problems and reviewing related information to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.
Coordination	Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
Critical Thinking	Using logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions or approaches to problems.
Equipment Maintenance	Performing routine maintenance on equipment and determining when and what kind of maintenance is needed.
Equipment Selection	Determining the kind of tools and equipment needed to do a job.
Installation	Installing equipment, machines, wiring, or programs to meet specifications.
Instructing	Teaching others how to do something.
Judgment and Decision Making	Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
Learning Strategies	Selecting and using training/instructional methods and procedures appropriate for the situation when learning or teaching new things.
Management of Financial Resources	Determining how money will be spent to get the work done, and accounting for these expenditures.
Management of Material Resources	Obtaining and seeing to the appropriate use of equipment, facilities, and materials needed to do certain work.
Management of Personnel Resources	Motivating, developing, and directing people as they work, identifying the best people for the job.
Mathematics	Using mathematics to solve problems.
Monitoring	Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
Negotiation	Bringing others together and trying to reconcile differences.
Operation and Control	Controlling operations of equipment or systems.

Operation Monitoring	Watching gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly.
Operations Analysis	Analyzing needs and product requirements to create a design.
Persuasion	Persuading others to change their minds or behavior.
Programming	Writing computer programs for various purposes.
Quality Control Analysis	Conducting tests and inspections of products, services, or processes to evaluate quality or performance.
Reading Comprehension	Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work related documents.
Repairing	Repairing machines or systems using the needed tools.
Science	Using scientific rules and methods to solve problems.
Service Orientation	Actively looking for ways to help people.
Social Perceptiveness	Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
Speaking	Talking to others to convey information effectively.
Systems Analysis	Determining how a system should work and how changes in conditions, operations, and the environment will affect outcomes.
Systems Evaluation	Identifying measures or indicators of system performance and the actions needed to improve or correct performance, relative to the goals of the system.
Technology Design	Generating or adapting equipment and technology to serve user needs.
Time Management	Managing one's own time and the time of others.
Troubleshooting	Determining causes of operating errors and deciding what to do about it.
Writing	Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.

### ***O\*NET Ability Descriptions***


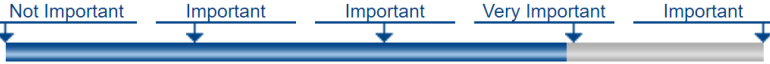

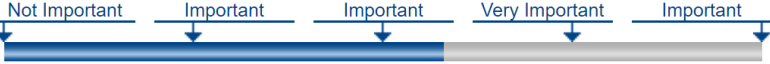












<b>Ability</b>	<b>Ability Description</b>
Arm-Hand Steadiness	The ability to keep your hand and arm steady while moving your arm or while holding your arm and hand in one position.
Auditory Attention	The ability to focus on a single source of sound in the presence of other distracting sounds.
Category Flexibility	The ability to generate or use different sets of rules for combining or grouping things in different ways.
Control Precision	The ability to quickly and repeatedly adjust the controls of a machine or a vehicle to exact positions.
Deductive Reasoning	The ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
Depth Perception	The ability to judge which of several objects is closer or farther away from you, or to judge the distance between you and an object.
Dynamic Flexibility	The ability to quickly and repeatedly bend, stretch, twist, or reach out with your body, arms, and/or legs.
Dynamic Strength	The ability to exert muscle force repeatedly or continuously over time. This involves muscular endurance and resistance to muscle fatigue.
Explosive Strength	The ability to use short bursts of muscle force to propel oneself (as in jumping or sprinting), or to throw an object.

Extent Flexibility	The ability to bend, stretch, twist, or reach with your body, arms, and/or legs.
Far Vision	The ability to see details at a distance.
Finger Dexterity	The ability to make precisely coordinated movements of the fingers of one or both hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble very small objects.
Flexibility of Closure	The ability to identify or detect a known pattern (a figure, object, word, or sound) that is hidden in other distracting material.
Fluency of Ideas	The ability to come up with a number of ideas about a topic (the number of ideas is important, not their quality, correctness, or creativity).
Glare Sensitivity	The ability to see objects in the presence of glare or bright lighting.
Gross Body Coordination	The ability to coordinate the movement of your arms, legs, and torso together when the whole body is in motion.
Gross Body Equilibrium	The ability to keep or regain your body balance or stay upright when in an unstable position.
Hearing Sensitivity	The ability to detect or tell the differences between sounds that vary in pitch and loudness.
Inductive Reasoning	The ability to combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events).
Information Ordering	The ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).
Manual Dexterity	The ability to quickly move your hand, your hand together with your arm, or your two hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble objects.
Mathematical Reasoning	The ability to choose the right mathematical methods or formulas to solve a problem.
Memorization	The ability to remember information such as words, numbers, pictures, and procedures.
Multi-limb Coordination	The ability to coordinate two or more limbs (for example, two arms, two legs, or one leg and one arm) while sitting, standing, or lying down. It does not involve performing the activities while the whole body is in motion.
Near Vision	The ability to see details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).
Night Vision	The ability to see under low light conditions.
Number Facility	The ability to add, subtract, multiply, or divide quickly and correctly.
Oral Comprehension	The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
Oral Expression	The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
Originality	The ability to come up with unusual or clever ideas about a given topic or situation, or to develop creative ways to solve a problem.
Perceptual Speed	The ability to quickly and accurately compare similarities and differences among sets of letters, numbers, objects, pictures, or patterns. The things to be compared may be presented at the same time or one after the other. This ability also includes comparing a presented object with a remembered object.

Peripheral Vision	The ability to see objects or movement of objects to one's side when the eyes are looking ahead.
Problem Sensitivity	The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
Rate Control	The ability to time your movements or the movement of a piece of equipment in anticipation of changes in the speed and/or direction of a moving object or scene.
Reaction Time	The ability to quickly respond (with the hand, finger, or foot) to a signal (sound, light, picture) when it appears.
Response Orientation	The ability to choose quickly between two or more movements in response to two or more different signals (lights, sounds, pictures). It includes the speed with which the correct response is started with the hand, foot, or other body part.
Selective Attention	The ability to concentrate on a task over a period of time without being distracted.
Sound Localization	The ability to tell the direction from which a sound originated.
Spatial Orientation	The ability to know your location in relation to the environment or to know where other objects are in relation to you.
Speech Clarity	The ability to speak clearly so others can understand you.
Speech Recognition	The ability to identify and understand the speech of another person.
Speed of Closure	The ability to quickly make sense of, combine, and organize information into meaningful patterns.
Speed of Limb Movement	The ability to quickly move the arms and legs.
Stamina	The ability to exert yourself physically over long periods of time without getting winded or out of breath.
Static Strength	The ability to exert maximum muscle force to lift, push, pull, or carry objects.
Time Sharing	The ability to shift back and forth between two or more activities or sources of information (such as speech, sounds, touch, or other sources).
Trunk Strength	The ability to use your abdominal and lower back muscles to support part of the body repeatedly or continuously over time without 'giving out' or fatiguing.
Visual Color Discrimination	The ability to match or detect differences between colors, including shades of color and brightness.
Visualization	The ability to imagine how something will look after it is moved around or when its parts are moved or rearranged.
Wrist-Finger Speed	The ability to make fast, simple, repeated movements of the fingers, hands, and wrists.
Written Comprehension	The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
Written Expression	The ability to communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand.



**Occupation Profile Example:**  
39-9021.00 - PERSONAL CARE AIDES

<u>Importance</u>	<u>Knowledge</u>
74 	<b>Customer and Personal Service</b> — Knowledge of principles and processes for providing customer and personal services. This includes customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and evaluation of customer satisfaction. <div> <div>Not Important</div> <div>Somewhat Important</div> <div>Important</div> <div>Very Important</div> <div>Extremely Important</div>  </div>
58 	<b>English Language</b> — Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar. <div> <div>Not Important</div> <div>Somewhat Important</div> <div>Important</div> <div>Very Important</div> <div>Extremely Important</div>  </div>
50 	<b>Psychology</b> — Knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral disorders. <div> <div>Not Important</div> <div>Somewhat Important</div> <div>Important</div> <div>Very Important</div> <div>Extremely Important</div>  </div>
<u>Importance</u>	<u>Skill</u>
72 	<b>Service Orientation</b> — Actively looking for ways to help people.
66 	<b>Social Perceptiveness</b> — Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
63 	<b>Active Listening</b> — Giving full attention to what others are saying, taking time to understand their points, asking questions, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
56 	<b>Speaking</b> — Talking to others to convey information effectively.
53 	<b>Monitoring</b> — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.
<u>Importance</u>	<u>Ability</u>
66 	<b>Oral Comprehension</b> — The ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences.
66 	<b>Oral Expression</b> — The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.
63 	<b>Problem Sensitivity</b> — The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
53 	<b>Deductive Reasoning</b> — The ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
53 	<b>Near Vision</b> — The ability to see details at close range (within a few feet of the observer).

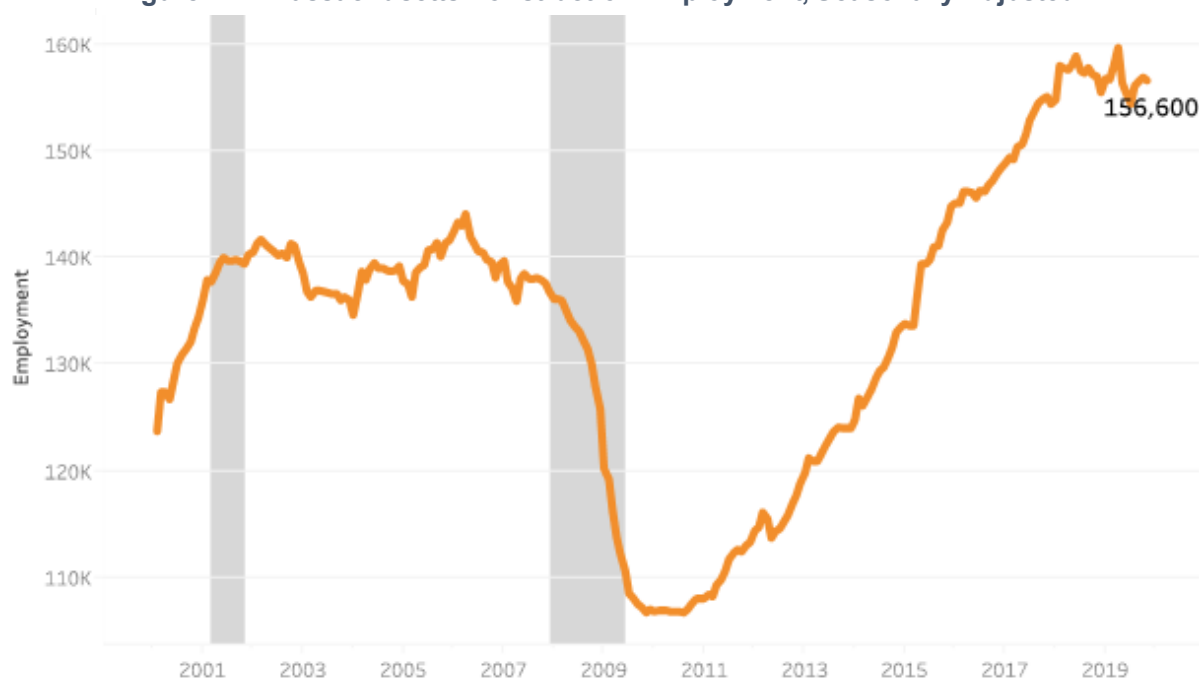
## ATTACHMENT D: Massachusetts Industry Profiles

### Construction

Massachusetts experienced large declines in construction employment from 2006 to 2011 due to the bursting of the housing bubble. At the low point, in November 2009, construction employment was at 106,700 jobs. Since November 2009, 49,900 jobs in the industry have been recovered.

In November 2019, employment was 156,600. The over-the-year change in November 2019 (-400 jobs, -0.3 percent) was 2,300 less when compared to November 2018 (+1,900, +1.2 percent). Even so, the number of jobs in this sector has been trending sharply upward over the last ten years.

**Figure 2.22 Massachusetts Construction Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics (CES-790), December 2019.

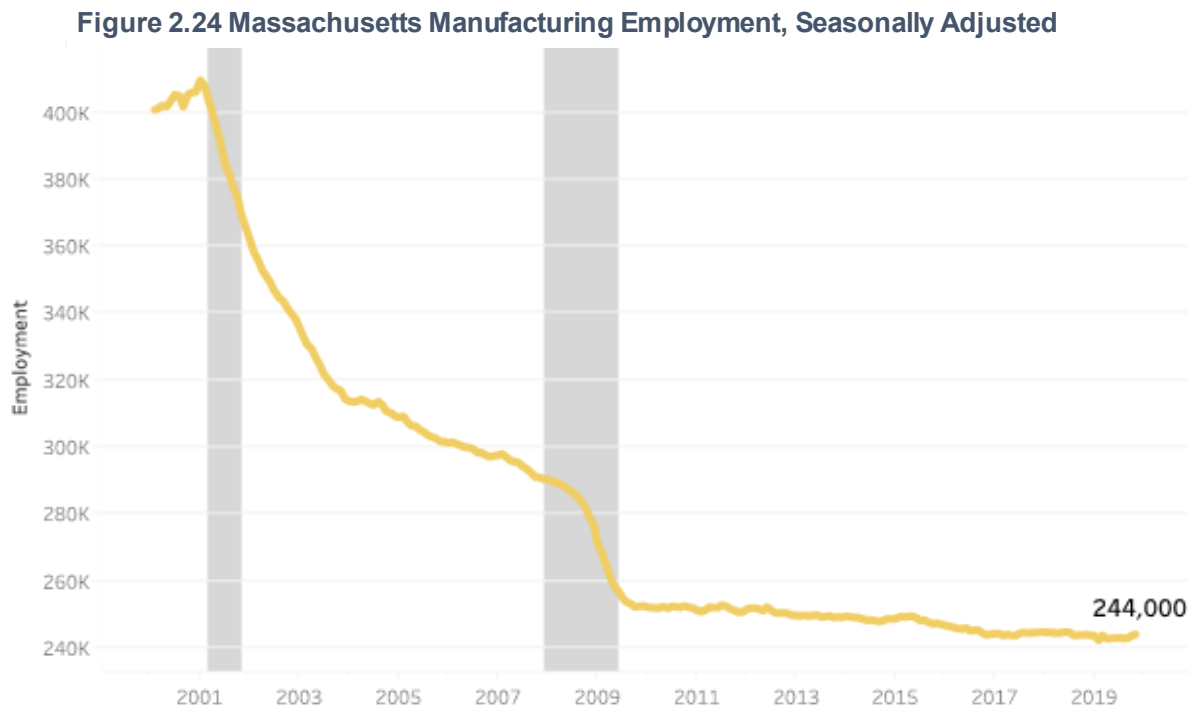
**Figure 2.23 Massachusetts Industry Trends: Construction**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Numeric Change
Establishments	19,287	19,774	20,626	21,095	21,127	+1,840
Total Employment	140,003	150,027	157,262	153,272	159,989	+19,986
Total Annual Wages	\$9,558,600,242	\$10,614,952,768	\$11,363,133,959	\$11,567,931,979	\$12,616,164,529	+\$3,057,564,287
Average Annual Wage	\$68,274	\$70,754	\$72,256	\$75,473	\$78,856	+\$10,582

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019.

## Manufacturing

Manufacturing is an often-discussed sector, both in Massachusetts and the United States. In 2018, Manufacturing accounted for \$53.256 billion, or 10.4 percent, of Massachusetts GDP. Though the number of jobs in Manufacturing has been declining, it remains an important sector for the Commonwealth, accounting for approximately eight percent of jobs through 2018. In November 2019, the employment in manufacturing was 156,700. The over-the-year change in November 2019 was 700 higher when compared to November 2018. Over the last five years, employment has declined by 4,600 jobs. There are, however, regional differences. In the Northeast, for example, employment in manufacturing has increased, and accounts for one of the region's highest employment sectors.



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics (CES-790), December 2019.

Within the Manufacturing sector, there are 21 subsectors with active establishments and employment in Massachusetts. These are divided into both Non-Durable Goods. Nine of these subsectors account for 81 percent of employment, each employing a minimum of 10,000 individuals. The largest of these subsectors is Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing, employing 52,900, or 21.7 percent of Manufacturing sector jobs. The second largest is Fabricated Metal Products Manufacturing, employing 31,760, and the third is Food Manufacturing with 25,750 employees. In each of the subsectors, Production Occupations employed the largest portion of the workforce, with the exception of Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing, where there were 13,040 employees in Architecture and Engineering Occupations compared with 12,100 in Production Occupations.

**Figure 2.25 Massachusetts Industry Trends: Manufacturing**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Numeric Change
Establishments	7,047	6,976	6,949	6,938	6,711	-336
Total Employment	250,300	249,084	245,686	244,589	245,091	-5,209
Total Annual Wages	\$20,875,988,670	\$21,458,401,001	\$21,222,751,154	\$21,549,990,595	\$21,709,210,405	+\$833,221,735
Average Annual Wage	\$83,404	\$86,149	\$86,382	\$88,107	\$88,576	+\$5,172

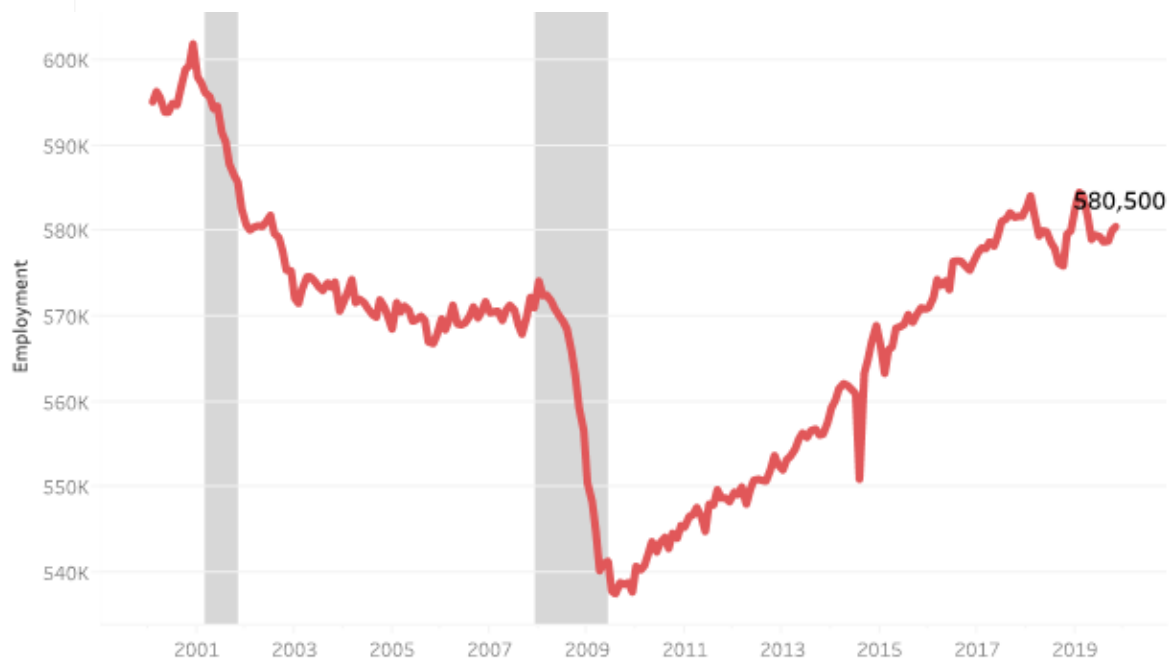
Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

### Trade, Transportation, and Utilities

This industry is heavily dependent on the general economic vitality of the Massachusetts economy. Employment peaked in January 2008 at 574,100 and began a rapid decline until 2010. At the low point, in August 2009, employment was 537,500. Since August 2009, 43,000 jobs in the industry have been recovered. Currently, industry employment is 6,400 jobs above its 2008 peak.

In November 2019, the employment was 579,900. The over-the-year change in November 2019 (+900 jobs, +0.2 percent) was 3,000 greater when compared to November 2018 (-2,100, -0.4 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past decade.

**Figure 2.26 Massachusetts Trade, Transportation and Utilities Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics (CES-790), December 2019.

**Figure 2.27 Massachusetts Industry Trends: Trade, Transportation and Utilities**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Numeric Change
Establishments	43,116	43,312	43,622	43,663	42,946	-170
Total Employment	589,785	596,140	594,228	598,808	604,871	+15,086
Total Annual Wages	\$28,035,762,397	\$29,362,869,213	\$29,726,832,118	\$31,157,815,706	\$32,609,203,183	+\$4,573,440,786
Average Annual Wage	\$268,465	\$276,629	\$278,120	\$295,330	\$306,243	+\$37,778

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019.

### Information

Massachusetts experienced large declines in information employment from 2001 to 2004 due to the bursting of the tech bubble and from 2008 to 2011 due to the bursting of the housing bubble. Industry employment has rebounded since the Great Recession and is currently 2,800 jobs above its 2008 peak.

In November 2019, employment was 94,300. The over-the-year change in November 2019 (+1,900 jobs, +2.1 percent) was 1,500 greater when compared to November 2018 (+400, +0.4 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the last eight years.

**Figure 2.28 Massachusetts Information Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics (CES-790), December 2019.

**Figure 2.29 Massachusetts Industry Trends: Information**

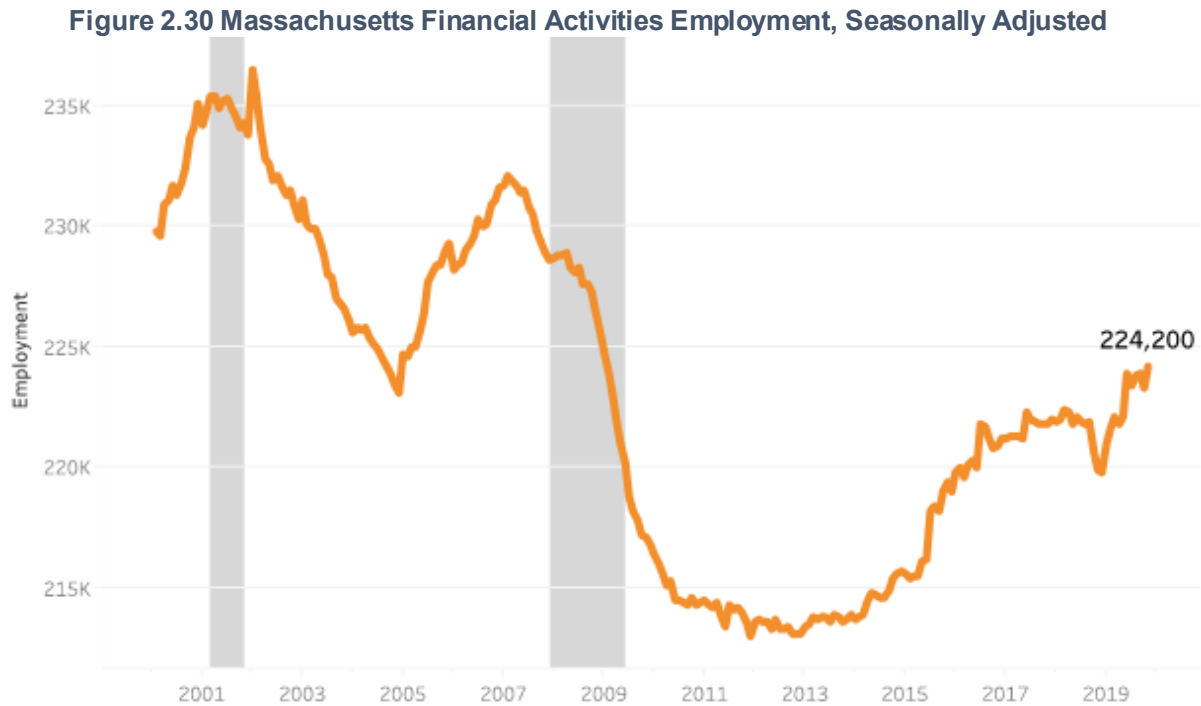
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Numeric Change
Establishments	4,714	4,969	5,119	5,437	5,670	+956
Total Employment	91,906	93,943	95,014	97,611	97,744	+5,838
Total Annual Wages	\$9,087,968,573	\$9,721,431,191	\$10,050,833,173	\$10,686,602,440	\$11,517,113,432	+\$2,429,144,859
Average Annual Wage	\$98,883	\$103,482	\$105,783	\$109,482	\$117,829	+\$18,946

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019.

### Financial Activities

Financial activities employment in Massachusetts peaked at 232,100 jobs in February 2007 and experienced a rapid decline until reaching 213,000 employed in December 2011. Since the low, 11,200 jobs in the industry have been recovered.

In November 2019, employment was 224,200. The over-the-year change in November 2019 (+4,300 jobs, +2.0 percent) was 2,400 greater when compared to November 2018 (-1,900, 0.9 percent). The number of jobs in this industry has been trending upward over the past six years.



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics (CES-790), December 2019.

**Figure 2.31 Massachusetts Industry Trends: Financial Activities**

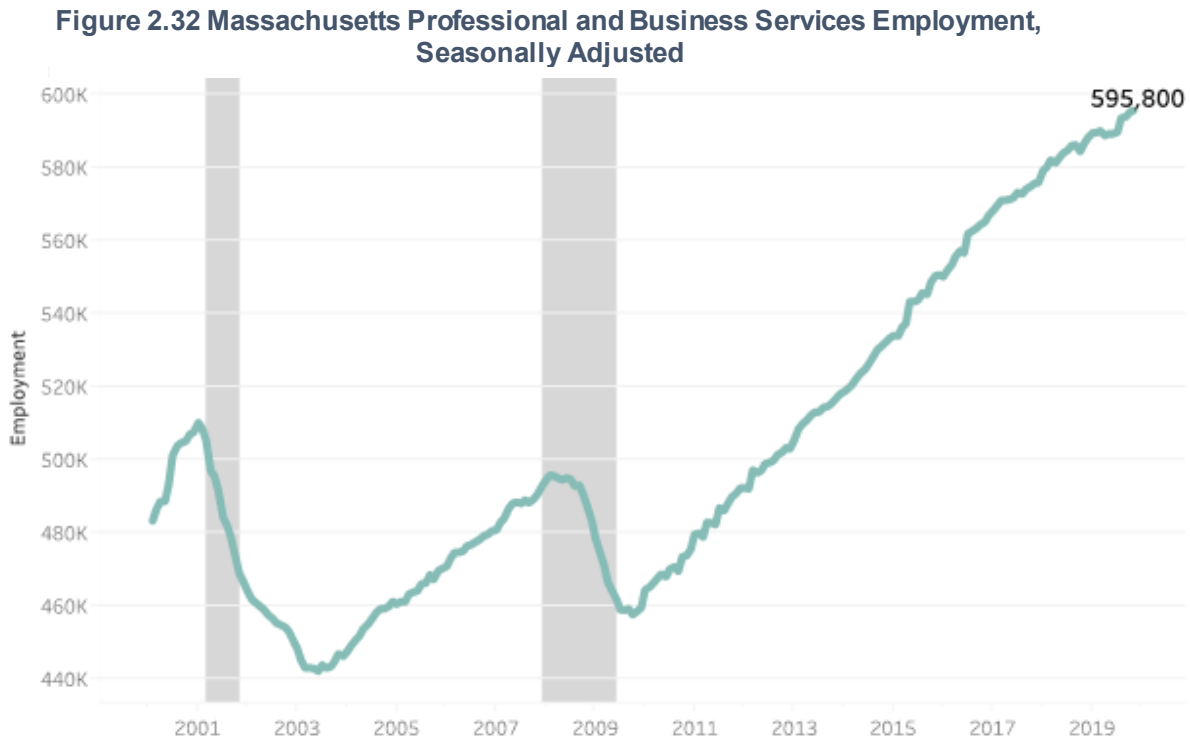
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Numeric Change
Establishments	16,421	16,581	16,985	17,307	17,521	+1,100
Total Employment	209,107	212,156	215,947	217,331	217,895	+8,788
Total Annual Wages	\$25,996,522,989	\$27,700,116,859	\$28,056,653,474	\$29,540,409,101	\$31,469,112,896	+\$5,472,589,907
Average Annual Wage	\$210,427	\$218,771	\$219,218	\$228,787	\$242,079	+\$31,652

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019.

### Professional and Business Services

Employment in Massachusetts' professional and business services industry fell rapidly from 2001 to 2003 due to the bursting of the tech bubble and from 2008 to 2009 due to the bursting of the housing bubble. After reaching a low of 457,600 jobs in October 2009, industry employment has been steadily rising. Currently, employment is 100,000 jobs above its February 2008 peak.

In November 2019, the employment was 595,800. The over-the-year change in November 2019 (+9,100 jobs, +1.6 percent) was 1,800 less when compared to November 2018 (+10,900, +1.9 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past ten years.



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics (CES-790), December 2019.

**Figure 2.33 Massachusetts Industry Trends: Professional and Business Services**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Numeric Change
Establishments	44,180	45,587	46,648	47,327	47,475	+3,295
Total Employment	521,809	538,847	553,110	568,959	590,439	+68,630
Total Annual Wages	\$47,917,775,291	\$52,216,196,013	\$54,035,568,115	\$58,334,602,637	\$63,651,858,296	+\$15,734,083,005
Average Annual Wage	\$282,783	\$303,166	\$297,604	\$307,274	\$318,980	+\$36,197

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019.

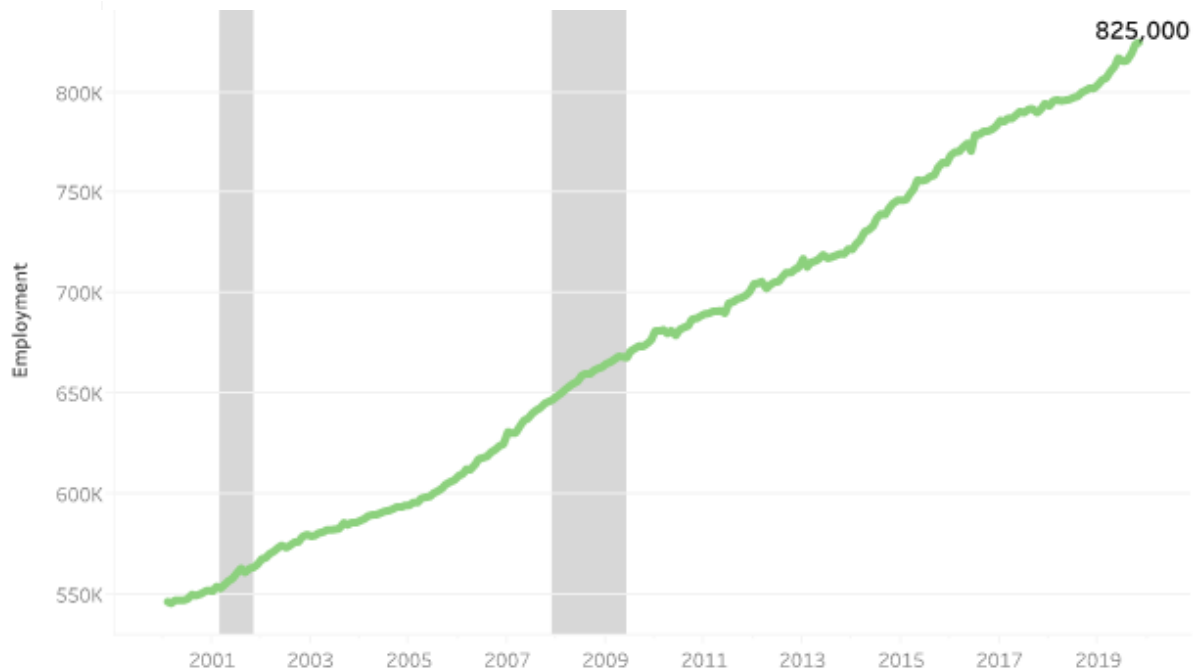


### Education and Health Services

Massachusetts did not experience a decline in education and health services employment during the Great Recession, although the rate of job growth did slow down.

In November 2019, employment was 825,000. The over-the-year change in November 2019 (+22,700 jobs, +2.8 percent) was 12,100 greater when compared to November 2018 (+10,600 jobs, +1.3 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward for over two decades.

**Figure 2.34 Massachusetts Education and Health Services Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics (CES-790), December 2019.

**Figure 2.35 Massachusetts Industry Trends: Education and Health Services**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Numeric Change
Establishments	50,718	54,021	58,802	62,419	67,682	+16,964
Total Employment	945,674	967,708	988,392	1,001,894	1,008,494	+62,820
Total Annual Wages	\$51,562,609,934	\$53,965,694,075	\$55,896,641,058	\$58,050,588,758	\$59,341,993,847	+\$7,779,383,913
Average Annual Wage	\$110,057	\$112,817	\$114,676	\$117,606	\$119,615	+\$9,558

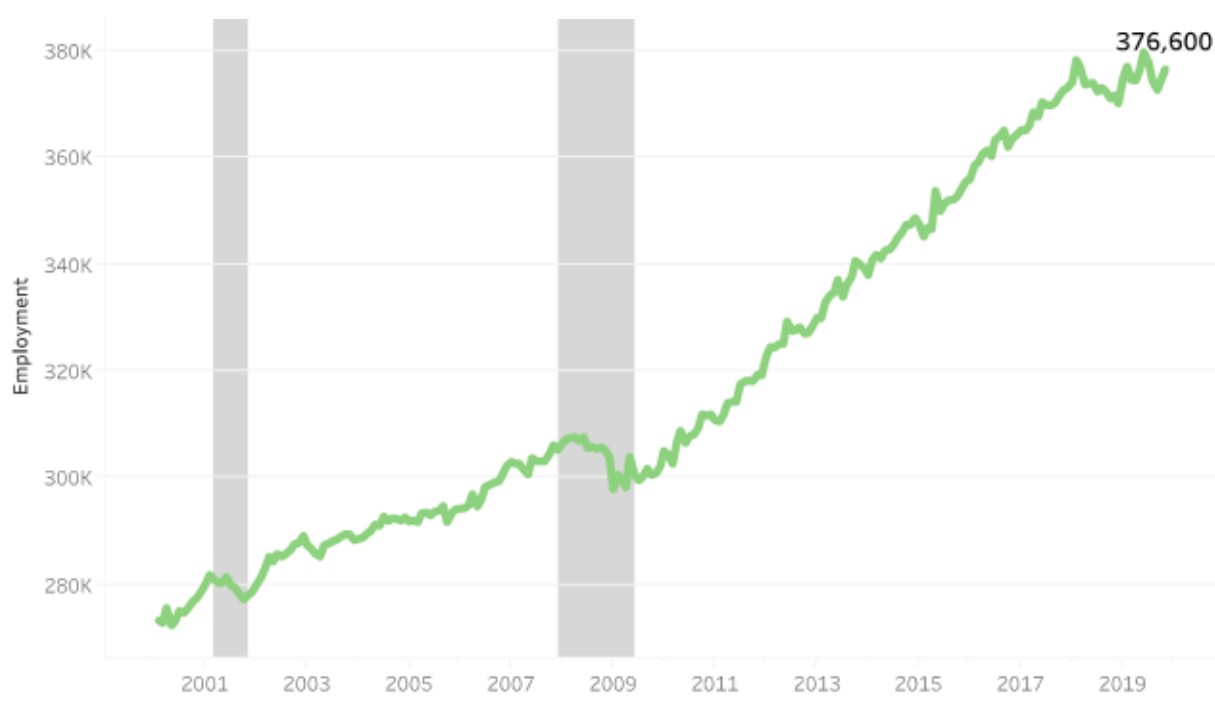
Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019.

### Leisure and Hospitality

Leisure and hospitality employment in Massachusetts declined during the Great Recession, reaching a low of 297,800 in January 2009. Currently, industry employment is 69,000 jobs above its April 2008 peak.

In November 2019, employment was 376,600. The over-the-year change in November 2019 (+4,900 jobs, +1.3 percent) was 5,900 greater when compared to November 2018 (-1,000, -0.3 percent). Overall, the number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past ten years.

**Figure 2.36 Massachusetts Leisure and Hospitality Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics (CES-790), December 2019.

**Figure 2.37 Massachusetts Industry Trends: Leisure and Hospitality**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Numeric Change
Establishments	20,164	20,390	20,693	20,974	20,907	+743
Total Employment	348,391	356,587	367,546	374,838	381,611	+33,220
Total Annual Wages	\$8,236,076,117	\$8,849,966,855	\$9,481,138,906	\$10,061,165,497	\$10,610,464,214	+\$2,374,388,097
Average Annual Wage	\$56,589	\$58,793	\$60,625	\$62,821	\$65,153	+\$8,564

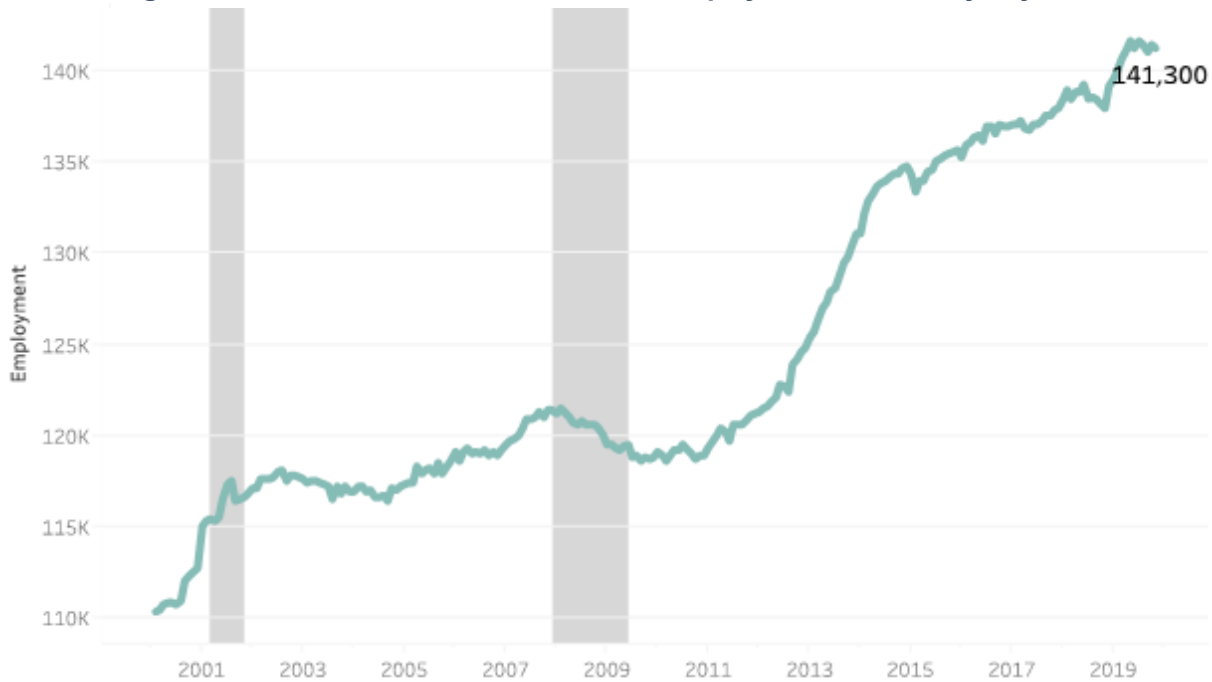
Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

### Other Services

The Other Services sector comprises establishments engaged in providing services not specifically provided for elsewhere in the industry classification system. Examples range from automotive repair and maintenance to environment, conservation, and wildlife organizations. Other services employment in Massachusetts experienced a decline from 2007 to 2010. Industry employment is currently above its previous peak.

In November 2019, employment was 141,300. The over-the-year change in November 2019 (+3,300 jobs, +2.4 percent) was 3,200 greater when compared to November 2018 (+100, +0.1 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past nine years.

**Figure 2.38 Massachusetts Other Services Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics (CES-790), December 2019.

**Figure 2.39 Massachusetts Industry Trends: Other Services, Except Public Administration**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Numeric Change
Establishments	20,861	21,012	21,578	21,997	21,669	+808
Total Employment	114,988	115,583	117,639	119,070	120,707	+5,719
Total Annual Wages	\$3,944,457,405	\$4,099,179,183	\$4,277,983,221	\$4,415,493,290	\$4,663,622,659	+\$719,165,254
Average Annual Wage	\$34,303	\$35,465	\$36,365	\$37,083	\$38,636	+\$4,333

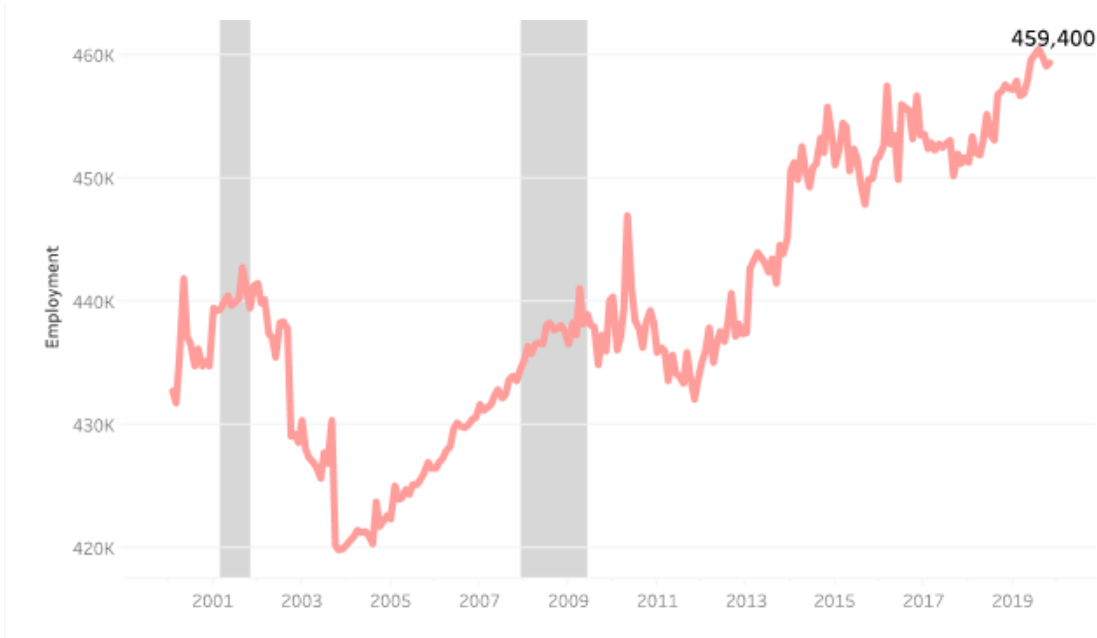
Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

### Government

Massachusetts experienced declines in government employment from 2009 to 2011, reaching a low of 432,100 jobs in November 2011. Currently, government employment is greater than in any previous year.

In November 2019, employment was 459,400. The over-the-year change in November 2019 (+1,800 jobs, +0.4 percent) was 4,600 less when compared to November 2018 (+6,400, +1.4 percent). The number of jobs in this sector has been trending upward over the past eight years.

**Figure 2.40 Massachusetts Government Employment, Seasonally Adjusted**



Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, Current Employment Statistics (CES-790), December 2019

**Figure 2.41 Massachusetts Industry Trends: Government**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Numeric Change
Establishments	4,019	4,055	4,134	4,235	4,288	+269
Total Employment	137,120	136,524	137,145	136,346	137,226	+106
Total Annual Wages	\$9,563,206,984	\$9,983,066,110	\$10,018,490,405	\$10,377,595,139	\$10,743,193,869	+\$1,179,986,885
Average Annual Wage	\$69,743	\$73,123	\$73,050	\$76,112	\$78,288	+\$8,545

Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019.

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## ATTACHMENT E: MassHire Charter

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**VISION:** MassHire envisions a better future for people and businesses of Massachusetts through meaningful work and sustainable growth.

**MISSION:** MassHire creates and sustains powerful connections between businesses and job seekers through a statewide network of employment professionals.

**VALUES:**

**COLLABORATION:** MassHire believes in the power of partnership and streamlined integration of services to achieve effective and timely results for those we serve.

**RESPECT:** MassHire is committed to understanding and valuing the diverse, unique requirements and professional goals of the businesses and people we serve.

**RELIABILITY:** MassHire creates trust and reliability by consistently delivering high-quality professional services at each location and in every interaction.

**INGENUITY:** MassHire leverages flexibility, expertise, and knowledge to successfully meet our mission, regardless of new challenges and circumstances.

**ESSENCE:** “I feel like a valued, professional partner of MassHire.”

**POSITIONING:** MassHire is an essential catalyst for professional and economic growth across the Commonwealth.

**PROMISE:** MassHire promises to champion prosperity, connecting employers with talent and job seekers with tools, services, and connections to achieve meaningful and sustained employment.

**PERSONALITY:** “I am your trusted partner in achieving your personal and business goals. I embrace your needs as my mission and offer a welcoming, professional experience at every point in our journey together. I believe in you as I do in myself. Things change quickly... I GET IT. You can always depend on me to offer guidance, resources, and support. If you want a job, seek to fortify your business for the long-term, or need a quick response to a pressing need, I can help. “Let’s get to work!”

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## **ATTACHMENT F: Universal Design Principles**

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The following. The examples for MassHire are provided by the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMASS Boston.

### **Principle One: Equitable Use**

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

Guidelines:

- A. Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
- B. Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users.
- C. Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users.
- D. Make the design appealing to all users.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

1. During orientation, ask all customers if they need assistance completing registration rather than only individuals you think may have a disability.
2. Make information on all services available to all customers and avoid assuming that certain customer groups or customers may or may not be interested in certain services.

### **Principle Two: Flexibility in Use**

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Guidelines:

- Provide choice in methods of use.
- Accommodate right- or left-handed access and use.
- Facilitate the user's accuracy and precision.
- Provide adaptability to the user's pace.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

- Provide options for a career interest inventory that can be completed online, on paper, or through answering questions through an interview.
- Provide a range of options for inputting information in a computer including a keyboard, trackball, or a mouse.
- Provide information through both online self-directed methods, as well as in group workshop settings.

### **Principle Three: Simple and Intuitive**

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level. Eliminate unnecessary complexity.

Guidelines:

- Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
- Be consistent with user expectations and intuition.
- Accommodate a range of literacy and language skills.
- Arrange information consistent with its importance.
- Provide effective prompting and feedback during and after task completion.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

- a) In an interviewing workshop, when talking about potential interview questions, role-play answers to questions, then promptly give suggestions about how interviewees might improve their answers.
- b) Provide information in multiple languages.
- c) Use touch screens with graphics for inputting information in a kiosk or computer.

**Principle Four: Perceptible Information**

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

Guidelines:

- Use different modes (pictorial, verbal, tactile) for redundant presentation of essential information.
- Provide adequate contrast between essential information and its surroundings.
- Maximize "legibility" of essential information.
- Differentiate elements in ways that can be described (i.e., make it easy to give instructions or directions).
- Provide compatibility with a variety of techniques or devices used by people with sensory limitations.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

- During trainings and workshops, present information verbally and in writing, and incorporate graphics to illustrate information, so individuals can receive information in the manner that best suits them.
- In the resource room, for all signage, use graphics and pictures combined with text. Use color to correspond to different types of information (e.g., job listings printed on different color paper from workshop notices; job listings for different job categories contained in different color binders).

**Principle Five: Tolerance for Error**

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

Guidelines:

- Arrange elements to minimize hazards and errors: the most used elements are most accessible; hazardous elements are eliminated, isolated, or shielded.
- Provide warnings of hazards and errors.
- Provide fail-safe features.
- Discourage unconscious action in tasks that require vigilance.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

- In the resource room or library, configure most computers so that customers cannot inadvertently change settings, while having a couple of computers with a more flexible configuration so that users can more easily access the built-in accommodation features, and change these as necessary for their specific needs.
- Have computer procedures set up that ensure automatic back-up of job seeker resume, cover letters, job listing research, etc., avoiding accidental deletion.

**Principle Six: Low Physical Effort**

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, and with a minimum of fatigue.

Guidelines:

- Allow user to maintain a neutral body position.
- Use reasonable operating forces.
- Minimize repetitive actions.
- Minimize sustained physical effort.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

1. Provide adjustable chairs, desks, and tables for workstations and classrooms.
2. Avoid storing paper resource materials in file drawers that can be heavy and difficult to open. Use notebooks or other alternatives instead which are more accessible.
3. Set up Macros on computer keyboards for standard cover letter and resume text.

**Principle Seven: Size and Space for Approach and Use**

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

Guidelines:

- Provide a clear line of sight to important elements for any seated or standing user.
- Make the reach to all components comfortable for any seated or standing user.
- Accommodate variations in hand and grip size.
- Provide adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistance.



Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

- ✓ Plan group meetings and workshops in a room large enough for a sign language interpreter and so that individuals who use wheelchairs have ample space to turn around.
- ✓ Design the front desk area so there are sections where the counter height is appropriate for customers who are standing, as well as a section that is lower so individuals in wheelchairs can interact with staff on a face-to-face level, and easily reach documents and materials.

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## **ATTACHMENT G: Draft High-Quality Youth Program Elements**

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*Developed by the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board Youth Committee (February 2018)*

- **Work-based learning experiences**
  - Structured exposure to work opportunities
- **Robust case management**
  - Caring adults who provide support, coaching, and on-going feedback to build self-efficacy
- **Access to support services**
  - Connect to resources to enable participation such as childcare and transportation
- **Employer Engagement**
  - Demand-driven program design and structure to lead to job placement and career opportunities
- **Employability (“soft”) Skills Development**
  - Job readiness skills: communication, teamwork, problem solving, etc.
- **Occupational or Academic Skills Progression**
  - Enhances literacy and numeracy skills to ensure career growth

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**ATTACHMENT H: WIOA STATE PLAN Metrics Definitions**


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<b>Statewide Metric</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Shared Customer	A customer that received services from MassHire and one or more partner agencies.
Customer Diversity	Demographics of customers (e.g., race/ethnicity, age, gender, and disability)
Entered Employment*	A customer who is in unsubsidized employment.
Median Earnings*	The wage paid to hired customers that falls in the middle of the earnings distribution; half earned less - half earned more.
Employment Retention*	A customer who remains employed during consecutive quarters.
Credential Attainment*	A recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent including valid industry-based credentials.
Educational Advancement*	Progression in the enrollment and/or completion of postsecondary education, and occupational skills trainings.
Career/wage “pathway”	Progression in a shared customer’s educational advancement, credential attainment, employment and wages over time.
Apprenticeship	A work-based training program that has been registered with the Massachusetts Division of Apprenticeship Standards.
Work-Based Learning	An educational strategy that aligns classroom and workplace learning with academic, technical and employability skills in a work setting. (Examples include internships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, etc.)
Businesses Served*	A business customer that has received a service from MassHire or a partner organization.
Repeat Businesses*	A business customer that has received a service from MassHire or a partner organization in multiple time periods.
Referred applicants hired	A jobseeker customer referred to a job posting of a business customer who was subsequently hired by that business.
Business Customer Satisfaction	A measure of how a business customer feels the workforce system met their business need(s).
Time to employment	The amount of time between an unemployed customer’s first service with the workforce system and their hire date.
Job Posting	An employment opportunity published and distributed by workforce system partners.

*\*Denotes a performance metric that is also reported to the federal government by MassHire and partner agencies.*

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**ATTACHMENT I: Statewide Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

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**I. Introduction to State WIOA MOU**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. The State WIOA MOU articulates agreement among all state-level workforce system partners to fulfill the WIOA mission and strategies outlined in the 2020 Massachusetts' WIOA Combined State Plan.

**A. WIOA Principles**

WIOA strengthens the United States public workforce development system through innovation, alignment, and improvement of employment, training, and education programs, and promotes economic growth. WIOA stresses three principles for the workforce system:

- **Program Alignment**

- a. Unified strategic planning across a wide range of partners and programs (defined in Sections III A and B of this MOU)
- b. Enhanced role for State and Local Area Workforce Boards in developing and implementing a WIOA State Plan

- **Effective Service Delivery**

- Engagement of businesses and alignment of education and training activities through career pathways
- Partnerships and investments in the MassHire Career Center delivery system

- **Increased Accountability**

- Common, federally designed WIOA measures across WIOA titles I, II, III, IV as identified by the federal government
- State-designed performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of education and workforce programs
- Accountability and transparency through reporting and evaluations

**B. Vision for the Massachusetts Workforce System – An Integrated System**

All Massachusetts residents will benefit from a world-class, modern, integrated system of education, workforce, and business services that supports *career pathways* for individuals and leads to a more informed, educated, diverse, and skilled workforce that meets the Commonwealth's businesses' demands and sustains a diverse labor force and thriving economy.

MOU partners will work to:

- a. **Design career pathways** aligned with business demand across federal, state, and community-based partners
- b. **Improve employability skills and transitions to postsecondary education and training** for individuals with barriers to employment including under-educated, limited English proficiency adults, individuals with disabilities, youth, and young adults
- c. **Assist low-income individuals and families to achieve economic self-sufficiency** through labor-market driven credentialing and employment, and leveraging supports and services provided by the broader partner network (MOU signatories)
- d. **Meet the needs of both job seekers and businesses** who engage in the public workforce system
  - i. **Build an integrated, statewide technical assistance team** to support problem resolution and continuous quality improvement and oversight to Local Area MOU teams to ensure that all regions (Local Area MOU teams) are operating collaboratively and effectively.

## II. Purpose of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

The Purpose of the MOU is to:

- **Articulate a coordinated vision for organizing the Massachusetts public workforce system** to produce the best possible outcomes for shared customers, including youth, job seekers, and businesses.
- **Establish agreement at the state level to design partnerships and coordinate service delivery systems through the MOU partners** (both Core Partners and Additional Partners identified in Sections III A and B of this MOU) to ensure that Massachusetts businesses and job seekers, including those individuals with disabilities, low-income status, education or language barriers, Veterans and other individuals “shared” by the MOU partners achieve/demonstrate measurable and better access and outcomes in the areas of education, training, job placement, wages, and economic mobility.
- **Affirm the definition and set of shared infrastructure costs as provided in MOU Sections VII**, to support partnerships and service delivery between the WIOA Core Partners (identified in Section III A of this MOU), specialized centers such as Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Area Offices, and/or affiliated centers, and the Local Area MassHire Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Centers in Local Areas as authorized by WIOA.
- **Guide the continued development of Local Area partnerships and Local Area MOU agreements** (as required by WIOA Section 121(b)/WIOA Regulations 20 CFR Part 678.500) on how services can be connected, integrated, or enhanced by

sharing staffing, resources, or jointly designed services in ways that improve outcomes for shared customers – youth, job seekers and businesses.

- a. This MOU confirms the framework for Local Area MOUs as outlined in the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Joint Partner Local Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) – 2nd REVISION](#). This policy will be updated during Fiscal Year 2021.
- b. If Local Area WIOA Core Partners cannot execute an MOU that meets the statewide expectations outlined in the Joint WIOA Local Area MOU policy (referenced above), the state WIOA Core Partners will finalize the agreement for the Local Area through an approved dispute resolution process as provided for by the MassHire State Workforce Board and the Governor. Departments administering WIOA funding and departments administering programs that are WIOA Core Partners (listed in Section III A of this State WIOA MOU) shall have input into the development of the dispute resolution process.

### III. **Massachusetts Workforce Partners (WIOA Core Partners and Additional Partners)**

A. Consistent with WIOA, Section 121(b), and WIOA Regulations, 20 CFR 678.400, the following programs are identified as Core Partners:

- **The Adult Program (Title I of WIOA)**, as part of the MassHire Department of Career Services (DCS), Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), programs authorized under Title I, including Job Corps, YouthBuild, Native American programs, and Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers programs;
- **The Dislocated Worker Program (Title I)**, as part of MDCS, EOLWD;
- **The Youth Program (Title I)**, as part of MDCS, EOLWD;
- **The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (Title II)**, as part of Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Executive Office of Education (EOE);
- **The Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III)**, as part of MDCS, EOLWD;
- **The Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV)**, as part of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS);
- **Federal-state unemployment compensation program**, as part of the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA), EOLWD;
- **Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of Title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))**, as part of MDCS, EOLWD;
- **Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)** as part of MDCS, EOLWD;
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)** as part of Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), EOHHS; and

- **Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**, (Programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C.2015(d)(4)), as part of DTA, EOHHS;
- **Senior Community Service Employment Program** (Programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

**B. Additional Partners (not receiving WIOA funding)** included in the state team and suggested for Local Area consideration in the development/continuation of the 16 Local Area MOUs.

- Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
  - Massachusetts Office of Business Development
  - Department of Housing and Community Development
- Executive Office of Education
  - Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Educational Act of 2018, Chapter 70, Chapter 74 funded programs
  - Department of Higher Education
- Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services
- Division of Apprentice Standards
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Correction
- Commonwealth Corporation
- Community Based Organizations
- Operational ABLE
- Senior Services America, Inc.
- Business associations
- Philanthropy

**C. Role of MOU Partners and the State MOU**

The State WIOA MOU (this document) was initially established as part of the Massachusetts 2016 WIOA Combined State Plan with input from MOU Core and Additional Partners, stakeholders, and the general public. The role of the State WIOA MOU is to improve outcomes for job seekers and business customers by organizing resources, services, and structures through a "customer" lens rather than the bureaucratic administration of federal or state resources. The State WIOA MOU is designed to outline areas of agreement that help the Commonwealth implement WIOA including:

- a. Focus on Business-Driven Services

- b. Priority of Service for Individuals with Barriers to Employment
- c. Streamlining Workforce Structures (Workforce Boards, Service Delivery, etc.)
- d. Partnerships Across WIOA Programs
- e. Regional Planning
- f. Performance Metrics Across All Partners (including new state-driven metrics)

In addition, the State WIOA MOU is intended to further Massachusetts-driven strategic initiatives to enhance the workforce system including:

- Integrating the MassHire Vision, Mission, and Values
- Pursuing the goals and strategies of the 2020 WIOA Combined State Plan
- Expanding capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment
- Improving career mobility and employment outcomes for youth
- Supporting business growth and sustainability, elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses
- Ensuring Massachusetts has a world-class service delivery system by integrating use of modern tools and techniques
- Developing statewide data sharing initiatives to facilitate program and partner integration (e.g., Workforce Connect).

The MassHire Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Centers will continue to convene the various WIOA Core and Additional Partners to leverage relationships with the business community and enhance a coordinated approach to outreach and service delivery. Most importantly, connecting outreach activities to employment outcomes of job seekers across the partners is a significant task for a truly “integrated” system.

In addition, the Core Partners will implement “priority of service” requirements to ensure that individuals with barriers (including individuals who are low-income, have limited education or technical skills, limited English proficiency, Veterans, ex-offenders, recipients of public assistance or face other barriers to employment such as disabilities, homelessness, etc.) are able to access critical employment and training services through the MassHire Career Center system and WIOA Core Partner programs.

In order to shift MassHire Career Center practices to develop a priority of service, all MOU Core and Additional Partners (listed in Sections III A and B of this MOU) shall work together with MassHire Career Centers to:

- i. *Refine the local definition of Shared Customers between MOU Core and Additional Partners* in the Local Area MOU to foster a clear understanding of how multiple providers, services, and resources should support an individual person or business;



- ii. *Implement the Local Area's MassHire Career Center Customer Flow and service practices across WIOA Core and Additional Partner agencies, including embedding universal design principles to ensure the accessibility and availability of services to Shared Customers;*
- iii. *Utilize robust technology tools to scale-up practices and provide more significant supports for individuals with barriers to employment, including basic skill assessment, remediation, and career development tools; and*
- iv. *Track and evaluate the outcomes for individuals who face barriers to employment.*

#### IV. MOU Agreements for State Partners

- All of the State WIOA MOU Core and Additional Partners agree to the following activities at state level:
  1. **Participate in the process to develop a WIOA Combined State Plan** and subsequent updates to the Plan, including reviewing, commenting, and approving the appropriate operational planning elements of the Combined State Plan that impact programs and funding that serve shared customers;
  2. **Commit to develop a shared understanding of partner programs and policies** and to identify and remove barriers for participation (state and local level) in the MassHire system. Define and share information on:
    - A. Populations served by partner systems
    - B. Eligibility criteria of partner systems
    - C. Resources available to businesses.
  3. **Identify individuals** best representing each of the Core and Additional WIOA Partners (defined as including Title I, II, III, IV, TANF/SNAP, and other partners), as appropriate, to serve on Local Area MassHire Workforce Boards
    - A. The Local Area Chief Elected Official (CEO) designated by the Governor consults with the Adult Basic Education (ABE) state director to ensure ABE is properly represented on the Local Area MassHire Board. If there are multiple ABE programs in a region, the CEO develops a process for ABE program directors to nominate a representative to serve on the local Board with input from the state ABE Director.
  4. **Identify individuals that best represent the MOU Core and Additional Partners to participate in the state's certification process of Local Area MassHire Workforce Boards** to ensure MassHire Boards properly consider and serve the needs of the WIOA Core Partner program.
  5. **Identify individuals that best represent their WIOA Core Partner(s)** (listed in Section III A) to serve on the Local Area WIOA Lead Operator competitive selection

process managed by the MassHire Board to ensure the Local Area's MassHire Career Center(s) serves the needs of the WIOA Core Partner program.

6. **Commit to the development of statewide policies and programs across Core and Additional Partners** that build service pathways for youth to develop employability and career navigation skills, and expand Work Based Learning and career pathways for youth and young people. The United States Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services have agreed that Career Pathways are:

*A series of connected education and training strategies and support services that enable individuals to secure industry relevant certification and obtain employment within an occupational area and to advance to higher levels of future education and employment in that area.*

7. **Participate in business initiatives and strategies** that are coordinated across the system (including the work of MassHire BizWorks and the Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet, MRC employer partnerships, the Workforce Training Fund, the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Funds, and others).
8. **Continue to define and build an online, common intake and referral portal** to work across the data systems of MOU partners (as appropriate) to facilitate referrals, registration, assessment, career planning, and data reporting for "shared" customers. The MOU Partners will continue to have representatives on a committee that works to design the business requirements for an online tool.
  - a) MOU partners will develop policies regarding referrals among agencies for prioritizing enrollments (e.g., when there is a waitlist).
9. **Design state and regional training for front-line staff** who are delivering services for each WIOA program partner. Critical training areas include:
  1. Program eligibility criteria for services and referral processes for the WIOA Core Program (Section III A and B)
  2. Business services offered by each MOU partner
  3. Labor market information on high-demand industry and careers produced by the MassHire Department of Career Services and Department of Unemployment Assistance
  4. Best practices for serving WIOA priority populations (WIOA priority populations includes individuals that are: low income, low skilled, persons with Limited English Proficiency, people with disabilities, older workers, returning citizens, racial/ethnic minorities, Veterans, unemployment claimants, etc.)
  5. Evidence-based models for integrated education and training, career pathways, wrap-around/college and career readiness support services

10. **Continue to implement a uniform methodology for calculating infrastructure costs and shared resources within Local Area MOUs**, including in-kind staff contributions such as MRC vocational rehabilitation counseling staff time or Adult Basic Education out-stationing staff. Each partner will negotiate with the local area on the type of activity and the type of support provided.

- See Sections VII C-F for detail on calculations for state and local area cost-sharing mechanisms.
- All MOU Core and Additional Partners agree to revise the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Joint Core Partner Local Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) – 2nd REVISION guidance](#) that includes directions for Local Areas on Core and Additional Partners required on the Local Area MOU planning teams, as well as the required Local Area MOU content that demonstrates Local Area Core and Additional Partner commitment and activity toward building an integrated workforce system. MOU Planning Teams are led by the Local Area MassHire Workforce Board and CEO and is comprised of individuals who are empowered to represent the MOU Core and Additional Partner agency or organization for the purpose of developing and executing the Local Area MOU, modeled on the State WIOA MOU.
- State WIOA MOU Core and Additional Partners agree to support the WIOA Local Area MOU Planning Teams to ensure Local Areas are demonstrating reasonable progress toward meeting the required Local Area MOU provisions as required in the [WIOA Joint Core Partner Local MOU Policy Guidance](#). MOU support includes reviewing and providing written feedback on Local Area MOUs submitted by Local Area, providing training and technical assistance to local areas through a Joint Partner MOU Support Team, facilitating peer-to-peer learning by sharing successes and best practices from Local Areas, and regular review and feedback on the Local Area MOU. State Core and Additional Partners agree to facilitate connections with existing Local Area planning teams (e.g., regional planning, etc.) to ensure strategic alignment with other planning and activity taking place in the region.
- In accordance with the [WIOA Joint Core Partner Local MOU Policy Guidance](#), Local Area MOUs outline steps to address the following items:
  - a. A strategy and process to share information on the labor market.
  - b. The development of career pathway maps and/or service flowcharts for youth 16-24 across WIOA Youth programs, MassHire Career Centers, adult education (Title II)/DESE, TANF/DTA, MRC/MCB, YouthWorks, and other key partners in the Local Area to collaboratively leverage resources for the purpose of expanding access to credentials and work-based learning for target populations, including:

- i. Unemployed individuals (including those served by the Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA))
- ii. Low-skilled, limited-education individuals
- iii. People with disabilities
- iv. Individuals with Limited English Proficiency
- v. Individuals and families receiving public assistance
- vi. Homeless / unstable housing
- vii. Veterans
- viii. Youth
- ix. Businesses

## **V. Timeline and Amendments for State MOU**

### **A. Duration**

1. The effective date is July 1, 2020.
2. WIOA Sections 121(c) (v) require that the MOU be reviewed at least once every 3-year period to ensure appropriate funding and delivery of services, also including effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility.

### **B. Amendments**

1. A Partner on the MOU can request an amendment to the MOU, or the MassHire Performance Committee can make a recommendation to MassHire State Workforce Board and Governor for amendments or renewals.
2. The MassHire State Workforce Board's MassHire Performance Committee shall review the State MOU once every year to ensure appropriate funding, delivery of services, and achievement of outcomes.

## **VI. Governance of Shared System**

### **A. Accountability**

1. The Governor bears ultimate accountability for governance of federal programs authorized under WIOA.
2. The MassHire State Workforce Board (State Board) will provide guidance and direction to the workforce system through the WIOA State Plan.
  - a. The MassHire Performance Committee will ensure fidelity to the Plan and oversight of cross-system integration and operation.
  - b. All WIOA Core Partners and Additional Partners on the MOU will execute the MOU through agency directors and designated staff in the WIOA Joint Partner Policy group (or similar body), work groups, and MassHire State Workforce Board meetings.

## **B. Data and Outcome Reporting Across Partners**

- WIOA Core Program Partners will work together to develop separate, agency-specific data matching agreements and MOUs between partners to measure the outcomes of customers utilizing workforce system and core partner services, and evaluation studies on the impact of education, workforce, and health and human service investments.
- Under the large umbrella of the workforce system and as permitted by state and federal law, the MassHire State Workforce Board and the Department of Unemployment Assistance will work with other critical, non-WIOA partners to develop separate, agency-specific data matching agreements relevant to understanding education, workforce, and economic development outcomes. The data matching agreements will meet the data requirements of state designed WIOA measures developed by the partners included in the State Plan.

## **VII. Local Area Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

WIOA Section 121(c) and 20 CFR Parts 678.500-510 require that a Memorandum of Understanding be executed between a Local Area MassHire Workforce Board and Local Area WIOA Core Partners in the MassHire Career Center (listed in Section III A of this MOU).

The WIOA Core Partners agree that staff or programs operating in a region will be identified to participate in the development of the Local Memorandum of Understanding (Local Area MOU). The Local Area MassHire Workforce Board will act as the convener of Local Area MOU negotiations and together with partners will shape how local MassHire Career Center services are delivered.

### **A. Process**

The Local Area MassHire Workforce Board will convene representatives of WIOA Core and Additional Partners in the Local Area and other stakeholders to develop shared service strategies for job seekers and businesses and identify related shared customer flow.

Local Area strategies will include but not be limited to operational and service workflows, related referral processes, coordinated staff development and training, marketing and community integration, co-locations of staff (physical or virtual), and the nature and provision of related infrastructure and shared costs.

These strategies will be designed by the Local Area WIOA planning team to meet the service, resource, and technology needs of the center and take into consideration the individual characteristics, service needs, and resources of each of the WIOA Core Partners.

Strategies should be both data- and demand-driven to further support the development of local service strategies and the needs of businesses and job seekers.

The Local Area MOU will include agreements on the specific infrastructure and shared program costs including the method by which revenue and costs will be supported by each partner.

Cost calculations will take into consideration the proportionate share of use of MassHire Career Center consistent with budgets, mandates, and program limitations and must be spent solely for purposes allowable according to the partner authorizing statutes and other applicable legal requirements, including Federal cost principles.

[Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Joint Partner Local Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) – 2nd REVISION](#) details the requirements that must be included in each of the Local Area MOUs (1 for each of the 16 WIOA regions), including:

- A description of the process to develop a Local Area MOU;
- A description of the priority populations referenced in Section IV. D and additional populations identified by the Local Area MOU Partners;
- A description of the continuum of services available for each priority population;
- A description of the continuum of services available for businesses;
- Access to technology and materials that are available through the MassHire Career Center service delivery system;
- Coordinated staff development and training;
- Assurances of participation of WIOA Core Partners (at a minimum, partners described in Section III A of the MOU);
- A plan to fund joint costs:
  - Funding of infrastructure costs
  - Funding of shared services and operating costs of service delivery system
- Duration of the Local Area MOU;
- Assurances covering Local Area MOU review, revisions, and other provisions agreed to by local areas.

The Local Area MOU may include other provisions agreed to by all parties that are consistent with all partner programs, services and activities authorizing statutes, and regulations.

The Local Area MOU must include all requirements as set-forth in the most up to date WIOA Local Area MOU policy guidance. In addition, the local MOU will reflect an agreement of the Local Area MOU Core and Additional Partners to jointly review the WIOA-mandated performance metrics for the region or metrics negotiated as part of

any shared and infrastructure contract costs between a Local Area (MassHire Board) and the mandated MassHire Career Center, including incentives and penalties.

Although the Local Area MassHire Workforce Board (with agreement of the Chief Elected Official and WIOA Core Partner) may enter into a separate agreement with each WIOA Core Partner or group of WIOA Core Partners under the purview of WIOA, the State WIOA Core Partners require that a single “umbrella” Local Area WIOA MOU be executed to address the issues relating to the MassHire Career Center service delivery across all WIOA Core Partners unless sufficient evidence can be provided as to why a Local Area cannot develop an umbrella MOU.

The Local Area MOU is fully executed when it contains the signatures of the MassHire Board, WIOA Core Partners (Section III A of this MOU) and the Chief Elected Official (CEO), and the time period that the MOU is in effect.

**B. Interim Plan or Local Area MOU impasse**

If necessary, an interim infrastructure funding agreement may be put in place initially. The funding agreement must be finalized, however, within 6 months of the signing of the MOU. If it is not finalized within that timeframe, the Local Area MassHire Board must notify the Governor as described in WIOA Section 121 (h) and 20 CFR Part 678.725 and the state infrastructure mechanism will trigger.

The Local Area MassHire Workforce Board must report to the State Board, Governor, and the appropriate WIOA Core Partner state agencies if MOU negotiations with WIOA Core Partner agencies have reached an impasse. The Local Area MassHire Workforce Board and MOU Core Partners must document the negotiation and efforts that have taken place in the MOU negotiations.

Impasses related to infrastructure costs must be resolved using the State Infrastructure cost funding mechanism (Section VII, D).

**C. Infrastructure and Shared Cost Funding**

WIOA sections 121(h) and 121(i), and 20 CFR 678, Subpart E 20CFR 700 -760, require that MassHire Career Centers Core Partners must contribute jointly to fund infrastructure costs, as well as use a portion of the funds available to support their programs, activities and services operated through a Local Area MassHire Career Center consistent with the proportional burden, program mandates and limitations, and the state infrastructure-cost default funding caps, should Local Area consensus not be reached.

These support costs are defined as shared and infrastructure costs. The proportion of the shared and infrastructure costs paid by each WIOA Core Partner must comply with federal cost principles, which require that all costs must be allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable to the program, and must be in accordance with all other applicable legal requirements.

Funding contributed by Core WIOA Partners is intended to:

- Maintain the MassHire Career Center delivery system to meet the needs of the Local Area;
- Reduce duplication by improving program effectiveness through the sharing of services, resources, and technologies among Partners;
- Reduce overhead by streamlining and sharing financial, procurement, and facilities costs;
- Encourage efficient use of information technology;
- Ensure that costs are appropriately shared by MassHire Career Center Core Partners by basing contributions on proportionate share of use, and requiring that all funds are spent solely for allowable purposes; and
- Ensure that services provided by the MassHire Career Center are allowable under the Partner's program.

**D. Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA)**

The signatories to this State WIOA MOU agree that all WIOA Core Partners have a joint funding responsibility to support and maintain an effective Local Area integrated service delivery system. In addition, all Parties recognize that infrastructure costs are applicable to the WIOA Core Partners. As such, a MassHire Career Center Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) shall be developed and updated annually to determine the WIOA Core Partner infrastructure contributions. The Infrastructure Funding Agreement is updated annually, and published as a Joint Partner Policy Issuance on the [WIOA State Partner Infrastructure Contributions](#).

All signatories further acknowledge that the Local Area MOU serves the purpose of the infrastructure funding agreement (IFA) as required by WIOA. The IFA will be revisited on an annual basis and periodically reconciled against actual costs incurred and will be adjusted accordingly to ensure that it reflects a cost allocation methodology that demonstrates how infrastructure costs are charged in proportion to relative benefits received.

Infrastructure funding contributions are based upon a methodology where infrastructure costs are charged to each partner in proportion to relative benefits received and consistent with the partner's programs' authorizing laws and regulations including Federal cost principles, and other applicable legal requirements. Calculations pursuant to the IFA are apportioned annually at the state level based on the percentage of shared customers served in each Local Area workforce area. On an annual basis, State Core WIOA Partners will establish a methodology that ensures costs are allowable, reasonable, necessary, and allocable. WIOA Section 121 (h) and 20 CFR Part 678.735 include the limitation for the required partner contributions, based on a percentage of their Federal funding allocation. These limitations do not apply at the outset to the Local Area funding mechanism. Instead, they are a cap on required contributions determined by the Governor if consensus is not reached between the Local Area board, chief elected



officials and WIOA Core Partners. In addition, the IFA includes timelines regarding notification to the Governor if Local Area agreement is not reached that will trigger a State- Infrastructure Funding Mechanism.

As appropriate, State Partners will enter into Inter-Agency Service Agreements (ISAs) or Contracts with MDCS, as the designated State Workforce Agency (SWA), to issue the Local Area allocations. MassHire Boards will ensure all allocations are incorporated into the Local Area integrated budget during the annual planning process. MDCS will monitor the spending of all shared and infrastructure costs and Local Area MOU partners will meet regularly to discuss integrated service delivery strategies and the shared and infrastructure funds needed to actualize services. On an annual basis, Local Area MOU Partners will provide suggestions and recommendations to state level partners for adjustments to shared and infrastructure funding.

- **Shared Costs Funding Mechanism**

WIOA Core Partners developed agency-specific guidelines to be utilized during Local Area MOU negotiations to assist in determining each WIOA Core Partner's proportionate share of shared costs (as defined in VII, F). These guidelines are consistent with the WIOA Core Partner's mandates, budgets, and program limitations and take into consideration the default caps on required contributions delineated in WIOA section 121 (h) and 20 CFR Part 678.735. Once contributions are identified by Local Area partners via successful Local Area MOU negotiations or at the state level if Local Area consensus fails, the method of transferring negotiated partner funds to the MassHire Career Center system may be via direct contract from the WIOA Core Partner agency to the Local Area or to the area via funds transferred from the WIOA Core Partner agency to EOLWD to distribute to the Local Area, as appropriate.

## **F. Definition of Share Costs and Infrastructure Costs**

- **Shared Costs**

Shared costs are costs jointly identified by the MassHire Workforce Board, MassHire Career Centers, and each WIOA Core Partner to provide services to shared customers (co-enrolled participants) across program staff and facilities. MassHire Career Centers and WIOA Core Partners on the Local Area MOU will develop the appropriate activities for the shared customer pools. Activities and services include, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Intake
- b. Needs assessment
- c. Basic skills assessments
- d. Identification of appropriate services to meet needs
- e. Referrals to other MassHire Career Center partners
- f. Business services

- g. Support for programs to invest in or create access to assistive technologies

Under WIOA Section 121 (i) and 20 CFR 678.760 shared costs must be determined as part of the Local Area MOU and may include cash and non-cash resources.

- **Infrastructure Costs**

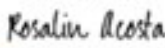
MassHire Career Center infrastructure costs are defined as non-personnel costs necessary for the general operation of the MassHire Career Center, including:

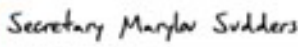
1. Facility and rental costs
2. Utilities and maintenance
3. Equipment (including assessment-related and assistive technologies for individuals with disabilities)
4. Technology to facilitate access to the MassHire Career Center (including planning and outreach)
5. Common MassHire Career Center delivery system identifier costs (signage and other identifier-related items)

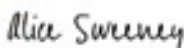
Infrastructure costs are funded through a State MassHire Career Center Infrastructure Funding Agreement set by the Governor, after consultation with the CEOs, MassHire Workforce Boards and the MassHire State Board that determines the WIOA Core Partner contributions in accordance with section VII D.

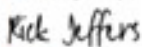
### VIII. Signatories

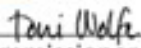
By signing this agreement, all parties agree that the provisions contained herein are subject to all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, or guidelines. By signatures affixed below, the parties specify their agreement:

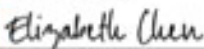
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Executive Office of Labor and Workforce  
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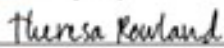
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MassHire Department of Career Services

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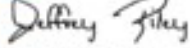
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Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

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Secretary Elizabeth Chen  
Executive Office of Elder Affairs


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Theresa Rowland, Interim President &  
CEO  
Commonwealth Corporation

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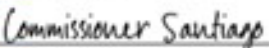
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Commissioner David D'Arcangelo  
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

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Secretary Francisco Urena  
Department of Veterans' Services

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Commissioner Carlos E. Santiago  
Department of Higher Education

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*Patrick Mitchell*

Director Patrick Mitchell  
*Division of Apprentice Standards*

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*Jennifer Maddox*

Jennifer Maddox, Undersecretary  
*Department of Housing and Community  
Development*

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*Christine Garland*

Christine Garland, VP of Workforce  
Development  
*Senior Service America, Inc*

DocuSigned by:

*Carol Mici*

Commissioner Carol Mici  
*Department of Correction*

DocuSigned by:

*Marian Walsh*

Marian Walsh, President and CEO  
*Operation ABLE*

## APPENDIX

### Definitions:

- ✓ **Administrative Entity:** Entity(ies) designated by the CEO to coordinate and administer WIOA activities and services within a local area on the local board's behalf and in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, rules, policies, plans, and the terms of this MOU.
- ✓ **Chief Elected Official:** Identified in WIOA Section 3 Definitions (9) as the chief elected officer of a unit of general local government in a local area or the individual(s) designated under a local agreement pursuant to WIOA Section 107(c)(1)(B).
- ✓ **Career Services:** The services which shall be available, at a minimum, to individuals who are adults or dislocated workers through the career center delivery system in each local area. The career services that must be provided as part of the career center delivery system are listed in WIOA Section 134(c)(2).
- ✓ **Combined Plan:** Per WIOA Section 103, a state may develop and submit a combined plan for the core programs and 1 or more of the programs and activities defined in Sec. 103 (a) (2).
- ✓ **Common Measures:** Primary indicators of performance," for its six core programs
- ✓ **Core Partner:** An entity that carries out one or more of the programs or activities identified under WIOA Section 121 (b)(1) and is required under that Section to participate in the MassHire Career Center delivery system and to make the career services under its program or activity available through the career center system
- ✓ **Cost Allocation:** Per 66 Fed. Reg. 29639, cost allocation is the measurement of actual costs in relation to the benefit received in order to determine each partner's fair share of career center operating costs.
- ✓ **Fair Share:** The portion of career center operating costs allocated to each partner in proportion to the benefits the Partner receives from participation in the career center system.
- ✓ **Fiscal Agent:** An entity appointed by a local area's CEO in accordance with WIOA Section 107 (d)(12)(B)(i)(II) and (III)) to be responsible for the administration and disbursement of WIOA and other funds allocated for workforce development activities in the local area. WIA Section 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(II) provides that designation of a fiscal agent does not relieve the CEO from his/her liability for any misuse of grant funds.
- ✓ **Governor's Massachusetts Workforce Development Board (MWDB):** Enacted by the Massachusetts Governor and Legislature on December 2, 2015, the Board will assist the Governor in creating an integrated statewide strategic plan for workforce development which will link workforce policies, education and training programs, and funding streams with the economic needs of Massachusetts and its regions and in complying with the provisions and requirements of WIOA Section 101. The new legislation can be found here: <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2015/Chapter142>
- ✓ **In-Kind Contributions:** 66 Fed. Reg. 29639-29640 defines these types of contributions as donations from third parties that are not to be confused with contributions to the career center by partner programs of such things as space, equipment, staff, or other goods and services for which the partner program incurs a cost. In-kind contributions may include

funding from philanthropic organizations or other private entities or through other alternative financing options, to provide a stable and equitable funding stream for on-going career center delivery system operations. WIOA 121(c)(2)(A)(i).

- ✓ **Local Area:** A local workforce investment area designated by the Governor, under section 106, subject to sections 106(c)(3)(A), 107(c)(4)(B)(i), and 189(i).
- ✓ **Local Workforce Development Board (local board):** The board created by the CEO pursuant to WIOA Section 107 with responsibility for the development of the local plan and for oversight of the workforce development activities in the local area.
- ✓ **Local Area Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** The 16 Local Areas must develop an MOU with the Core and Additional WIOA Partners to describe the vision, goals, strategies and resource sharing commitments across the WIOA Core and Additional Partners. The State WIOA MOU (this document) describes the minimum requirements for the Local Area MOU.
- ✓ **Additional Partner:** Per WIOA 121 (b)(2), an entity that carries out a program not identified as required under WIOA that is approved by the MassHire Workforce Board and the CEO may be included as a MassHire Career Center partner in a Local Area.
- ✓ **Massachusetts Career Center Delivery System:** The career center delivery system is essentially a collaborative effort among public agencies, non-profit organizations, and private entities that administer workforce investment, educational, and other human resource programs to make the variety of services available under those programs more accessible to eligible job seekers and businesses.
- ✓ **Massachusetts Career Center Operator:** An entity or consortium of entities designated in accordance with WIOA Section 121(d) to operate a career center site and to perform career center service delivery activities in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, rules, policies, plans, and the terms of this MOU.
- ✓ **MassHire BizWorks:** MassHire BizWorks is a federal and state collaboration designed to enhance and align the services offered to Massachusetts businesses. It simplifies and coordinates efforts among agencies that work with businesses.
- ✓ **Priority Populations:** WIOA statute and regulations prioritizes service for individuals that are: low income, low skilled, persons with Limited English Proficiency, people with disabilities, older workers, homeless, returning citizens, racial/ethnic minorities, Veterans, unemployment claimants, etc.
- ✓ **Resource Sharing:** Per 66 Fed. Reg. 29639, Resource Sharing is the cash and/or resources each partner will contribute to fund its fair share of costs for operation of the career center system. This can include “in-kind” contributions from third parties to partner programs. The LWDB, CEO and career center partners may fund the costs of infrastructure off career centers through methods agreed on by the LWDB, CEO and career center partners through Resource Sharing.
- ✓ **Shared Customers:** Those job seekers that are receiving services through the MassHire system and one additional MOU partner, as defined by Joint Partner Issuance [01.2018](#).
- ✓ **Specialized Service Centers:** A specialized service center of a core partner is defined as a local service center providing specialized services to shared customers such as assistive technology, benefits counseling, and vocational counseling.

- ✓ **Training Services:** Services to adults and dislocated workers as described in WIOA Section 134(c)(3). Per WIOA 134(c)(3)(D) these may include occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, programs that combine workplace training with related instructions, which may include cooperative education programs, private-sector training programs, skill upgrading and retraining, apprenticeships, entrepreneurial training, transitional jobs, job-readiness training, adult education and literacy activities in combination with a training program, or customized training.
- ✓ **WIOA:** The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) Act amends the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to strengthen the United States workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training, and education programs in the United States, and to promote individual and national economic growth, and for other purposes.
- ✓ **WIOA Local Plan:** Per WIOA Section 108, the local plan is a comprehensive 4-year plan developed by each LWDB, in partnership with the chief elected official and submitted to the Governor. The plan shall support the strategy described in the State plan. At the end of the first 2-year period of the 4-year local plan, each local board shall review the local plan, and the local board, in partnership with the chief elected official, shall prepare and submit modifications to the local plan to reflect changes in labor market and economic conditions or in other factors affecting the implementation of the local plan. Plans identify the respective local area's current and projected workforce investment needs, the career center delivery system, performance standards, and strategies to address the workforce investment needs in consideration of performance standards per WIOA Section 116.
- ✓ **WIOA State Plan:** The term "State Plan", used without further description, means a unified State plan under Section 102 or a combined State plan under Section 103.





## DEPARTMENT OF CAREER SERVICES

### Find a MassHire Career Center Near You

Visit a MassHire Career Center for:

- Job search assistance;
- Career planning information;
- Workshops on job search techniques including interviewing, networking, and resume writing;
- Data on the current statewide and local job market; and
- Resources to help you find the right training opportunities;
- Tools to help you conduct an effective job search.

#### Greater Boston

##### **MassHire Boston Career Center**

1010 Harrison Avenue  
Boston, MA 02119  
(617) 541-1400, TTY#: (617) 442-3610

##### **MassHire Downtown Boston Career Center**

75 Federal Street, 3rd Floor  
Boston, MA 02110  
(617) 399-3100, 800-436-WORK (9675)

##### **MassHire Metro North Career Centers**

186 Alewife Brook Parkway, Suite 310  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
(617) 661-7867, (888) 454-9675  
TTY#: (800) 439-2370

(affiliated limited services)\*

4 Gerrish Avenue  
Chelsea, MA 02150  
(617) 884-4333

100 TradeCenter  
Suite G-100  
Woburn, MA 01801  
(781) 932-5500, (888) 273-WORK

##### **MassHire Framingham Career Center**

1671 Worcester Road  
Framingham, MA 01701  
(508) 861-7993

##### **MassHire Norwood Career Center**

32 Day Street  
Norwood, MA 02062  
(781) 269-5494

#### Northeastern Massachusetts

##### **MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Centers**

Haverhill Opportunity Works  
(HOW Building)  
671 Kenoza Street,  
Haverhill, MA 01830  
(978) 241-4730

255 Essex Street  
Lawrence, MA 01840  
(978) 722-7000

##### **MassHire Lowell Career Center**

107 Merrimack Street  
Lowell, MA 01852  
(978) 458-2503, TTY#: (978) 805-4915

##### **MassHire North Shore Career Centers**

70 Washington Street  
Salem, Massachusetts 01970  
(978) 825-7200

(affiliated limited services)\*

5 Pleasant Street  
Gloucester, MA 01930  
(978) 283-4772

(affiliated limited services)\*

North Shore Community College  
300 Broad Street, LE-102  
Lynn, MA 01901  
(781) 691-7450

##### **MassHire North Shore Youth Career Center\*\***

117 Franklin Street  
Lynn, MA 01902  
(781) 691-7430

#### Southeastern Massachusetts

##### **MassHire Attleboro Career Center**

95 Pine Street  
Attleboro, MA 02703  
(508) 222-1950

##### **MassHire Cape & Islands Career Center**

372 North Street  
Hyannis, MA 02601  
(508) 771-JOBS (5627),  
TTY#: (508) 862-6102

##### **MassHire Greater Brockton Career Center**

34 School Street,  
Brockton, MA 02301  
(508) 513-3400

##### **MassHire Greater Brockton YouthWorks\*\***

34 School Street, lower level  
Brockton, MA 02301  
(508) 584-9800

##### **MassHire Fall River Career Center**

446 North Main Street  
Fall River, MA 02720  
(508) 730-5000

##### **MassHire Youth Connections\*\***

139 South Main Street  
Fall River, MA 02720  
(508) 675-9245

##### **MassHire Greater New Bedford Career Center**

618 Acushnet Avenue  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
(508) 990-4000

##### **MassHire Taunton Career Center**

72 School Street  
Taunton, MA 02780  
(508) 977-1400

##### **MassHire South Shore Career Centers**

36 Cordage Park Circle, Suite 214B  
Plymouth, MA 02360  
(617) 376-5170

1515 Hancock Street

Quincy, MA 02169  
(617) 745-4000

#### Central Massachusetts

##### **MassHire North Central Career Center**

100 Erdman Way  
Leominster, MA 01453  
(978) 534-1481, TTY#: (978) 534-1657

##### **MassHire Southbridge Career Center**

5 Optical Drive, Suite 200  
Southbridge, MA 01550  
(508) 765-6430, TTY#: (508) 765-6437

##### **MassHire Worcester Career Center**

340 Main Street, Suite 400  
Worcester, MA 01608  
(508) 799-1600

#### Western Massachusetts

##### **MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Centers**

One Arch Place  
Greenfield, MA 01301  
(413) 774-4361, TTY#: 413-772-2174

(Affiliated limited services)\*

20 West Street  
Northampton, MA 01060  
(413) 774-4361

##### **MassHire Holyoke Career Center**

850 High Street  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
(413) 532-4900, TTY#: (413) 535-3098

##### **MassHire Berkshire Career Center**

160 North Street  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
(413) 499-2220, TTY#: (413) 499-7306

##### **MassHire Springfield Career Center**

95 Liberty Street, Third Floor  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413) 858-2800, TTY#: (413) 858-2800

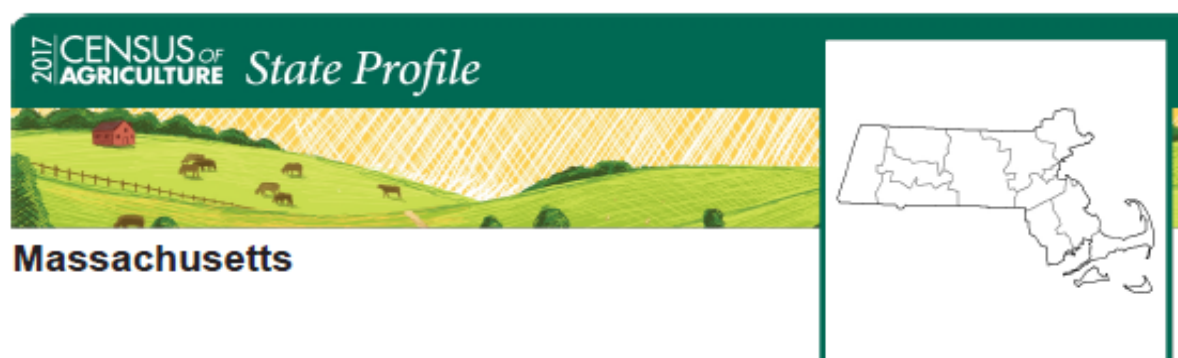
For more information about MassHire Career Centers, visit [www.mass.gov/careercenters](http://www.mass.gov/careercenters)

\* Affiliated limited services - Contact the career center for hours of operation and services available.

\*\* Youth-specific Career Center.

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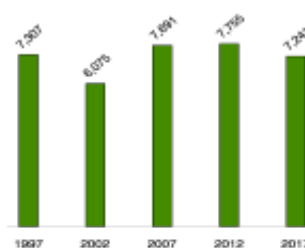




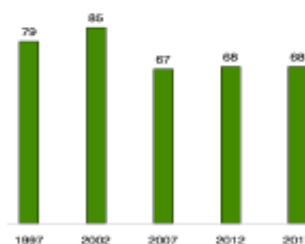
## Total and Per Farm Overview, 2017 and change since 2012

	2017	% change since 2012
Number of farms	7,241	-7
Land in farms (acres)	491,653	-6
Average size of farm (acres)	68	+1
<b>Total</b>	<b>(\$)</b>	
Market value of products sold	475,184,000	-3
Government payments	4,004,000	-51
Farm-related income	70,388,000	-10
Total farm production expenses	492,665,000	-9
Net cash farm income	56,911,000	+44
<b>Per farm average</b>	<b>(\$)</b>	
Market value of products sold	65,624	+3
Government payments (average per farm receiving)	7,583	-27
Farm-related income	28,009	-3
Total farm production expenses	68,038	-2
Net cash farm income	7,859	+54

## Number of Farms, 1997-2017



## Average Farm Size, 1997-2017 (acres)



## Farms by Value of Sales

	Number	Percent of Total *
Less than \$2,500	3,258	45
\$2,500 to \$4,999	752	10
\$5,000 to \$9,999	767	11
\$10,000 to \$24,999	774	11
\$25,000 to \$49,999	526	7
\$50,000 to \$99,999	405	6
\$100,000 or more	759	10

## Farms by Size

	Number	Percent of Total *
1 to 9 acres	2,373	33
10 to 49 acres	2,535	35
50 to 179 acres	1,669	23
180 to 499 acres	548	8
500 to 999 acres	92	1
1,000 + acres	24	(2)



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Agricultural Statistics Service

[www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus](http://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus)

## 2017 CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE State Profile

### Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold

	Sales (\$1,000)	Rank in U.S. <sup>a</sup>	States Producing Item	(Z) Percent of U.S. agriculture sales
<b>Total</b>	<b>475,184</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>50</b>	
<b>Crops</b>	<b>363,524</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>Share of Sales by Type (%)</b>
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas	5,388	47	50	Crops 77
Tobacco	5,733	9	18	Livestock, poultry, and products 23
Cotton and cottonseed	-	-	17	
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes	102,061	25	50	
Fruits, tree nuts, berries	88,433	16	50	
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, sod	139,740	26	50	
Cultivated Christmas trees, short rotation				<b>Land in Farms by Use (acres)</b>
woody crops	3,536	15	50	Cropland 171,496
Other crops and hay	18,633	44	50	Pastureland 46,341
				Woodland 194,189
				Other 79,627
<b>Livestock, poultry, and products</b>	<b>111,661</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>50</b>	
Poultry and eggs	12,194	42	50	<b>Top Counties: Land in Farms (acres)</b>
Cattle and calves	11,147	45	50	Worcester 95,308
Milk from cows	45,336	39	50	Franklin 88,247
Hogs and pigs	2,098	40	50	Plymouth 60,036
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, milk	2,305	41	50	Berkshire 58,647
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, donkeys	3,430	43	50	Hampshire 50,644
Aquaculture	29,402	16	50	
Other animals and animal products	5,749	37	50	

<b>Total Producers <sup>a</sup></b>	<b>12,778</b>	<b>Percent of farms that:</b>	<b>Top Crops in Acres <sup>d</sup></b>
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	7,206	Have internet access <b>84</b>	Forage (hay/haylage), all 79,004
Female	5,572		Vegetables harvested, all 19,014
<b>Age</b>			Land in berries 14,994
<35	1,082	Farm organically <b>3</b>	Corn for silage or greenchop 13,689
35 – 64	7,381		Cranberries 13,555
65 and older	4,315		
<b>Race</b>			<b>Livestock Inventory (Dec 31, 2017)</b>
American Indian/Alaska Native	29	Sell directly to consumers <b>25</b>	Broilers and other
Asian	95		meat-type chickens 17,663
Black or African American	166		Cattle and calves 36,574
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	6		Goats 7,632
White	12,402	Hire farm labor <b>33</b>	Hogs and pigs (D)
More than one race	80		Horses and ponies 14,584
<b>Other characteristics</b>			Layers 155,008
Hispanic, Latino, Spanish origin	207	Are family farms <b>95</b>	Pullets 10,139
With military service	1,102		Sheep and lambs 13,310
New and beginning farmers	3,538		Turkeys 21,227

See 2017 Census of Agriculture, U.S. Summary and State Data, for complete footnotes, explanations, definitions, commodity descriptions, and methodology.

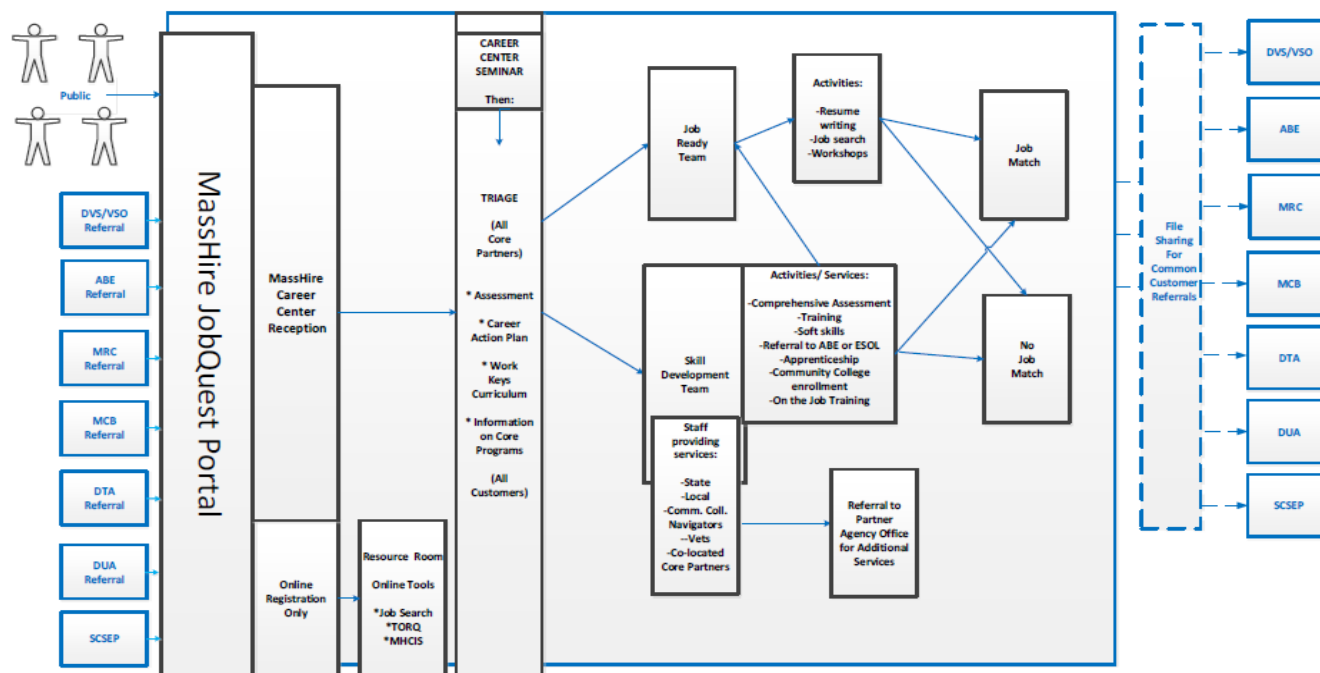
<sup>a</sup> May not add to 100% due to rounding. <sup>b</sup> Among states whose rank can be displayed. <sup>c</sup> Data collected for a maximum of four producers per farm.

<sup>d</sup> Crop commodity names may be shortened; see full names at [www.nass.usda.gov/go/croptnames.pdf](http://www.nass.usda.gov/go/croptnames.pdf). \* Position below the line does not indicate rank.

(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations. (NA) Not available. (Z) Less than half of the unit shown. (-) Represents zero.

## ATTACHMENT L: Integrated, technology-based job seeker flow chart at for Career Centers (with Core Program partners)

New statewide customer flow to manage individuals from various referral sources who are triaged based on new, intensive skill assessment tools to Job Ready and Skill Building Teams within the Career Center.



Partner agencies refer customers to MassHire Career Centers for employment assistance and training services.

DVS/VSO	Dept. of Veterans' Services/ Veterans Services Officers	DTA	Department of Transitional Assistance
ABE	Adult Basic Education	DUA	Department of Unemployment Assistance
MRC	MA Rehabilitation Commission	MCB	MA Commission for the Blind
SCSEP	Senior Community Service Employment Program		

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## ATTACHMENT M: EOLWD/MDCS Staff Training and Professional Development Overview

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The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development/MassHire Department of Career Services (EOLWD/MDCS) continues the process of assessing the current skill level of career center staff and analyzing the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to perform each job in the career center. EOLWD/MDCS has created and implemented regular professional development opportunities for Workforce Board and career center staff to ensure that their knowledge and expertise is current and consistent with the specific opportunities and needs within their regional areas. Existing training includes:

*Platform Skills:* MDCS has reviewed the levels and skills sets that are required to enhance/improve staff abilities to conduct one on one career counseling, workshops, and public presentations and give exceptional customer service to both job seekers and employers through the MassHire system. These skills are critical to ensuring that the employer and jobseeker customers understand the depth and breadth of the services available to them and to promote knowledge and utilization of the Massachusetts Workforce Development System.

*Labor Market Information (LMI):* It is essential to understand that LMI touches every aspect of the job search in order to locate and understand the skills level of in-demand jobs, and identify transferable skills, or the need to upgrade current skills to meet the needs of employers. It also assists staff and customers to identify appropriate salary demands and many labor trends. Staff and customers will also understand the need for researching companies and building interview skills to prepare for the interview and negotiate salaries. EOLWD/MDCS has invested in tools to help in this effort.

*Using Tools Effectively:* Staff have and will continue to be provided training on: WorkKeys, Labor Insight; Mass Career Information Systems (Mass CIS), O\*Net Online and TORQ. The training demonstrates how to assist job seekers to search for and access valuable labor market information on industry trends and career projections that will inform their choices in seeking employment and/or training. Breaking down job descriptions and resumes to identify and focus on the skills required for the job utilizing such software, as TORQ will move Massachusetts significantly in a demand driven manner.

Below is a listing with descriptions, of regularly scheduled trainings, webinars, and workshops available to all staff of the Massachusetts Workforce System. Scheduling for these sessions is located at: <https://www.mass.gov/workforce-system-staff-training>.

### Apprenticeship 101

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) is a training and employment structure that produces highly skilled workers to meet the demands of employers competing in a global economy. RA ensures authentic, applied learning by combining on-the-job learning with theoretical and practical classroom instruction to prepare exceptional workers.

MDCS is hosting “Apprenticeship 101” for practitioners with limited knowledge or experience with the model. Participants learn about the core elements of an apprenticeship program and about the strategies in place in the Commonwealth to expand the apprenticeship model, which has been successful in construction and trade for decades, to non-traditional industries such as healthcare, manufacturing and tech. Link to webinar: <http://detma.adobeconnect.com/p2vfa90uux8w/>.

#### Customer Service

A focus on customer service is critical to ensuring the success of MassHire Career Centers and their customers. The Customer Service training is interactive and covers customer service basics; how assumptions, perceptions, and biases affect customer service; creating a customer friendly culture; how to handle difficult customer interactions and tips for de-escalation

#### Essentials of Career Planning

A comprehensive training that begins with an explanation of WIOA elements as they relate to Career Planning, customer flow and the importance of continual assessment. The training brings career center staff through the career planning process beginning with Informational Intake, initial and comprehensive assessments, identifying barriers to employment and triage of a customer. Evaluation, labor market information and goal setting are discussed in the context of developing an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) to create a roadmap for customers.

#### LMI Tools: Using Labor Insight Training and WorkKeys Curriculum

This training is in webinar format and covers the strategic application of WorkKeys Curriculum. In particular, how WorkKeys curriculum can support labor market research, job matching, and skill remediation and best practices to effectively deploy WorkKeys Curriculum.

MassHire BizWorks continues to provide training with regard to standard staff business service knowledge and competencies across multiple state agencies that are responsible for the provision of myriad programs and services to the Commonwealth’s employers.

MassHire BizWorks training includes the “Business Compliance Programs” module, which provides an overview of the variety of agencies, programs and services with which Massachusetts businesses must be in compliance. The “Back to Basics” module continues the series of Business Services training with regard to the business cycle, business services work processes, business assessments, performance reports and more. Staff from all partner agencies working directly with businesses/employers and those who supervise Business Services staff are encouraged to attend this training, as well as career center management and workforce board staff.

EOLWD/MDCS is invested in ensuring MassHire Career Center management and staff have the knowledge and understanding of the local, state, national and global economy as the Commonwealth implements a business-driven system.

MassHire Career Information System The MassHire Career Information System (MassHire CIS) is a comprehensive, internet-based career information delivery tool designed for career counselors, job seekers, students, and educators to promote better-informed career and school choices.

MassHire CIS provides information on career assessment and planning, occupations, the labor market outlook, and educational options culminating in a basic user portfolio.

The Massachusetts One Stop Employment System (MOSES) is the statewide database for the Massachusetts Workforce Development System. All data regarding services to Career Center customers (job seekers; training seekers; employers, etc.) are recorded in MOSES. Ongoing training that includes four modules is available to Workforce Development staff and partners across the state:

*MOSES 101 - navigating the MOSES database; MOSES 102 – Business Services, using the MOSES database to record employer services; MOSES 103 – Career Planning and MOSES 104 – Job Seeker Basic Eligibility and Program Enrollment.*

#### Overview of Addiction, Recovery, and Available Resources

The MassHire Department of Career Services, Commonwealth Corporation, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health - Bureau of Substance Addiction Services have partnered to offer training sessions for front line career center staff on addiction recovery and resources. These training sessions have been developed to address the impact of addiction to alcohol and other drugs and the influence of the recovery process on the customers utilizing MassHire Career Centers. This information enables career center counselors to efficiently and effectively engage, establish rapport, and support individuals in their recovery, while they pursue their career and educational goals.

#### Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Training

These RESEA sessions are designed to provide career center directors, operations managers, and RESEA supervisors with an overview of all required RESEA service delivery components, including discussion and Information on common field concerns relative to RESEA program implementation, MassHire Career Center best practices to assist managers and supervisors in improving their RESEA service delivery and updates on RESEA Program monitoring and future RESEA program changes.

#### TORQ (Transferrable Occupational Relationship Quotient)

TORQ allows career center customers to explore the transferability of their skills, knowledge, and ability from one occupation to others by analyzing previous work history in light of current labor market conditions. This LMI tool is based on O\*NET skill sets and allows real-time matches to several internet job search engines, including Massachusetts specific labor market information. Emphasis in this workshop is on helping career center staff evaluate how TORQ can be integrated into career counseling services.

### UI Online Navigation Training

Provides career center staff with fundamental knowledge to assist Career Center customers with navigation of their unemployment claim. The training session covers navigation assistance topics such as: navigating the UI Online system, filing a new claim for unemployment insurance or reopening an existing claim, requesting weekly benefits and communicating with DUA regarding UI claims

### Unified Workforce Development System Complaint and Appeals

This training provides guidance specific to alleged violations (by action or omission) related to services funded under Title I of WIOA and the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended; delineates procedures for initiating resolution of appeals, and for complaints related to other federal or state statutory requirements, including Equal Opportunity (EO).

### Transforming Services Through A Trauma-Informed Approach

The MassHire Department of Career Services, Commonwealth Corporation, and the Central Massachusetts Recovery Learning Community (RLC) and Kiva Center have partnered to offer training sessions for MassHire Career Center staff and partner staff on Transforming Services Through A Trauma-Informed Approach. These three-hour training sessions, conducted by the RLC and Kiva Center, are designed to increase the ability of career center staff to recognize and navigate the centrality of trauma with their customers.

### WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth

*WIOA Title I - Adult and Dislocated Worker* training provides information and technical assistance on eligibility criteria for adults and dislocated workers; source documentation; career services/training; coordination with WIOA Core programs; performance measures and MOSES data entry related to providing services to Career Center customers under the WIOA Title I legislation.

*WIOA Title I – Youth Program* training provides information and technical assistance on eligibility criteria for youth, source documentation, program requirements, coordination with WIOA Core programs, performance measures, tracking youth progress in MOSES, and data entry required for state and federal reporting.

### Cross-Training: State Partner Programs and Services

The Statewide MOU is designed to establish strong connection; support collaboration and cooperation; and provide a framework for joint resource sharing and service delivery among WIOA required partners. Inter-agency cross-training of personnel is one way that the Commonwealth assists partners in understanding the needs of our respective constituent groups and the available resources to make referrals and customize services based on customer needs. This is not only critical to mutual understanding, but also is essential in effective, reciprocal utilization of services and appropriate referrals.

Each of the training sessions provide MassHire Career Center and Partner staff with a fundamental knowledge of each other's programs, operational processes and available resources, as well as a profile of the individual customers/consumers/clients. For each training, a map or matrix indicates the locations of individual offices, statewide, and their



proximity to Career Centers. Point persons were identified at each respective location in order so enhance local contact and communication.

Regional training sessions are conducted by senior managers/trainers from both agencies, and some include additional virtual trainings delivered by video conferencing. The content of each training program includes an overview of the workforce development system, as well as the partner agency system, including respective programs, services and resources and eligibility information. There is discussion regarding shared customers and MOU/ISA mutual requirements, roles, responsibilities, and expectations and compatible referral processes.

To date, the following partner agencies have received cross training:

1. Department of Transitional Assistance – *Training delivered: July – August 2017*
2. Executive Office of Elder Affairs – Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) - *Training delivered: December 2017 – April 2018*
3. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission - *Training delivered February- March 2019*
4. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) – Adult Community Learning Services (ACLS) *Training in development, target date Spring – Summer 2020*

#### **National Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance and Training Grant**

The ***Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance and Training Grant (P2P/TAT)***, awarded from the Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration in 2015, has enabled Massachusetts to showcase innovative workforce development programs, projects, and best practices. The grant supported a program whereby other states reviewed and requested training and technical assistance directly from the MassHire Workforce Development system and its partners via a national website. The project offered specific training/technical assistance to other states delivered in a variety of formats. including in-person classroom training; video conferencing; conference calls; instructional videos; materials (handbooks/manuals), etc. To view the of available trainings, please go to: <https://www.mass.gov/national-peer-to-peer-technical-assistance-and-training>.

#### **Planned Training Development Activities 2020 - 2024**

Massachusetts will continue to focus on providing innovative training opportunities to Workforce Development and Partner staff. The multiple systems and agencies we work with are constantly changing and presenting unique challenges to our collective ability to deliver quality services. The diversity of job and training seeking customers is dynamic and requires continuous analysis of how best to serve and support our shared constituent groups. The following topics have been identified as areas that require further training and education around characteristics that staff must be better prepared to address. In addition, we are cognizant of the needs of employers and their desire to better understand and, if necessary, make accommodations for supporting and employing diversity in the workforce.

The following is a list of subject areas, trainings, tools, and processes that are under development:



### Domestic Violence Training

The MassHire Department of Career Services and the Commonwealth Corporation are exploring opportunities to partner with appropriate organizations to develop training sessions for front line career center staff on the issues and impacts of domestic violence. According to the Center for Disease Control, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men will experience physical violence by their intimate partner at some point during their lifetimes. About 1 in 3 women and nearly 1 in 6 men experience some form of sexual violence during their lifetimes. The impact of domestic violence on individuals can be devastating and significantly limit an individual's ability to function in society, at home and at work.

These proposed training sessions will be developed to assist workforce staff to better understand the impacts of domestic violence on customers utilizing the MassHire Career Centers. They will provide information that enables career center counselors to efficiently and effectively engage, establish rapport, and support individuals affected by domestic violence, while they pursue their career and educational goals.

### Strategies for Supporting LGBTQ Individuals to Gain Employment and Training

MassHire Department of Career Services is committed to ensuring that all individuals who participate in programs and activities through the MassHire Career Centers and sub recipients operating programs under Title 1 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) receive services in a safe and welcoming environment regardless of gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and intersex traits.

We are currently working to identify appropriate partners to assist us in developing a training course that provides a basic education on who comprises the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQ) community.

### Motivational Interviewing Training

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs in partnership with the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) is sponsoring a two-day Motivational Interviewing (MI) training for workforce development staff working directly with job seekers, consumers, and clients who require assistance in making life choices.

Motivational Interviewing integrates an empathic style of interviewing with behavioral strategies for helping clients make life decisions. Participants will learn key principles, techniques and tools of motivational interviewing.

Coupled with this training, is a plan to conduct on-going practical follow up for training participants for one year, post training, to provide support and technical assistance. The follow up sessions will be conducted by the original trainers who are experts in this field.

### MOSES Local Expert (MLE) Train-the-Trainer

The Massachusetts One Stop Employment System (MOSES) is the statewide database for documenting and recording all service activity within the Massachusetts Workforce Development System. All staff providing services to job seekers, training seekers and employers and partner constituent groups must record such data in MOSES.

Development System. All staff providing services to job seekers, training seekers and employers and partner constituent groups must record such data in MOSES.

With limited resources currently available to provide training on MOSES, we are embarking on a program design and training activity to expand training capability and build capacity in the local/regional offices. We are currently recruiting staff from all 16 workforce areas to participate in a train-the-trainer course to become MOSES Local Experts (MLEs). Upon completion of this course participants will be able to deliver this training (MOSES 101) to new staff and certify the trainees are eligible to receive a MOSES ID and begin using the system. Because MOSES training is traditionally offered once per month and delivered primarily in Boston, the expanded trainer pool will yield several benefits.

The projected outcomes of this project are to:

1. build capacity in the local areas whereby MOSES training can occur at the local level thereby reducing wait time for the next centrally scheduled training session,
2. reduce travel time and costs for attending centrally scheduled MOSES training, and
3. provide readily accessible local expertise to address technical assistance needs and troubleshoot problems regarding the MOSES system.

MLEs will be provided with ongoing technical support to ensure a high level of quality and expertise.

#### PACE: State E-learning System (Performance And Career Enhancement)

MassHire Department of Career Services is working to provide access to the PACE (Performance And Career Enhancement) Learning Management System for non-state partner and Workforce Board staff. PACE, supported by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, offers a variety of online training courses including, but not limited to:

- Preventing Workplace Violence for Employees/Managers
- Diversity Part II/Disability Awareness
- Conflict of Interest Law
- Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace
- Diversity Part III Gender Identity and Expression in the Workplace [Online]
- Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking Awareness
- Project Management for Non-Project Managers [Online]

Individual accounts are in-process for 260+ non-state employees. Account utilization will be tracked to inform recommendations to managers and supervisors with regard to the use of the system and to encourage staff to take specific courses relevant to their work and the customers they serve.

(LMS) video conferencing and webinars are useful ways to communicate, transmit information, teach courses, and provide technical assistance. MDCS is exploring a variety of tools, topics and established practices that have been proven to be useful. MDCS has started to produce and record live webinars to be made available on our Workforce System Staff Training website: <https://www.mass.gov/workforce-system-staff-training>.

Through the use of Adobe Connect, WebEx, and Microsoft 365 we are exploring ways to improve the ways in which we connect, coordinate, and collaborate within and outside of the Workforce Development System.

### **Workforce Innovation Cohort Work**

Workforce Innovation Cohorts, led by DOL, consist of teams of participants representing local areas, States and/or regions who collaborate through an organized process to develop solutions to improve system integration around challenges. The cohorts work toward the following outcomes:

- Help cohort members address the challenge in their own States/regions
- Develop a practical solution to the challenge to be disseminated to the field
- Serve as an overall “Innovation Lab” for ideas that could drive integration, promote improved efficiencies and get ahead of Federal ideas of how the system needs to be reformed

Cohorts combine “team time” (within own State/region) with cross-state/regional collaboration using both virtual and in-person engagement. The cohorts yield innovative yet practical solutions for each cohort member to take back to their community for adaptation and implementation.

EOLWD/MDCS, with a team of state and local partners engaged in the cohort work depicted in the chart below.

## Massachusetts Technical Assistance Cohort Participation

Cohort	Duration	Scope	Deliverable
Credential Attainment	October 2019 - May 2020	Explore different methods for identifying types of degrees, credentials, licenses that qualify as industry recognized credentials according to the WIOA definition of a credential.	Establish a state action plan that outlines a process and set of criteria that <u>can be applied in identifying IRCs</u> .
Maximizing WIOA and Non-WIOA Performance Data Cohort	July 2018 - September 2019	Focus time and space to share, identify, and explore strategies for using performance data to demonstrate programmatic achievements, challenges, and stakeholder return-in-investment.	Developed state action plan designed to maximize the use of performance data.
Accessibility	November 2018 – April 2019	Strategize to further maximizing physical and programmatic access for customers with disabilities using career centers.	Developed state action plan for implementation of universal strategies to promote physical and programmatic accessibility.
Co-Enrollment	March 2018 – May 2018	Identify and explore approaches to co-enrollment and advance efforts to integrate services that promote co-enrollment.	Developed a state-cross agency action plan for co-enrollment of shared customers.
Out of School Youth	February 2018 - May 2018	Unpack out-of-school youth engagement and retention	Developed resources in the following areas: Empowering Youth as Active Participants; Using Technology in Innovative Ways through Programming; and Recruitment, and Marketing, and Outreach Strategies
Future of AJC	January 2018 – April 2018	Consider how AJCs can be proactive and creative in planning ahead to remain competitive and relevant as technology advances and other social and industry trends emerge.	Future of AJCs Cohort Resource Tool
Integrated Business Services	January 2018 – June 2018	Explore integration of business outreach and services with partner agencies to provide a unified business service strategy to businesses.	<u>MassHire BizWorks</u> was used as a model for the cohort and was recognized by many of the participants as the model to follow.

## Customer Service Partnerships: Specialized Programs

The programs described below are funded through state interagency service agreements.

Policies for each of these programs are located here: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massworkforce-joint-partner-policy>.

### FY2020 Adult and Community Learning Services Adult Career Pathway Partnership

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) has committed \$200,000 in Adult Career Pathway funds to support local workforce area efforts to work in partnership with local adult education programs to identify and develop career pathway opportunities for adult learners.

The ACLS Adult Career Pathway funds have been allocated to the 16 MassHire Workforce Boards based on FY2019 adult education student enrollments in each of the local workforce areas.

MassHire Workforce Boards work in partnership with local adult education programs in the development of career pathways opportunities for adult learners. Funds provided to the Workforce Boards are intended to support the following activities: review of adult education proposals (CALC, workplace education, etc.); participation of MassHire Workforce Board staff on program quality reviews (PQR) (monitoring) and selected site visits and related trainings to determine the quality of services against a set of Indicators through a diagnostic assessment. The reviews ensure state and federally funded adult education providers are compliant with state and federal policies; promising practices will be identified and disseminated.

The funds also support the development of effective employer partnerships in order to place adult education graduates. And, provide support and guidance to adult education programs

area as well as to adult education programs related to the development of bridge classes and integrated education and training programs, serving “shared customers” and to the out-stationed adult education staff located at MassHire Career Centers

*Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Training Partnership*

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) provides training funds to MassHire Career Centers (MCCs) to provide occupational training to MRC consumers.

In FY19, MRC committed \$450,000 in funding to support workforce training for MRC consumers. MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) and MRC partner to assist training ready MRC consumers to enroll in workforce training through Individual Training Accounts (ITA) in the effort to increase employment opportunities. Funds provided by MRC for training are supplemental to WIOA training funds.

All MRC consumers referred to the MassHire Career Center system are required to complete a career center registration, which allows MRC consumers access to basic services, including labor exchange services, information on programs and services, and referrals. MRC consumers who complete a career center registration are considered shared customers.

This program continues through FY20, with an infusion of an additional \$550,000 into the MassHire Career Center system.

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**ATTACHMENT N: Department of Unemployment Assistance**

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(a) State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

- Measures/Programs to be Addressed for Alternate SQSP 2020
- First Payment Promptness
- Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness
- Nonmonetary Determination Quality
- Tax Quality
- Lower Authority Appeals Promptness
- Improper Payments Measure
- Detection of Overpayments
- Benefits Data Validation
- Tax Data Validation
- Benefit Accuracy Measurement (BAM)
- UI Integrity Action Plan (IAP)
- Narrative
- New CAP Form

(b) Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance Organization Chart

(c) SQSP Signature Page

(d) SF424

(e) SQSP Transmittal Letter

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## ATTACHMENT N-1: Department of Unemployment Assistance State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

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### 1: SQSP Corrective Action Plan (CAP) Excel Workbook Reporting Format Instructions

1. This Excel workbook will be used by states for developing their biennial SQSP submission and for reporting updates to the specific milestones and performance each quarter. The intent is to capture the state's cumulative performance data for each deficient measure in one document.
2. The Excel workbook has an embedded hyperlink to assist states in reporting their target and actual performance level.
3. States should complete each tab in this SQSP CAP Workbook for each measure listed by program area. The workbook is state-specific and includes individual worksheets with the measures that resulted in a required CAP. Each state will receive only the number of worksheets necessary to complete their required CAPS and Integrity Action Plan (IAP). States should work in partnership with their ETA Regional Office if assistance or training on this new submission method is needed.
4. Similar Performance Measures have been grouped together so that only one CAP will be required for these measures. ie: (First Payment Timeliness Measures, Lower Authority Appeals Promptness Measures)
5. Each tab has been divided into the following three sections:
  - A. Measure/Program Area and Performance Level
  - B. Corrective Action Plan Summary
  - C. Milestones

#### Measure/Program Area and Performance Level

7. Each measure and program area the state is expected to address is pre-filled in each workbook as well as the "CAP based on performance level" that did not meet the Federal criteria. States should enter the target performance level (by quarter) they anticipate will result from the completion of the planned corrective action plan (CAP) and milestones. States shall report the actual performance levels achieved each quarter in the quarterly updates. For further details on target/actual performance data, see the worksheet labeled "Performance Levels."

#### Corrective Action Plan Summary

8. The summary must address each deficient performance measure as described in ET HB 336, Chapter I, in the space provided. It must explain the reason for the deficiency, provide a description of the specific actions/activities planned to improve performance, and a plan for monitoring and assessing accomplishments of planned actions for each CAP. The worksheet can be expanded to allow for additional space.
9. Enter an X in the appropriate box if the desired performance improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the fiscal year for which the plan is in effect.
10. ETA Regions will provide technical assistance to states in developing the biennial SQSP in the Excel format.

#### Milestones

11. States must list specific milestones (key correction action or improvement activities) and the completion date for each milestone in the space provided. Milestones must be established for each element of the state's CAP and be of sufficient number and frequency to oversee and assess their progress during the 2-year cycle. A completion date for each milestone should also be entered by selecting a date from the drop down box.
12. Quarterly Update: States must provide a quarterly update for each milestone in the space provided, including the actual performance level attained at the end of the quarter. The update should describe if the milestone was completed as scheduled or explain if the milestone was not completed as scheduled. States should explain if the milestone was not completed as scheduled and submit a new target completion date. The workbook can be expanded to allow for additional characters in the milestone section. See Performance Levels worksheet for definition of actual performance.

#### Guidelines for Recording Performance Levels in SQSP

The purpose of the "Target Performance Levels" is for states to reflect the performance milestones they anticipate will result from the completion of the planned corrective action plan (CAP) and milestone activities. For SQSP purposes, these guidelines –

- Define the "current" performance level,
- Explain how states should estimate the "target" performance level,
- Explain how to calculate the "actual" performance level, and

#### Performance Levels

The **"CAP Based on Performance Level"** is defined as the performance level achieved at the end of the measurement period for the specific measure. The performance level will be listed numerically or listed as Pass/Fail (i.e. Tax Quality, Data Validation, etc). A majority of the core measures are based on 12 months of performance from April 1- March 31, while others measures may be based on the IPYA year or calendar year. The "measurement period" for each measure is listed in Attachment A of the annual SQSP UIPL. This performance level does not change during the SQSP period and will be pre-filled by the Regional Office.

The **Target Performance Level (TPL)** is defined as the 12-month cumulative performance level the state expects to achieve by each quarter ending date in line with the CAP and milestone activities. States should estimate the TPL based on all the known factors at the time the CAP is submitted. At the time the SQSP is submitted, the most recent two quarters of actual data are available and should be used to estimate the TPL. For example, if the SQSP is submitted in August, the state should use actual data available from the previous 12 months to project levels during the new SQSP period. The TPL should be attainable based on the milestone achievements and should reflect incremental improvements from quarter to quarter. If the TPL is changed during the SQSP period, the state should include an explanation as to why the goal was changed in the quarterly SQSP update.

The **Actual Performance Level (APL)** is defined as the actual 12-month cumulative performance met as of the quarter ending date. For example, for the first quarter report (quarter ending 12/31/2017), the APL should be the cumulative performance achieved from January 1, 2017 - December 31, 2017. For the second quarter report (quarter ending 3/31/2017), the APL should be the cumulative performance achieved from April 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017. Several of the actual performance levels can be found using the link at the bottom of the page or by tracking agency performance internally. If the APL for a measure cannot be found, please contact your Regional Office for assistance.



Massachusetts						
(a) MEASURES/PROGRAMS TO BE ADDRESSED FOR ALTERNATE SQSP 2020						
	Measures/Programs to be Addressed (Each Measure Below is Hyperlinked to the CAP Worksheet)	Acceptable Level of Performance (ALP)	Corrective Action Plan (CAP)		Narrative Required (In Word Doc.)	Performance Level
			N	E		
B E N E F I T S	First Payment Promptness	≥ 87%		X		82.22%
	First Payment Promptness (IntraState 14/21 Days)	≥ 87%		X		82.72%
	First Payment Promptness (InterState 14/21 Days)	≥ 70%				81.81%
	First Payment Promptness (IntraState 35 Days)	≥ 93%		X		91.10%
	First Payment Promptness (InterState 35 Days)	≥ 78%				90.81%
	Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness	≥ 80%		X		59.37%
	Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Separations	≥ 75%		X		64.06%
	Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Nonseps	≥ 75%	X			66.26%
	Lower Authority Appeals (30 Days)	≥ 60%		X		19.99%
	Lower Authority Appeals (45 Days)	≥ 80%		X		54.83%
A P P E A L S	Average Age of Pending Lower Authority Appeals	≤ 30 days				23.0
	Average Age of Pending Higher Authority Appeals	≤ 40 days				33.0
	Lower Authority Appeals Quality	≥ 80%				93.67%
	New Employer Status Determinations Timelapse	≥ 70%				87.60%
	Tax Quality (Part A)	No more than 3 tax functions failing TPS in a year				Pass
	Tax Quality (Part B)	The same tax function cannot fail for 3 consecutive years		X		Failed: Credits/Refunds
	TPS Sample Reviews	Pass				Pass
	Effective Audit Measure	Pass 4 factors/score ≥ 7				Pass
	Improper Payments Measure	< 10%		X		25.05%
	Detection of Overpayments - 3 Year Measure	≥ 50% & ≤ 95%		X		0.00%
I N T E G R I T Y	Overpayment Recovery Measure	≥ 68%				
	Data Validation - Benefits (All Submitted & Passing)	All Benefit Pops Submitted & Passing		X		Failed: Populations (1, 3, 3a, 4, 5, 7-15) Mod 4 (Seps, Non-Seps, Appeals)
	Data Validation - Tax (All Submitted & Passing)	All Tax Pops Submitted & Passing		X		Failed: Populations 1, 3-5
	NDNH BAM Compliance	Pass				pass
	BAM Operations Compliant	Pass All M&P		X		Failed: Sample Selection; DCA Separation Population Comparison Variance
	Incorrect Recording of Issue Detection Date	95%				Pass
	Incorrect Recording of Determination Date	95%				Pass
	UI Reporting Requirements	Pass			X	Fail
	Percent of Intrastate Payments Made Timely	87%				82.72%
	Detection of Recoverable Overpayments	54.5%				0.00%
G P R A	% of Employer Tax Liability Determinations Made Timely	89%				88.08%
Integrity Action Plan (IAP) Top Three Root Causes						
Worksearch						
Benefit Year Earnings						
Separation Issues						
Monitoring Findings/Audit Resolution						



(b) First Payment Promptness																						
State: Massachusetts					Federal Fiscal Year: 2019-view SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report																	
Back to Biennial Overview 2019		Back to Alternate Overview view			Instructions																	
Performance Measures	ALP	CAP Based on SQSP 2019 Performance Level	CAP Based on SQSP view Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2018 Quarter 1	3/31/2019 Quarter 2	6/30/2019 Quarter 3	9/30/2019 Quarter 4	12/31/2019 Quarter 5	3/31/2020 Quarter 6	6/30/2020 Quarter 7	9/30/2020 Quarter 8										
First Payment Promptness: % of all 1st payments within 14/21 days after the compensable week.	≥ 87%	82.79%	82.22%	Target	80.0%	75.0%	80.0%	83.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%										
				Actual	89.0%	90.0%	85.0%															
First Payment Promptness, 14/21 days Intrastate UI full weeks	≥ 87%	83.35%	82.72%	Target	77.0%	80.0%	82.0%	82.5%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%										
				Actual	89.0%	90.0%	85.0%															
First Payment Promptness, 35 days Intrastate UI full weeks	≥ 93%	91.25%	91.10%	Target	84.0%	85.0%	83.0%	88.0%	86.0%	86.0%	86.0%	87.0%										
				Actual	93.0%	94.0%	90.0%															
Regional Office Comments in cell below:																						
<p><b>Corrective Action Plan Summary:</b>  The Summary must provide:</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b>  A. The Reason for the deficiency.  The reason for failing to meet the First Payment Promptness metric is the amount of issues that are getting created up front, adjudication backlog of issues over twenty-one days, and total issues per claimant vs staff ratio. UI Online was designed to capture information from claimants and employers anytime they raised potential for a non-monetary determination. Although effective, this has created a situation where more claims will have to be adjudicated. The top three categories of issue types currently pending adjudication are; able, available and actively seeking work (23%), still employed and earnings (23%), and separation (15%) issues. As previously noted during our FY 2017-2018, SQSP cycle DUA experienced a significant reduction of force due to a decrease in funding. This situation had a dramatic impact on our ability to address work flow volume, particularly adjudication. As a result a back log of issues was created. Total issues per claim vs staff ratio measures our ability to resolve non-monetary determinations at a rate which exceeds the amount of non-monetary issues being set up on claims. Currently, DUA sets up approximately 5,000 issues per week. Present staffing levels have the ability to determine 4,500 issues per week.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b>  B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.  Our plan to resolve the identified issues is to work on a series of initiatives and enhancements that have been approved; recently implemented or plan to be implemented to improve the timely resolution and reduction of adjudication issues. In July 2016, we enhanced our UI Online security roles to allow adjudicators to assign adjudication issues to themselves. Since then, we have been working on manual processes to allow adjudicators to work on all issues holding payment for individual claimants and have improved our escalation process by allowing for a timelier resolution of outstanding issues on a claim. We have explored the use of seasonal staff to alleviate adjudication staff on the phones and to assist with single party issues. We have offered the opportunity to work overtime to adjudication staff and those of other units that could assist with adjudication of issues in an effort to reduce backlog and assist with timely first pay. During calendar year 2017, we realigned our adjudication staff into a team model. We continue to build upon this model, and maintain focus of the resolution of all outstanding issues on claims assigned to the team. In 2018, we began to keep track of individual backlog, making sure that adjudication staff is accountable for all issues assigned to them and ensure follow through. We are in the middle of an upgrade to our existing IVR system that will help us improve the data transfer between the IVR and UI Online. This effort will help us provide better customer service to our constituents. This change will also allow us to improve upon our Tele Cert feature by making it a more effective tool. Through improved integration, we expect to reduce the amount of time adjudicators spend supporting telephone activities, reduce issues and improve customer service. DUA will be engaging with an outside firm to assist us in improving our business process, performance, and assist with recommendations for best practices overall. As part of this engagement, we hope to be able to expand on our technology and resources.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b>  C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.  The plan that was in place for the previous year is still in ongoing with some additions. We continue to service our claimants in need via our fact-finding line where skilled adjudicators are able to assist customers with questionnaires and expedite the issue resolution process. The fact-finding line provides direct access to the queue, without having to pass through the screening process. This plan was previously put into practice and continues today. We are in the process of implementing new enhancements that will facilitate the weekly certification process, reduce issues, and improve our IVR and interaction with UIO among others. In the meantime, we are continually assessing our processes and making changes where we believe will make a difference in service and turnaround time. These initiatives have helped us improve, but we are aware that additional work is needed in order to hit our performance target goals consistently.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b>  D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.  DUA will start sending the DUA First Payment Promptness Executive Dashboard numbers to the Regional Office on a weekly basis. In addition, we will continue to track our performance progress through the increased utilization of existing internal management reports.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b>  NOTE: Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.  (Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Milestones</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Continue to monitor call center work flow enhancements and make adjustments to business procedures to improve the customer experience.</td> <td>Completion Date 9/30/2020</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2"> <b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b>  DUA continues to monitor Timely First Pay, Time Lapse, and Aging issues on a daily and weekly basis. Our latest approach, was changed the prior quarter, where the issue assignment was towards an overall call center approach rather than teams. We are dividing TFP cases by call center based on SSN, and making staff accountable for their own backlog. We have implemented an escalation and backlog unit, which has assisted us in the front end minimizing escalation phone calls and reducing claimant frustration. We continue to work towards eliminating unnecessary issues and workarounds; this is an ongoing effort that takes time to implement. We are also making strides towards implementing system enhancements, which will address current defects, which will ultimately assist us in issue reduction  <b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b>  DUA continues to monitor Timely First Pay, Time Lapse, and Aging issues on a daily and weekly basis. We continue to divide TFP cases by call center based on SSN, and making staff accountable for their own backlog. We have implemented an escalation and backlog unit, which has assisted us in the front end minimizing escalation phone calls and reducing claimant frustration. We continue to work towards eliminating unnecessary issues and workarounds; this is an ongoing effort that takes time to implement. 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**Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):**

We continued the use of seasonals through this quarter, they were able to assist us during our peak period, they joined us mid way through last quarter in November 2018 and continued the season through April 2019. Their assistance with fact finding has been instrumental in helping DUA exceed target goals.

**Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):**

In the past year we have added 17 adjudicators, 3 supervisors/management staff, 7 hearings staff, 1 document processing staff and 4 claims staff to the FTE count for DUA to backfill the unoccupied positions. We are currently utilizing seasonal staff to assist with fact finding, to alleviate the adjudication unit from phone work to better use their time to adjudicate. Their assistance with fact finding continues to be instrumental in helping DUA exceed target goals.

**Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):**

**Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):**

**Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):**

**Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):**

**Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):**

3. Monitor and enhance technology tools (i.e., IVR) to improve our business process.	Completion Date 9/30/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> The IVR migrated to the cloud in October of 2018. We are now in the process of updating our IVR flows, as well as implementing enhancements to our web and IVR which will ultimately facilitate weekly certification for claimants and reduce unnecessary issues.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> This quarter we focused primarily on updating our certification questions for our constituents. A good part of the quarter was spent communicating with developers, testing, and updating. We look forward towards implementation in the next quarter.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> This quarter we focused primarily on updating our certification questions for our constituents. The rework with the IVR team and our integration team is currently in process. At this time we are in the process of getting the language translated for IVR to assist our LEP claimants, we will also need to update all communication to claimants once this project is complete. We are also in the process of automating our issue assignment process, currently this is a manual process which takes up a lot of time for both supervisory staff as frontline staff. A lot of work has gone into the project from getting feedback from our frontline staff to consulting with our integration team in an effort to make this project move forward in a way that will be effective and productive for our staff.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
4. Engage a vendor in order to improve our business process.	Completion Date 9/30/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> This quarter DUA was chosen as one of the pilot agencies to work with a vendor on a 6 week engagement. The engagement was an effort to improve call center optimization. The 6 week engagement took a look at our processes, current technology, and overall needs. The vendor was able to provide a list of recommendations that we can now review and analyze as to what best suits the agency. This is work in process among other initiatives that DUA has in the works.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> DUA continues to engage and work closely with Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS) as well as Contact Center Operations Council to develop ways to facilitate UI for our constituents, and provide training opportunities for our staff. This is an ongoing effort. Changes have been made to our web pages in an effort to promote self service, in addition we are working on a commonwealth training initiative for internal staff.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Business process improvements and redesigns have been in development for an extended period of time. As part of this process, there have been a number of initiatives in the past year. Specifically in September and October of 2018 where we engaged with Zelus a consulting group to review current business processes specifically for adjudication as well as training needs for our agents. In November and December we also met with another consulting group, McKensie, mapping the user journey of the customer and staff experience for DUA. These results are currently being reviewed to identify potential business processes to be redesigned to improve our processes.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
5. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
6. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	

7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018): Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019): Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019): Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019): Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020): Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020): Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	



(c) Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness												
State: Massachusetts					Federal Fiscal Year: 2019-view SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report							
Back to Biennial Overview 2019		Back to Alternate Overview view			Instructions							
Performance Measure	ALP	CAP Based on SQSP 2019 Performance Level	CAP Based on SQSP view Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2018 Quarter 1	3/31/2019 Quarter 2	6/30/2019 Quarter 3	9/30/2019 Quarter 4	12/31/2019 Quarter 5	3/31/2020 Quarter 6	6/30/2020 Quarter 7	9/30/2020 Quarter 8
Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness	≥ 80%	63.56%	59.37%	Target	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	55.0%	60.0%	60.0%	60.0%	65.0%
Regional Office Comments in cell below:					Actual	60.0%	60.0%	61.0%				
<b>Corrective Action Plan Summary:</b> The Summary must provide:  <b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> <b>A. The Reason for the deficiency.</b> The reason for failing to meet the Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness performance metric is the backlog of adjudication issues over twenty-one days old. As previously noted during our FY 2017-2018, SQSP cycle DUA experienced a significant reduction of force due to a decrease in funding. This situation had a dramatic impact on our ability to address work flow volume, particularly adjudication. As a result a back log of issues was created.  <b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> <b>B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.</b>  We have worked on a series of initiatives and enhancements that have been approved; recently implemented or plan to be implement to improve the timely resolution and reduction of adjudication issues. In July 2016, we enhanced our UI Online security roles to allow adjudicators to assign adjudication issues to themselves. Since then, we have been working on manual processes to allow adjudicators to work on all issues holding payment for individual claimants and have improved our escalation process by allowing for a timelier resolution of outstanding issues on a claim. We have explored the use of seasonal staff to alleviate adjudication staff on the phones and to assist with single party issues. We have offered the opportunity to work overtime to adjudication staff and those of other units that could assist with adjudication of issues in an effort to reduce backlog and assist with timely first pay. During calendar year 2017, we realigned our adjudication staff into a team model. We continue to build upon this model, and maintain focus of the resolution of all outstanding issues on claims assigned to the team. In 2018, we began to keep track of individual backlog, making sure that adjudication staff is accountable for all issues assigned to them and ensure follow through. We are in the middle of an upgrade to our existing IVR system that will help us improve the data transfer between the IVR and UI Online. This effort will help us provide better customer service to our constituents. This change will also allow us to improve upon our Tele Cert feature by making it a more effective tool. Through improved integration, we expect to reduce the amount of time adjudicators spend supporting telephone activities, reduce issues and improve customer service. DUA will be engaging with an outside firm to assist us in improving our business process, performance, and assist with recommendations for best practices overall. As part of this engagement, we hope to be able to expand on our technology and resources. Moving forward we plan on using internal and vendor review process to identify additional enhancements to the customer experience. In addition, we will continue to use the seasonal adjusters to strengthen our personnel resources.  <b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> <b>C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.</b>  The plan that was in place for the previous year is still in ongoing with some additions. We continue to service our claimants in need via our fact-finding line where skilled adjudicators are able to assist customers with questionnaires and expedite the issue resolution process. The fact-finding line provides direct access to the queue, without having to pass through the screening process. This plan was previously put into practice and continues today. We are in the process of implementing new enhancements that will facilitate the weekly certification process, reduce issues, and improve our IVR and interaction with UIO among others. In the meantime, we are continually assessing our processes and making changes where we believe will make a difference in service and turnaround time. These initiatives have helped us improve, but we are aware that additional work is needed in order to hit our performance target goals consistently.  <b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> <b>D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.</b> DUA continues to provide First Payment Promptness numbers to the Regional Office on a weekly basis. That practice will continue. In addition, we will continue to track our performance progress through the increased utilization of  <b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> <b>NOTE: Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the</b> <span style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 50px; height: 20px; vertical-align: middle;"></span> <b>major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.</b> <b>(Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)</b>												
<b>Milestones</b>												
1. Monitor and enhance recent adjudicator business process to improve staff outcomes										Completion Date		
										9/30/2020		
<b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> We continue with our ongoing efforts towards improving timely first payment and issue timeliness. The changes with regards to issue assignment and escalations procedures is proving to be very effective. The division of issues has changed, we are addressing backlog as well as TFP, and Aging, staff is now accountable for their own backlog and responsible for completing all issues assigned to them. Priorities for our management staff has also changed, as it has for our supervisory staff. We continue to keep track of daily and weekly  <b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> We continue with our ongoing efforts towards improving timely first payment and issue timeliness. The changes with regards to issue assignment and escalations procedures is proving to be effective. We are addressing backlog as well as TFP, and Aging, staff continues to be accountable for their own backlog and responsible for completing all issues assigned to them. Criteria for assigning escalations has changed and continues to be monitored. We continue to keep track of daily and weekly. This quarter we were faced with the government shutdown, as well as a pretty major strike and managed to exceed target and maintain consistent.  <b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Business process improvements and redesigns have been in development for an extended period of time. As part of this process, there have been a number of initiatives in the past year. Specifically in September and October of 2018 where we engaged with Zelus a consulting group to review current business processes specifically for adjudication as well as training needs for our agents. In November and December we also met with another consulting group, McKensie, mapping the user Journey of the customer and staff experience for DUA. These results are currently being reviewed to identify potential business processes to be redesigned to improve our processes.  <b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b>  <b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b>  <b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b>  <b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b>  <b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b>												
2. Use seasonal staff to augment personnel resources.										Completion Date		
										9/30/2020		
<b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> This quarter we hired seasonal staff to assist us during our peak period, they joined us mid way through the quarter in November 2018. Their assistance with fact finding has been instrumental in DUA being able to exceed target goals.  <b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> We continued the use of seasonals through this quarter, they were able to assist us during our peak period, they joined us mid way through last quarter in November 2018 and continued the season through April 2019. Their assistance with fact finding has been instrumental in helping DUA exceed target goals.  <b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> In the past year we have added 17 adjudicators, 3 supervisors/management staff, 7 hearings staff, 1 document processing staff and 4 claims staff to the FTE count for DUA to backfill the unoccupied positions. We are currently utilizing seasonal staff to assist with fact finding, to alleviate the adjudication unit from phone work to better use their time to adjudicate. Their assistance with fact finding continues to be instrumental in helping DUA exceed target goals.  <b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b>  <b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b>  <b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b>												

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):

	Completion Date
3. Engage a vendor in order to improve our business process.	9/30/2020
<b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> This quarter DUA was chosen as one of the pilot agencies to work with a vendor on a 6 week engagement. The engagement was an effort to improve call center optimization. The 6 week engagement took a look at our processes, current technology, and overall needs. The vendor was able to provide a list of recommendations that we can now review and analyze as to what best suits the agency. This is work in process among other initiatives that DUA has in the works.	
<b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> DUA continues to engage and work closely with Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS) as well as Contact Center Operations Council to develop ways to facilitate UI for our constituents, and provide training opportunities for our staff. This is an ongoing effort. Changes have been made to our web pages in an effort to promote self service, in addition we are working on a commonwealth training initiative for internal staff.	
<b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Business process improvements and redesigns have been in development for an extended period of time. As part of this process, there have been a number of initiatives in the past year. Specifically in September and October of 2018 where we engaged with Zeus a consulting group to review current business processes specifically for adjudication as well as training needs for our agents. In November and December we also met with another consulting group, McKensie, mapping the user journey of the customer and staff experience for DUA. These results are currently being reviewed to identify potential business processes to be redesigned to improve our processes.	
<b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b>	
<b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b>	
<b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b>	
<b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b>	
<b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b>	
4. Monitor and enhance recent telecert changes.	Completion Date 9/30/2020
<b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> The IVR migrated to the cloud in October of 2018. We are now in the process of updating our IVR flows, as well as implementing enhancements to our web and IVR which will ultimately facilitate weekly certification for claimants and reduce unnecessary issues.	
<b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> This quarter we focused primarily on updating our certification questions for our constituents both on the web as well as IVR. A good part of the quarter was spent communicating with developers, testing, and updating. We look forward towards implementation in the next quarter	
<b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> UI Online system enhancements has been under development since November 2018 and will be implemented in the near future. The goal of this enhancement is to reduce the number of erroneously created issues by reworking and reducing the number of Telecert and webcert questions back to only the questions necessary to determine the claimants eligibility for the week in questions and eliminate extraneous questions. This will reduce the number of non-mon issues created via telecert and webcert errors by the claimant and allow adjudication staff to focus on the relevant issues regarding eligibility. This process is moving forward, and we are in the final stages, at this time, it is due to be completed by end of 2019.	
<b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b>	
<b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b>	
<b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b>	
<b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b>	
<b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b>	
5. Issue Reduction efforts by DUA to assist with backlog and claimant escalations	Completion Date 9/30/2020
<b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b>	
<b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b>	
<b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> It is important to note that DUA for the past 3 years plus has been working on different tactics to reduce our backlog. We have identified areas of need, have implemented changes in procedures to the way work is being distributed to our adjudication staff, have worked closely with our integration unit to identify defects and have been successful in implementing some of those changes as budget allows. Our total issue count as of June 28, 2019 is 93,296 total non-mon issues of which 51,103 issues are holding payment. Of the total issues, 16,473 issues are backlog over 21 days with 13,084 holding payment. DUA will continue to move forward with attempts to reduce our backlog. To date we have fully executed Task Order 14 agreement with CGI to update UIOnline and how it assigns non-mon issues to adjudication staff, currently we have opted to do this manually because the way UI Online is designed does not work to our satisfaction. The coming months will be devoted to this project. We have identified scripting that should be run, to remove unnecessary issues that are being created by UIO, and should not tie up our resources. We are in the process of discussing a memorandum of understanding with our union regarding overtime guidelines, which will help in allowing the appropriate staff to assist during periods of overtime. We are also in the process of negotiations with the union to come up with a fair metric that we can add to our EPRS's and be able to hold staff accountable for the work that they are producing. During the past several months, we have been able to backfill adjudication staff in the call center, and have been able to provide the foundational training that they need. These new adjudicators and in the process of being mentored and coached to be able to adjudicate all non mon issues. DUA has also been in communication and working with NASWA to create training a curriculum for adjudication and claims staff in the call center, and is working closely with NASWA and has engaged in a State Intensive Service agreement to assist in the reduction of worksearch and benefit year earnings errors at state level and more broadly at the national level.	
<b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b>	
<b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b>	
<b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b>	
<b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b>	
<b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b>	
6. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
<b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b>	
<b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b>	
<b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b>	
<b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b>	
<b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b>	
<b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b>	
<b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b>	
<b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b>	

7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	



(d) Nonmonetary Determination Quality												
State: Massachusetts					Federal Fiscal Year: 2019-view SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report							
Back to Biennial Overview 2019		Back to Alternate Overview view			Instructions							
Performance Measures	ALP	CAP Based on SQSP 2019 Performance Level	CAP Based on SQSP view Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2018 Quarter 1	3/31/2019 Quarter 2	6/30/2019 Quarter 3	9/30/2019 Quarter 4	12/31/2019 Quarter 5	3/31/2020 Quarter 6	6/30/2020 Quarter 7	9/30/2020 Quarter 8
Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Separations	≥ 75%	55.32%	64.06%	Target	58.0%	60.0%	63.0%	65.0%	67.0%	69.0%	72.0%	75.0%
				Actual	61.2%	62.5%	63.3%		67.0%	69.0%	72.0%	75.0%
Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Non Separations	≥ 75%	86.11%	66.26%	Target					67.0%	69.0%	72.0%	75.0%
				Actual								
Regional Office Comments in cell below:												
<p><b>Corrective Action Plan Summary:</b> The Summary must provide:</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> A. The Reason for the deficiency. DUA has failed to meet the acceptable levels of performance for Nonmonetary Determination Quality for several reasons. Most of the failure is due to adjudication staff failing to seek rebuttals from both claimants and employers, failing to request supporting documentation (company policies, release of claims, pension and medical documentation), issuing written determinations not supported by case material, and taking workload credit for invalid nonmonetary determinations.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.  As talked about in our prior SQSP, administrators, adjudication managers and supervisors have begun utilizing a report that provides a weekly sample of nonmonetary determinations resolved by adjudicators. As a result, quality reviews are being done more frequently and feedback on making improvements is being shared with adjudication staff. A new JSR handbook is currently in production, with Chapters 1-9 finalized, and Chapters 10-12 in the reviewing stage. It is our hope that this will be completed and ready for distribution and training by the end of 2019. In addition, DUA's UI Policy and Performance Department is monitoring trends identified via the Benefits Timeliness and Quality Nonmonetary Determinations Quality Review, as well as conducting random quality reviews from the weekly random sample report. This effort will now include a review of hearings decisions in order to identify trends. On-site training was developed to target specific areas requiring performance improvement. This effort proved to be an effective approach. Recently, a refresher Fact finding training was conducted on site in both of the call centers. A training/presentation regarding the BTA process is being delivered to all staff in Sept 2019. Going forward, DUA will leverage knowledge from stakeholders and other UI systems in order to identify potential training program enhancements. The belief is by implementing training program enhancements we will leverage our current class room approach with tools which can be used by adjudication supervisors for use in their coaching and training sessions.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.  During the previous SQSP cycle stakeholders made an effort to develop performance metrics for adjudication evaluations. This effort did not result in intended outcomes and DUA will continue to engage stakeholders in an effort to achieve organizational goals.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals. MDUA has engaged the NASWA Integrity Center in an effort to review. We will continue to analyze the data from existing management reports and quarterly quality reviews. In addition, the UI Policy and Performance Department will assist with training development and delivery.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> <b>NOTE:</b> Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved. (Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)</p>												
Milestones												
1. Continue weekly random sampling report to conduct more frequent quality reviews of resolved nonmonetary issues.											Completion Date 6/30/2020	
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> Field supervisors continue to score randomly sampled cases.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> Field supervisors continue to score randomly sampled cases.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Field supervisors continue to score randomly sampled cases in an effort to improve quality.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>												
2. Develop resources for adjudication supervisory staff to enhance staff coaching.											Completion Date 9/30/2020	
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> The newly formed Adjudication Committee will formulate a plan to achieve this milestone. This committee will have it's first meeting by 6/30/2019.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> The newly formed Adjudication Committee will formulate a plan to achieve this milestone. This committee will have its first meeting by 6/30/2019. After a recent NASWA Integrity Center review, we anticipate enhancing adjudication and improper payment training by leveraging their resources.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Because of a staffing issue the Adjudication Committee kick off will be delayed until 10/15/19. The staffing issue has been eliminated and we look forward to moving forward with the work of building a committee which will address consistency among adjudicators as well as advise on needed training.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>												



3. Investigate methods to enhance adjudication training program.	Completion Date 9/30/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> The newly formed Adjudication Committee will formulate a plan to achieve this milestone. This committee will have its first meeting by 6/30/2019. After a recent NASWA Integrity Center review, we anticipate enhancing adjudication and improper payment training by leveraging their resources.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> The newly formed Adjudication Committee will formulate a plan to achieve this milestone. This committee will have its first meeting by 6/30/2019. After a recent NASWA Integrity Center review, we anticipate enhancing adjudication and improper payment training by leveraging their resources.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Because of a staffing issue the Adjudication Committee kick off will be delayed until 10/15/19. The staffing issue has been eliminated and we look forward to moving forward with the work of building a committee which will address consistency among adjudicators as well as advise on needed training. MADUA has in the interim engaged the National Integrity Academy in order to review our current training structure and advise us how to enhance delivery of training.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
4. Analyze deficiencies from quarterly evaluation and discuss with adjudication managers and supervisors.	Completion Date 3/31/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> DUA has recently enhanced our communication strategy for post-BTQ review and communications. The first BTQ review with this enhanced strategy will be from the quarter ending 12/31/2018. After a recent NASWA Integrity Center review, we anticipate enhancing adjudication and improper payment training by leveraging their resources.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> DUA has recently enhanced our communication strategy for post-BTQ review and communications. The first BTQ review with this enhanced strategy will be from the quarter ending 12/31/2018. After a recent NASWA Integrity Center review, we anticipate enhancing adjudication and improper payment training by leveraging their resources.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> DUA has recently enhanced our communication strategy for post-BTQ review and communications. The first BTQ review with this enhanced strategy will be from the quarter ending 12/31/2018. After a recent NASWA Integrity Center review, we anticipate enhancing adjudication and improper payment training by leveraging their resources. MADUA recently filled the Director of UI Policy &amp; Performance position. This will allow information obtained from BAM/BTQ to be implemented into our training program seamlessly.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
5. Analyze hearing results in order to identify trends.	Completion Date 3/31/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> The newly formed Adjudication Committee will formulate a plan to achieve this milestone. This committee will have its first meeting by 6/30/2019. After a recent NASWA Integrity Center review, we anticipate enhancing adjudication and improper payment training by leveraging their resources.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> The newly formed Adjudication Committee will formulate a plan to achieve this milestone. This committee will have its first meeting by 6/30/2019. After a recent NASWA Integrity Center review, we anticipate enhancing adjudication and improper payment training by leveraging their resources.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Because of a staffing issue the Adjudication Committee kick off will be delayed until 10/15/19. The staffing issue has been eliminated and we look forward to moving forward with the work of building a committee which will address consistency among adjudicators as well as advise on needed training. MADUA has in the interim engaged the National Integrity Academy in order to review our current training structure and advise us how to enhance delivery of training.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
6. Leverage NASWA National Integrity Academy review of curriculum and training delivery.	Completion Date 6/30/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	

7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	

(e) Tax Quality												
State: Massachusetts					Federal Fiscal Year: 2019-view SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report							
Back to Biennial Overview 2019		Back to Alternate Overview view			Instructions							
Performance Measures	ALP	CAP Based on SQSP 2019 Performance Level	CAP Based on SQSP view Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2018 Quarter 1	3/31/2019 Quarter 2	6/30/2019 Quarter 3	9/30/2019 Quarter 4	12/31/2019 Quarter 5	3/31/2020 Quarter 6	6/30/2020 Quarter 7	9/30/2020 Quarter 8
Tax Quality (Part B)	The same tax function cannot fail for 3 consecutive years	Collections	Collections	Target			Pass				Pass	
		Credit/Refunds	Credit/Refunds	Actual								
				Target								
				Actual								
Regional Office Comments in cell below:												
<p><b>Corrective Action Plan Summary:</b>  The Summary must provide:  <b>Alternate Year Plan Updates:</b> Moving into the alternative year plan we will our effort to explore increasing our billing tolerance level. Also, we will move IT enhancements into production which will amend employer statements to better reflect balances on employer accounts.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates:</b>  A. The Reason for the deficiency.  The Collections function has struggled and failed due to issues identified with the automated notices being sent to delinquent employers. The system is designed to generate Cumulative statements on all accounts that owe at least \$10 in total delinquent debt approximately a week into each month. Additionally, there are 2 non-filer notices that are sent out quarterly, 1 day and 31 days after the due date, to those employers who have not filed the most recent past due quarter. These notices are essential for informing employers of potential non-filer assessment and penalties. Upon review, we identified that some employers were excluded from this notification process. DUA is reviewing increasing the tolerance level for billing employers and the monitoring of delinquent accounts.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates:</b>  B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.</p> <p>An in-depth analysis and full system review of the technical issues that caused these failures has been completed. We discovered the reason some employers who had incurred debt did not receive their statements. We have put in place systematic and procedural modifications and updates that remedy the problem.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates:</b>  C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.</p> <p>While the system related issues have been resolved, it will take some time for the sample populations to reflect the recent changes.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates:</b>  D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.</p> <p>We will be performing another in-depth systems review until the function passes. In addition, we will also validate that all employers listed on our Accounts Receivable report are receiving cumulative statements. If an employer was not sent a statement, one will be generated to ensure compliance with the TPS requirements.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates:</b>  NOTE: Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 50px; height: 20px; float: right;"></div> <p><b>(Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)</b></p>												
<b>Milestones</b>												
1. Complete in-depth systems review											Completion Date	
											6/30/2019	
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b>  We continue to monitor and test the generation of cumulative statements to employers. The 2018 TPS Review of the collections function passed, which indicates the modifications and corrections to our program were successful. Our TPS Reviewer is in the process of completing another in depth systems review which we anticipate to have completed by June 30, 2019.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b>  The in-depth Systems Review was completed to verify the internal controls and quality assurance are built into MA DUA program for effective Collections functionality. All controls were found to be in place and operating properly. While much of the lien tracking is currently still manual until the next system build, Collection controls are not at risk at this time.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b>  The system build is currently in the testing phase and anticipated to go-live in UI Online in September 2019. This build will automate the lien tracking. Completed as of 6/30/2019</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>												
2. Complete analysis confirming that all employers listed on our Accounts Receivable report are receiving cumulative statements											Completion Date	
											12/31/2019	
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b>  We have requested the reports showing cumulative statements issued and are working on the analysis to confirm all employers with accounts receivable balances are indeed receiving cumulative statements.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b>  We are still cross-matching the cumulative statements to the list of employers with receivable balances. We anticipate completion by 6/30/19.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b>  Staff has been working on other prioritized testing of enhancements and has not yet completed the cross-matching of cumulative statements to the list of employers with receivable balances. We continue with the cross-matching and anticipate completion by 10/31/19.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>												

3. Complete the review of increasing the tolerance level for billing employers and monitoring delinquent accounts report.	Completion Date 12/31/2019
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> We are considering increasing our tolerance level for billing and are working with the legal department to determine if doing so would be in compliance with our statute and regulations. We continue to use the monthly, downloadable AR file to prioritize collections as we work on system enhancements that will automatically assign cases based on priority.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> At this time, we cannot legally increase our billing tolerance per the statute and regulations. Legal is working on proposed regulation changes that would allow us to increase our billing tolerance to an amount over \$100.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> At this time, we cannot legally increase our billing tolerance per the statute and regulations. DUA Legal department continues to work on proposed regulation changes that would allow us to increase our billing tolerance to an amount over \$100. Review is complete as of 6/30/2019.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
4. Review existing business rules for generating account statements to employers to identify which rules need to be amended in order to generate statements for credit balances along with those for balances due.	Completion Date 3/31/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
5. Submit enhancement request to amend the existing business rules for the billing statements so that we statements are also generated for accounts with credit balances.	Completion Date 6/30/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
6. Test and implement enhancement as proposed so employers can receive statements of credit balances	Completion Date 9/30/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	

7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
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Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	



(f) Lower Authority Appeals Promptness																
State: Massachusetts				Federal Fiscal Year: 2019-view SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report												
Back to Biennial Overview 2019		Back to Alternate Overview view			Instructions											
Performance Measures	ALP	CAP Based on SQSP 2019 Performance Level	CAP Based on SQSP view Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2018 Quarter 1	3/31/2019 Quarter 2	6/30/2019 Quarter 3	9/30/2019 Quarter 4	12/31/2019 Quarter 5	3/31/2020 Quarter 6	6/30/2020 Quarter 7	9/30/2020 Quarter 8				
Lower Authority Appeals Time Lapse - 30 days	≥ 60%	19.04%	19.99%	Target	25.0%	30.0%	35.0%	40.0%	45.0%	50.0%	55.0%	60.0%				
				Actual	14.5%	40.0%	59.0%									
Lower Authority Appeals Time Lapse - 45 days	≥ 80%	47.29%	54.83%	Target	50.0%	55.0%	60.0%	65.0%	70.0%	75.0%	80.0%	80.0%				
				Actual	50.0%	70.0%	81.0%									
Regional Office Comments in cell below:																
<p><b>Corrective Action Plan Summary:</b> The Summary must provide:</p> <p><b>A. The Reason for the deficiency.</b> Massachusetts did not meet the Average Age of Pending Lower Authority Appeals, Lower Authority Appeals Time Lapse (30 days), and Lower Authority Appeals Time lapse (45 days). We have not been able to meet these performance standards for six consecutive months and we are taking steps to ensure that we continue to meet timeliness measures. As previously noted during our FY 2017-2018, SQSP cycle DUA experienced a significant reduction of force due to a decrease in funding. This situation had a dramatic impact on our ability to address work flow volume, particularly hearings.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b></p> <p><b>B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.</b></p> <p>Our performance was negatively impacted due to the short-staffing and an influx of new appeals. Although the number of new appeals appears to be trending upward, we continue to work through the backlog of cases. The Hearings Department also experienced staffing shortages as a result of medical absences and the resignations of review examiners and a regional hearings manager. The number of pending appeals has also increased due to auto-adjudication of non-monetary determinations. In December 2018, we began to schedule "pooled hearings." We schedule seven hearings at 9:00 am or 1:00 pm for each review examiner who hears the case on a first come, first serve basis. Review examiners are usually done within 1.5 hours and have the remainder of the morning or afternoon to write decisions. Although participation is voluntary, this method has helped dispose of more single party appeals. In February 2017, the Hearings Department increased the hearings schedule from 22.5 to 25 hours per week as we had improvements in the areas of system performance, phone hearing, and streamlined "pooled" hearings. However, the actual number of cases is dependent on the complexity of the issue. A half hour is added whenever a party requests an interpreter. On January 22, 2018, we implemented a telecommuting pilot. Examiners are scheduled to conduct hearings out of the regional or satellite hearings offices four days per week and write from home one day per week. Examiners who telecommute have reduced their backlogs significantly. This has also resulted in a reduction of travel costs. During the quarter ending March 31, 2018, we lost approximately 272 hearings due to snow emergencies during the months of January and March. We have re-employed a retired review examiner on a part time basis to help with the caseload. Additionally, the Board of Review loaned the Hearings Department a Counsel I, for several weeks to conduct hearings. The Legal Department loaned two Assistant General Counsels who held hearings two afternoons per week for a 2-month period. In an effort to improve time lapse and distribute the workload more uniformly between regions, examiners will be called upon to conduct telephone hearings from another region when the examiner assigned to the hearing is unexpectedly absent. With in-person hearings, if a review examiner is out of the office unexpectedly, the cases assigned to that reviewer had to be postponed unless another examiner from the same region had an opening in their schedule. With more telephone hearings being scheduled, cases can be transferred to examiners in other regions. Telephone hearings also reduce the amount of travel time required for Review Examiners, thereby allowing more appeals to be disposed. We will continue to make use of flexible scheduling and backfilling in order to maximize the number of dispositions. Support staff will continue to monitor last minute schedule openings and contact parties to determine if parties are willing to waive advance notice to participate in a hearings sooner. Postponement s initiated by parties and their representatives have caused delays in the disposition of appeals. We receive postponement requests for approximately 20-25 percent of all scheduled hearings. Management and Legal staff from Hearings Department will meet to discuss ways to tighten up the postponement policy. As we review our postponement policy, we will be conducting an in-depth assessment to determine the reasons offered whenever parties and representatives request postponements. This will allow us to determine what changes, if any, are necessary in order to help us improve our performance. Once this has been completed, training will be offered to support that will include guidance on postponements and what constitutes good cause for granting postponements. We anticipate that these actions will assist us in meeting all performance measures.</p> <p><b>C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.</b></p> <p>One of our challenges during the previous year has been short-staffing due to staffing constraints created by unexpected leaves and resignations from both examiners and a regional manager. Because of the resignation of a regional hearings manager who supervised two regional offices, the Hearings Department asked two review examiners to assist with the day-to-day management of each regional hearings offices. Since we are filling this vacancy, we hope that having the review examiners return to their normal duties will improve the overall operations of the Hearings Department and improve efficiency.</p> <p><b>D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.</b> Hearings Management are able to access improved tracking reports through our data warehouse system. The data warehouse reports include appeals caseload, mdisposed time-lapse by region and review examiner, open time slots, case aging, appeals over 90 days, and pending cases. These enhanced reports allow managers to effectively track timeliness and due dates of cases pending in Examiners queues. Managers are also able to easily identify openings in the schedule that can be backfilled with other cases. The use of these reports will greatly assist Hearings Management inventory all appeals.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.</p> <p>(Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Milestones</th> <th>Completion Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Review of Hearings Department Postponement Policy</td> <td>9/30/2020</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> During this quarter, the Hearings Department received postponement requests for approximately 20% of all scheduled hearings. Hearings Management and our Legal Counsel have started to review our current postponement policy which lists examples of good cause for postponements. The Deputy Director of Appeals will be reviewing postponement requests received at all regional offices during the month of January 2019 to assist in our evaluation. Our goal is to ensure postponements are handled in a consistent, fair manner while allowing the department to better manage our caseload. In the interim, we have continued to enforce strict postponement guidelines to avoid the aging of lower authority appeals where possible.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> For the period January 1, 2019 through March 31, 2019, 2,653 hearings were scheduled. During this period, there were 321 postponement requests - 202 were granted and 100 were denied. The Deputy Director of Appeals reviewed all postponement requests received during this period that have been received during this period to ensure requests were policy was applied in a consistent manner. A party may have good cause for postponement if a key witness is unavailable due to conflict of a serious nature, however, the examination revealed that Hearings staff did not clearly document the testimony to be provided by the witness. The Department may deny such requests where it cannot clearly determine if the witness' testimony is crucial. There were some inconsistencies between regions on what is considered to be good cause. The review indicated that, if a party requested a postponement because they were physically unavailable to participate, Hearings staff offered to switch the hearing to telephone or bifurcated in order to avoid a postponement. If a postponement request was granted, staff did not always solicit reschedule dates to avoid future conflicts. A reminder will be sent to Hearings Department staff to obtain dates when parties are not available to avoid second postponements.</p> <p>Because the Hearings Counsel retired unexpectedly after 28 years, we are delaying updating the postponement policy until we receive authorization to backfill this position.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> For the period April 1, 2019 through June 30, 2019, 7,078 hearings were scheduled. During this period, we received 1000 postponement requests - 664 were granted and 280 were denied. Some of these postponements also included administrative postponements due to unscheduled examiners absences which could not be reassigned to another examiner and/or region. Management continues to monitor postponement requests to ensure the Hearings Department Postponement Policy is uniformly applied throughout the state.</p> <p>Because the Hearings Counsel position is still vacant, we have delayed the substantive review of the Hearings Department Postponement Policy.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p>													Milestones	Completion Date	1. Review of Hearings Department Postponement Policy	9/30/2020
Milestones	Completion Date															
1. Review of Hearings Department Postponement Policy	9/30/2020															

<b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b>	
Continue to monitor the effectiveness of "pooled" hearings, telecommute schedules, enhanced phone hearings, and redistributing hearings to other regions.	<b>Completion Date</b> 9/30/2020
<b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> We showed improvement relative to both the 30 and 45 day time lapse requirement. The 30 day time lapse increased from 8% during the quarter ending September 30, 2018 to 15% during the quarter ending December 31, 2018. The 45 day time lapse increased from 43% in September 2018 to 52% during the quarter ending December 2018. Despite staffing challenges, we believe that scheduling pooled hearings and continuing to offer telecommuting for examiners to write decisions at home has increased the number of dispositions. Managers and support staff are using tracking reports to redistribute appeals to different regions and reduce the aging of appeals. The Average Age of Lower Authority Appeals for quarter ending December 31, 2018 is 33 days. Due to aggressive scheduling, the Average Age for January 2019 is 30 days. We believe that continuing to redistribute appeals to other regions will allow us to continue to improve our performance measures.	
<b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> The 30 day time lapse increased from 15% during the quarter ending December 31, 2018 to 40% during the quarter ending March 31, 2019. The 45 day time lapse increased from 52% during the quarter ending December 31, 2018 to 70% during the quarter ending March 31, 2019. Although we showed significant improvement, we were unable to meet time lapse measures due to staffing challenges. An examiner began a fulltime leave of absence on February 19, 2019. A newly hired review examiner who was on a reduced schedule elected to rollback to an adjudicator on March 22, 2019. Additionally, several examiners were out due to bereavement leaves. However, the average age of pending appeals is 23 days.	
This quarter, pooled hearings were only scheduled in two out of the four regional hearings offices. One of the regional offices who participated in pooled hearings could not schedule any due to scheduling limitations. Specifically, there were only 3 examiners in the region and they were not often at the regional office on the same day due to telecommuting, travel to satellite locations, or scheduled time off which would not allow the scheduling pooled hearings. Examiners in a fourth office continued to express disinterest in participating in pooled hearings.	
We are continuing use of telephone hearings for all single party issues as part of an overall business strategy to avoid delays in the disposition of appeals. With more telephone hearings being scheduled, cases can be transferred to examiners in other regions. This has resulted in fewer administrative postponements. Scheduling more telephone hearings has also reduced the amount of travel time required for review examiners, thereby allowing more appeals to be disposed. We will continue to make use of flexible scheduling and backfilling in order to maximize the number of dispositions. Examiners who are telecommuting continue to have lower backlogs when compared to colleagues who are not telecommuting.	
<b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> During the quarter ending June 30, 2019, the 30 day time lapse increased from 40% to 59% and the 45 day time lapse increased from 70% to 81%. We continue to inventory appeals to ensure all are accounted for and promptly scheduled. In an effort to meet the 30 and 45 time lapse measures, we are reassigning hearings to be heard at other regions as soon as appeals are filed. However, we received an appeal for U.I. benefits involving a former agency employee which was sent to a hearing before another state agency. Because we could not control the scheduling nor expediting the issuance of the decision, this appeal negatively impacted our measures.	
During this quarter, the Director of Claims and Appeals and Deputy Director of Appeals visited the four Regional Hearings Offices to meet with all department staff. During these meetings, we discussed scheduling, backfilling, backfilling and reviewed our federal metrics. If they were not already doing so, examiners were encouraged to participate in pooled hearings and telecommuting. Examiners who telecommute continue to have lower backlogs. We discussed the possibility of alternate scheduling and other tools which may help examiners perform their job. Some new examiners expressed an interest in participating in telecommuting.	
<b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b>	
<b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b>	
<b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b>	
<b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b>	
<b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b>	



3. Continue to make use of flexible scheduling and back-filling open examiner positions	Completion Date 9/30/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> We had 27 full time review examiners and 1 retiree who worked 2 days per week during the quarter ending September 30, 2018. However, we lost 2 review examiners this quarter. Despite the decrease in the number of review examiners, our performance improved from the last quarter with respect to time lapse and average age. We were allowed to back fill open examiner positions during this quarter. A review examiner resigned in October 2018. Another review examiner who had been out during the entire month of October resigned in November 2018. October 2018, we had 2 newly hired examiners begin to hold a reduced schedule of 3 hearings per day. A mentor was assigned a reduced hearing schedule to observe the new examiners hearings and edit decisions. The duration of mentoring is usually a 4-week period but may be extended if necessary, based on the examiner's progress. After holding hearings for several weeks, one of the new examiners was removed from the schedule in November after developing a high back log. The examiner was placed on a modified training plan and a reduced schedule of 2 hearings per day beginning in</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> This quarter, we had approximately 5,663 appeals filed and 4,827 dispositions. We are continuing to make progress with our current pending caseload. At the end of the quarter ending March 31, 2019, we had approximately 1,853 pending appeals. This is down significantly from this same time last year when we had approximately 2,599 appeals pending. On average, it is taking 23 days from the date an appeal is filed until the hearing decision is issued, therefore, we are meeting the DOL's 30-day requirement. Although our time lapse performance is below the desired levels of 60% for 30 day time lapse and 70% for 45 day time lapse, we have made substantial improvements. We are currently at 40% for 30 day time lapse and 70% for 45 day time lapse measurements. I am confident that we will continue the momentum we've gained in these areas as our aged caseload continues to decrease and we are able to focus our collective efforts on newer cases. A fulltime examiner will be starting in April 2019 and we hope to have the other 2 vacancies filled by the end of the next quarter. Although the new examiners will not be able to hold hearings immediately, it is anticipated they will be holding a reduced hearings schedule by July 2019.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> This quarter, we had approximately 4,722 appeals filed and 4,805 dispositions. We are continuing to make progress with our current pending caseload and we had approximately 1,443 pending appeals. This is down substantially from this same time last year when we had approximately 2,602 appeals pending. An examiner was on a full time leave of absence until mid-May 2019. The retiree review examiner who works part-time was not available to hold any hearings commencing mid-May 2019.</p> <p>We hired 3 full time review examiners who completed legal training June 2019. One of the new examiners began to hold single party hearings in late June while the other began to hold single party hearings in July. A third began a full time leave of absence in July and is expected to return to work in October. Although the new examiners will be hearing a reduced caseload for several months, it is expected they will hold a full caseload of 5 hearing hours within 3 months. We continue to implement strategies designed to target and identify our old cases so that they can be closed out.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
4. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
5. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
6. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	



7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	

(g) Improper Payments Measure												
State: Massachusetts					Federal Fiscal Year: 2019-view SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report							
Back to Biennial Overview 2019		Back to Alternate Overview view			Instructions							
Performance Measure	ALP	CAP Based on SQSP 2019 Performance Level	CAP Based on SQSP view Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2018 Quarter 1	3/31/2019 Quarter 2	6/30/2019 Quarter 3	9/30/2019 Quarter 4	12/31/2019 Quarter 5	3/31/2020 Quarter 6	6/30/2020 Quarter 7	9/30/2020 Quarter 8
Improper Payments Measure	< 10%	22.09%	25.05%	Target	20%	18%	16%	14%	12%	10%	8%	8%
				Actual	26.46%	not available						
Regional Office Comments in cell below:												
<p><b>Corrective Action Plan Summary:</b> The Summary must provide:</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan updates:</b> MDUA experienced a similar Improper Payment Rate during this review period. In order to make productive change in the rate Massachusetts engaged the NASWA Integrity Center who has completed a state intensive service review in September of 2019. Moving forward MDUA will be implementing recommendations from this review which we feel will dramatically impact our Improper Payment Rate.</p> <p><b>A. The Reason for the deficiency.</b> Massachusetts DUA has failed to meet the Improper Payments performance measure primarily because of benefit year work search issues. Work search issues accounted for 69.37% of improper payments for Q2 2017 through Q1 2018. The other major causes of Massachusetts Improper payments are Benefit Year Earnings (13.39%) and Able &amp; Available Issues (8.17%). Massachusetts recently participated in a NASWS UI Integrity Center (IC) state intensive service review. Although a plan is not finalized as yet we anticipate having the plan ready by September 6, 2019. The IC is using a five-pronged approach to allow MDUA to develop a plan which will address improper payments in the work search and benefit year earnings areas. MDUA anticipates leveraging the IC Centers subject matter experts to make organizational changes in the Policy &amp; Operations, Instructional Design and Behavioral Science areas.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates:</b> Massachusetts recently participated in a NASWS UI Integrity Center (IC) state intensive service review. Although a plan is not finalized as yet we anticipate having the plan ready by September 6, 2019. The IC is using a five-pronged approach to allow MDUA to develop a plan which will address improper payments in the work search and benefit year earnings areas. MDUA anticipates leveraging the IC Centers subject matter experts to make organizational changes in the Policy &amp; Operations, Instructional Design and Behavioral Science areas.</p> <p><b>B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.</b></p> <p>Work Search Issues- DUA needs to review the current system in place which requires claimants to conduct three work searches per week with each search conducted on a different day. Each week, claimants who certify for benefits are asked how many days they looked for work. If the answer is two days or less, an issue is placed on the claim and fact finding is generated. If the claimant changes their answer to 3 or more days, the fact finding does not ask the claimant why the response was changed. Claimants who state that they looked for work on three or more days do not have to provide a work search log. A system review requiring everyone to provide work search logs coupled with improved communication to claimants as to what is required for work search documentation will improve compliance. In addition, DUA will work with the Department of Career Services and the field to ensure that staff across the agency are familiar with the work search requirements. Benefit Year Earnings- DUA has implemented a new NDNH crossmatch through the AWARE software program provided by OnPoint Technologies. DUA staff has worked with OnPoint to improve the quality of results to prevent improper payments. DUA will also continue to work with the vendor to train staff to utilize the AWARE system as efficiently as possible. DUA will analyze, change and monitor claimant messaging to ensure appropriate able and available issues are identified and adjudicated. Once the Improper Payment Reduction Plan is in place we will focus our efforts on making specific changes to 21 of our business processes. Action Items on the plan which will impact work search errors are: sending claimants SMS or e-mail messages reminding them of weekly work search requirements, Provide a "cover letter" to the claimant guide emphasizing work search requirements, Working with the Department of Career Services examine the current work search requirement to looking for work three times in a week on three separate days, strengthening the RESEA staff's ability to present work search requirements, add text to work search disqualifications reminding claimant of requirement, update BAM cases coming from Hearings which overturn determinations, re-write claimant work search questionnaires. Action items on the plan which will impact benefit year earning improper payments are: Identify BAM benefit year earnings errors to adjust BPC thresholds, provide tailored advice to claimants on benefit year earning reporting, text change to monetary determination clarifying "earning disregard" rules and benefit earning requirements, Program Integrity staff along with other adjudication personnel will complete the IC certificate for Fraud Investigators, investigate how the state revenue department can assist with delinquent employer reporting. We have also identified some action items which will have a positive impact on all root causes, such as, quarterly discussions with BAM/BTO to facilitate staff development, Operations and Integrity Managers to routinely review Hearings decisions, Provide customized training for Adjudication, BAM, and BPC staff using case studies emphasizing the effect of good fact-finding and investigative strategies, All claims and adjudication staff complete the IC Centers Operations Certificate, Incorporate claimant video on public website, provide specific training to BAM and BPC staff to improve performance, provide specific training for claims agents which will lead to a better understanding of UI, and evaluate trends and impact related to MA's IPRP.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates:</b> Once the Improper Payment Reduction Plan is in place we will focus our efforts on making specific changes to 21 of our business processes. Action Items on the plan which will impact work search errors are: sending claimants SMS or e-mail messages reminding them of weekly work search requirements, Provide a "cover letter" to the claimant guide emphasizing work search requirements, Working with the Department of Career Services examine the current work search requirement to looking for work three times in a week on three separate days, strengthening the RESEA staff's ability to present work search requirements, add text to work search disqualifications reminding claimant of requirement, update BAM cases coming from Hearings which overturn determinations, re-write claimant work search questionnaires. Action items on the plan which will impact benefit year earning improper payments are: Identify BAM benefit year earnings errors to adjust BPC thresholds, provide tailored advice to claimants on benefit year earning reporting, text change to monetary determination clarifying "earning disregard" rules and benefit earning requirements, Program Integrity staff along with other adjudication personnel will complete the IC certificate for Fraud Investigators, investigate how the state revenue department can assist with delinquent employer reporting. We have also identified some action items which will have a positive impact on all root causes, such as, quarterly discussions with BAM/BTO to facilitate staff development, Operations and Integrity Managers to routinely review Hearings decisions, Provide customized training for Adjudication, BAM, and BPC staff using case studies emphasizing the effect of good fact-finding and investigative strategies, All claims and adjudication staff complete the IC Centers Operations Certificate, Incorporate claimant video on public website, provide specific training to BAM and BPC staff to improve performance, provide specific training for claims agents which will lead to a better understanding of UI, and evaluate trends and impact related to MA's IPRP.</p> <p><b>C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.</b></p> <p>DUA continues to monitor worksearch efforts to ensure claimant's understand their responsibility to stay attached to the labor market as a condition of eligibility. Although the plans which have been in place the last year showed improvement, more aggressive solutions need to be implemented.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates:</b> Leveraging our recent experience with the Integrity Center state intensive services we will be implementing 21 strategies in the areas of staff development, policy and behavioral insights to have an aggressive reaction to our high improper payment rate. We feel strongly these efforts will dramatically improve performance in this area.</p> <p><b>D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.</b></p> <p>Work Search - DUA will review compliance procedures and revise reporting requirements when possible. DUA will also train staff agency wide to ensure uniform understanding and compliance with the issue. BYE- DUA will continue to work with OnPoint Technologies to train staff and share information to improve the quality of the system overall. Separation issues will be addressed through staff training and monitoring of the adjudications.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates:</b> The state intensive services plan was structured to review both work search and benefit year earnings improper payments. Built into this plan is a monitoring and assessment tool in order to show how</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.</p> <p><i>(Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)</i></p>												
Milestones												
1. Improve communication regarding work search to claimants.											Completion Date	
											12/31/2019	
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> The formulation of an Adjudication Committee will formulate a plan to achieve this milestone. This committee will have its first meeting by 6/30/2019.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> The formulation of an Adjudication Committee will formulate a plan to achieve this milestone. This committee will have its first meeting by 6/30/2019.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Due to staffing issues, we were unable to meet this milestone. One of the open positions we had was the person who will be responsible for this item. The position has been open since February of 2019. A new person started in their new role in this position in mid-July. We anticipate moving quickly to start this group. The new estimated time-period to meet this milestone is October of 2019.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>												
2. Improve communication regarding benefit year earnings to claimants.											Completion Date	
											12/31/2019	
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b></p>												

The formulation of an Adjudication Committee will formulate a plan to achieve this milestone. This committee will have its first meeting by 6/30/2019.

**Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):**

The formulation of an Adjudication Committee will formulate a plan to achieve this milestone. This committee will have its first meeting by 6/30/2019.

**Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):**

Due to staffing issues, we were unable to meet this milestone. One of the open positions we had was the person who will be responsible for this item. The position has been open since February of 2019. A new person started in their new role in this position in mid-July. We anticipate moving quickly to start this group. The new estimated time-period to meet this milestone is October of 2019.

**Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):**

**Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):**

**Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):**

**Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):**

**Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):**

3. Provide agency staff with additional training to improve knowledge of separation, benefit year earnings and work search procedures.	Completion Date 12/31/2019
<p>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018): The formulation of an Adjudication Committee will formulate a plan to achieve this milestone. This committee will have its first meeting by 6/30/2019.</p> <p>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019): The formulation of an Adjudication Committee will formulate a plan to achieve this milestone. This committee will have its first meeting by 6/30/2019.</p> <p>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): Due to staffing issues, we were unable to meet this milestone. One of the open positions we had was the person who will be responsible for this item. The position has been open since February of 2019. A new person started in their new role in this position in mid-July. We anticipate moving quickly to start this group. The new estimated time-period to meet this milestone is October of 2019.</p> <p>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</p>	
4. Complete all IPRP action items.	Completion Date 6/30/2020
<p>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</p> <p>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): New Milestone for Alternative Milestone: The Integrity Center state intensive services team recommended, and MDUA agreed to, 21 interventions in the areas of policy, staff development and behavioral insights. We will continue to work with the Center to implement these interventions and monitor the outcomes.</p> <p>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</p>	
5. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
<p>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</p> <p>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</p>	
6. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
<p>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</p> <p>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</p>	

7. (Enter next milestone here)		Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):		
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):		
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):		
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):		
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):		
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):		
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):		
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):		



(h) Detection of Overpayments												
State: Massachusetts					Federal Fiscal Year: 2019-view SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report							
Back to Biennial Overview 2019		Back to Alternate Overview view			Instructions							
Performance Measure	ALP	CAP Based on SQSP 2019 Performance Level	CAP Based on SQSP view Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2018 Quarter 1	3/31/2019 Quarter 2	6/30/2019 Quarter 3	9/30/2019 Quarter 4	12/31/2019 Quarter 5	3/31/2020 Quarter 6	6/30/2020 Quarter 7	9/30/2020 Quarter 8
Detection of Overpayments - Core Measure - ≥50% & ≤95% of Detectable/Recoverable Ops are Established for Recovery	≥ 50% & ≤ 95%	35.08%	0.00%	Target	37.00%	40.00%	43.00%	45.00%	48.00%	51.00%	54.00%	55.00%
Actual					not available		not available					
Regional Office Comments in cell below:												
<p><b>Corrective Action Plan Summary:</b> The Summary must provide:</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> A. The Reason for the deficiency. The DUA has consulted with the USDOL National Office and received a recommendation to focus our efforts on Benefit Year Earnings. Therefore, the Corrective Action Plan here will be similar to the plan created for the Benefit Year Earnings measure.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.</p> <p>The DUA implemented an improved NDNH crossmatch in August of 2016. The improved crossmatch is expected to deliver higher quality hits, resulting in an increase in the detection of overpayments. DUA will continue to monitor the quality of hits produced by this crossmatch and make enhancements to the crossmatch algorithm to improve efficiency. Although this effort proved beneficial we will continue to explore new ways to improve this technology. DUA is also working with On Point Technology LLC to make implement participation in the Suspicious Actors Repository (SARs). In the summer of 2016, the Program Integrity Department was restructured. The department reduced investigative staff and replaced them with adjudication staff who work primarily on crossmatches. We have increased the size of the staff dedicated to this type of work. The DUA Program Integrity team will review existing business practices while working in tandem with the UI Policy and Performance department to develop training and business process flows. The DUA Program Integrity team will also continue communicating with our UI Performs team to review data and identify opportunities for improvement.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.</p> <p>We continue our working relationship with On Point Technology LLC to ensure NDNH enhancement we did in 2016 will provide the expected results. In February of 2016, a new Director for the Program Integrity Department was hired and in June of 2016, due to a restructuring effort, seven new staff members were onboarded. It is anticipated that within the upcoming quarters the DUA will see a significant improvement in the detection of fraudulent overpayments as the Program Integrity team continues to focus on improvements to existing business processes and technological enhancements. DUA has also invested significant resources in fraud training for the adjudication staff. In June of 2018 five members of the Program Integrity Department participated in the Integrity Center Fraud Investigator training. This training was critical in developing the skills of newer adjudicators. DUA looks forward to continuing the development of adjudicators through fraud investigation training.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.</p> <p>The Program Integrity Department will be involved in weekly, monthly, and quarterly report reviews to monitor the effectiveness of implemented enhancements and business practices. Open communication will be ongoing with the UI Performs, UI Policy and Performance, and UI Online departments to ensure that the Program Integrity team is following best practices. Additionally, we will continue to work with On Point Technology LLC to ensure DUA is utilizing the AWARE Fraud Detection tool to its maximum capabilities. This will be accomplished through staff training and open communication with the vendor.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> <b>NOTE:</b> Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.</p> <p>(Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)</p>												
Milestones												
1. Formalize NDNH crossmatch reporting in order to validate algorithm.											Completion Date	
											12/31/2019	
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> DUA and OnPoint Technologies continue to engage in an effort to improve data results and create training for staff.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> DUA and OnPoint Technologies continue to engage in an effort to improve data results and create training for staff.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> DUA and OnPoint Technologies continue to engage in an effort to improve data results and create training for staff.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>												
2. Engage UI Performs and UI Policy Departments to develop a unified approach to investigating cases.											Completion Date	
											3/31/2020	
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> A new formal process to capture deficiencies from UI Performs programs has been enacted and will create a streamlined communication approach. This will allow the Training unit within the UI Policy and Policy Department to strengthen our training program for Investigators.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> The new process to capture deficiencies from UI Performs to streamline a communications approach is in process. The training for Investigators will be further enhanced with NASWA Investigations training.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> The new process to capture deficiencies from UI Performs to streamline a communications approach is in process. The training for Investigators will be further enhanced with NASWA Investigations training in October 2019.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>												

3. Implement SARs interface	Completion Date
<p>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):  OnPoint Technologies and and DUA continue to work on a SAR solution. It is anticipated the solution will be deployed in April of 2019.</p> <p>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):  Progress is being made on the SAR solution with OnPoint technologies. The new platform will be deployed in June of 2019.</p> <p>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):  Progress is being made on the SAR solution with OnPoint technologies. The new platform has been moved to production with the exception of transferring all claim data. This will be implemented as part of a Phase II effort to be completed by March of 2020.</p> <p>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</p>	3/31/2020
4. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
<p>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</p> <p>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</p>	
5. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
<p>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</p> <p>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</p>	
6. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
<p>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</p> <p>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</p>	

7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	



(i) Benefits Data Validation													
State: Massachusetts				Federal Fiscal Year: 2019-view SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report									
Back to Biennial Overview 2019		Back to Alternate Overview view				Instructions							
Performance Measure	ALP	CAP Based on SQSP 2019 Performance Level	CAP Based on SQSP View Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2018 Quarter 1	3/31/2019 Quarter 2	6/30/2019 Quarter 3	9/30/2019 Quarter 4	12/31/2019 Quarter 5	3/31/2020 Quarter 6	6/30/2020 Quarter 7	9/30/2020 Quarter 8	
Data Validation Benefits - All Submitted and Passing	Submitted & Passing	Population 1	Population 1	Target			X				X		
				Actual									
		Population 3	Population 3	Target			X					X	
				Actual									
		Population 3a	Population 3a	Target			X					X	
				Actual									
		Population 4	Population 4	Target			X					X	
				Actual									
		Population 5	Population 5	Target			X					X	
				Actual									
		Population 7	Population 7	Target									
				Actual									
		Population 8	Population 8	Target			X					X	
				Actual									
		Population 9	Population 9	Target			X					X	
				Actual									
		Population 10	Population 10	Target			X					X	
				Actual									
		Population 11	Population 11	Target			X					X	
				Actual									
Population 12	Population 12	Target			X					X			
		Actual											
Population 13	Population 13	Target			X					X			
		Actual											
Population 14	Population 14	Target			X					X			
		Actual											
Population 15	Population 15	Target			X					X			
		Actual											
Mod 4 Seps	Mod 4 Seps	Target			X					X			
		Actual											
Mod 4 Nonseps	Mod 4 Nonseps	Target			X					X			
		Actual											
Mod 4 Appeals	Mod 4 Appeals	Target			X					X			
		Actual											

Regional Office Comments in cell below:

**Corrective Action Plan Summary:**  
The Summary must provide:  
Post UIOnline, MADUA built a data warehouse for all reporting, including extracts/sampling necessary for implementation of the Benefits Data Validation (BDV) program. MADUA resumed implementation of BDV in 2015 after a period of non-submission. While the Agency was able to submit all but one of the sixteen populations, there were significant failures across populations. Errors within the population data itself caused difficulty in ability to submit BDV as well as making any outcomes questionable. UI Performs staff have written enhancement requests for identified errors in all sixteen populations. All specifications have been rewritten for clarity. Data Warehouse resources must be obtained to complete specification updates before sign off will occur. BDV is dependent upon Data Warehouse resources to implement fixes identified in both written population specifications and previously submitted defects and enhancements. Post submission and population fix, UI Performs BDV will test all populations for accuracy. Testing will be completed through data analysis of individual population elements and well as submission but not transmission of populations into the SUN. Dependent upon accuracy of fixes and new issues being discovered, updates and retesting is considered an iterative process.

Upon obtaining confidence in the populations used for testing, changes to the MADUA UIOnline system must begin. UIPerforms BDV staff will submit defects and enhancements as identified through BDV implementation to the IT group responsible for UIOnline system maintenance. Fixes to the system that would allow BDV to pass will be dependent upon the ability to obtain resources to enact fixes. UI Performs BDV staff will assist in testing the UIOnline system to ensure fixes were completed accurately.

**Alternate Year Plan Updates**  
A. The Reason for the deficiency:  
Incorrect design of DV universe and smaple data in conjunction with UIOnline defects.

**Alternate Year Plan Updates**  
B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

DUA will work groups of related populations at the same time. BDV staff will work in conjunction with business staff to validate the BDV universe and sample in conjunction with identifying errors in a related UIIR. UIIR will be fixed at the same time the BDV population is fixed. Any UIOnline defects will be documented and delivered to IT staff. There are four milestones that result in an iterative process until a population is fixed and passing.

**Alternate Year Plan Updates**  
C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.

**Alternate Year Plan Updates**  
D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.  
Continued program implementation of BDV.

**Alternate Year Plan Updates**  
NOTE: Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.

(Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)

Milestones	
1. Complete review, modification, and acceptance of all BDV specification documents for populations	Completion Date 9/30/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> This was complete, and data validation passed for pops 1, 3, 3a, and 6-11 passed BDV. However, after modification to UIR's by business owners, these populations are now failing. BDV is obtaining copies of the related UIR specifications to determine what data is being reported through the related UIR's.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> Complete.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Complete.</p> <p>Update as of 09.18.2019 in response to India Oliver question "Why was UIR modified by business owners? What are the changes to the UIR specifications?" It is not known why the changes were made by the business owners. 1 (Susan Saulnier) have requested information as to what was changed and why. This information has not been received. Originally, changes with UIR and BDV were made in conjunction. Testing was completed in the SUN and BDV passed for pops 1, 3, 3a, and 6-11 but the data was not transmitted at that time. BDV for 2018 was transmitted early and failed. Testing was completed after transmission but before new 2019 DV year began. When BDV staff returned to execute, once the new DV year started, the populations failed. IT staff was diverted from BDV to work on 227 and other projects. It is expected that once IT staff is available, we will have to rework the populations and UIR again.</p> <p>Update as of 09.18.2019 in response to India Oliver question "Why was UIR modified by business owners? What are the changes to the UIR specifications?" It is not known why the changes were made by the business owners. 1 (Susan Saulnier) have requested information as to what was changed and why. This information has not been received. Originally, changes with UIR and BDV were made in conjunction. Testing was completed in the SUN and BDV passed for pops 1, 3, 3a, and 6-11 but the data was not transmitted at that time. BDV for 2018 was transmitted early and failed. Testing was completed after transmission but before new 2019 DV year began. When BDV staff returned to execute, once the new DV year started, the populations failed. IT staff was diverted from BDV to work on 227 and other projects. It is expected that once IT staff is available, we will have to rework the populations and UIR again.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
2. Validate BDV population samples for accuracy post build to BDV populations	Completion Date 9/30/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> Populations 1 - 4 and 6-11 and 12-15 have been validated as accurate. MDUA continues to work on ETA 227 construction in order to pass populations 12 - 15. At this time, UIOnline and Data Warehouse errors are being investigated at the same time that previously identified system enhancements are being worked on by the IT team.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> IT Resources are focused on populations 12 -15. Sample is not accurate based defects within the agencies UIOnline system overpayment processing methodology. Defects have been submitted to IT to have UIOnline fixed. Until UIO is fixed, the BDV population data cannot be assessed.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> ETA 227 is in testing phase. Populations 12 - 15 will be used as part of the testing to assess accuracy of the 227.</p> <p>Update as of 09.18.2019 in response to Rachel Beistel questions "This does not make sense. How can pops 1-4, 6-11, and 12-15 be "validated as accurate" when all submissions for 2019 failed. Is there any movement on IT fixes for populations other than 12-15? What is being tested? By whom? How are populations 12-15 being used for testing on the 227?" It is believed that the BDV team has accurately defined and built populations to validate the agency data. This is completed through analyzing of raw data from population files for both BDV and UIR. There are significant errors in the agencies UIOnline computer system. This causes errors in the UIRR. BDV cannot pass when there are errors in data, errors that the BDV population testing identifies. BDV Pops 12 through 15 are considered accurate at this time. The intent is to run BDV once the 227 is submitted. The agency has not been able to successfully submit a 227. IT continues to work on this and has had to seek assistance in testing from Ericka Parker. As of 09.18.2019; all sections except section C, reimbursables, has passed. IT will immediately return to recoding section C. If transmittable, BDV for those populations will be implemented.</p> <p>Update as of 09.18.2019 in response to India Oliver's question "Do you have any plans to revisit Populations 1-4 and 6-11 prior to June 10, 2020 deadline?" Yes. If the 227 is completed by the end of September, TDV is in the IT queue for the fall. The intent is to return to BDV in January 2020.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
3. Test BDV population data within SUN for accuracy post build to BDV populations, UIRR, and/or UIOnline (Steps 1-3 are iterative until the population passes.)	Completion Date 9/30/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> This was complete, and data validation passed for pops 1, 3, 3a, and 6-11 passed BDV. However, after modification to UIR's by business owners, these populations are now failing. BDV is obtaining copies of the related UIR specifications to determine what data is being reported through the related UIR's.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> IT Resources are focused on populations 12 -15. Sample is not accurate based defects within the agencies UIOnline system overpayment processing methodology. Defects have been submitted to IT to have UIOnline fixed. Until UIO is fixed, the BDV population data cannot be assessed. Until UIO is fixed and able to deliver complete data, testing cannot be completed</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> IT Resources are focused on populations 12 -15. Sample is not accurate based defects within the agencies UIOnline system overpayment processing methodology. Defects have been submitted to IT to have UIOnline fixed. Until UIO is fixed, the</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
4. Identify and report defects/enhancements to facilitate system changes necessary for improved data accuracy to IT group for remediation.	Completion Date 9/30/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> The BDV team has identified 56 defects within UIOnline and has referred them to IT for remediation.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> The BDV team has identified 56 defects within UIOnline and has referred them to IT for remediation. Additional defects have been submitted. The BDV team has limited influence on prioritization of defect fixes and must wait until resources are devoted to the defects/enhancements to continue BDV work.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> The BDV team has identified 56 defects within UIOnline and has referred them to IT for remediation. Additional defects have been submitted. The BDV team has minimal influence on prioritization of defect fixes and must wait until resources are devoted to the defects/enhancements to continue BDV work. Update as of 09.18.2019 in response to Rachel and India's questions regarding defects. MDUA has 48 outstanding defects/enhancements at this time as a combined total of changes necessary to both the Data Warehouse from which reports are generated as well as in UIOnline. There have been changes added and resolved to arrive at 48.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	

5. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
6. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	



(j) Tax Data Validation																	
State: Massachusetts					Federal Fiscal Year: 2019-view SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report												
Back to Biennial Overview 2019		Back to Alternate Overview view				Instructions											
Performance Measure	ALP	CAP Based on SQSP 2019 Performance Level	CAP Based on SQSP view Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2018 Quarter 1	3/31/2019 Quarter 2	6/30/2019 Quarter 3	9/30/2019 Quarter 4	12/31/2019 Quarter 5	3/31/2020 Quarter 6	6/30/2020 Quarter 7	9/30/2020 Quarter 8					
Data Validation Tax - All Submitted and Passing	Submitted & Passing	Population 1	Population 1	Target			Pass				Pass						
				Actual			Fail										
		Population 3	Population 3	Target													
				Actual													
		Population 4	Population 4	Target													
				Actual													
		Population 5	Population 5	Target			Pass				Pass						
				Actual			Fail										
		Regional Office Comments in cell below:															
		<p><b>Corrective Action Plan Summary:</b> The Summary must provide:</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> A. The Reason for the deficiency. A Tax Performance System review of DUA's UI Revenue Operations was conducted for calendar year 2017. The review identified discrepancies with information reported on the ETA 581 report as well as data retrieved from the UI Online system. Discrepancies were discovered in populations 1 (Active employers: reimbursable) and population 5 (Field Audits). During CY 2015, a new version of the ETA 581 was put into production. This led to a mismatch between what was pulled in the data populations versus what was recorded on the ETA 581 Report.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.</p> <p>The UI Revenue Operations Department is in the process of reviewing the discrepancies between the reporting and the data populations. We have identified areas of the ETA 581 Report where we need revisions of the specifications. Population 1 - Many reimbursable employers are not accurately accounted for in the ETA 581. Specification changes and enhancements to the ETA 581 are pending due to allocation of resources. It has been discovered that there is a subset of employers that are not moving from active to inactive; they are not being identified via the normal system process for automatic modification. A tax unit is currently reviewing each of these for status and manually modifying as necessary.</p> <p>Population 3 - There was one case that failed in the sampling; causing all of Population 3 to fail. This caused the entire population to fail. The error that occurred in the minimum sampling was the status determination type. The account was suspended and revived and then suspended again and revived again during Q4 2018. The final action was a revival and the status determination type in the sample says that the account is terminated. Most likely, this resulted from</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.</p> <p>The required fixes to population 1 and 5 are still pending due to allocation of resources.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals. Once the required fixes to population 1 and 5 are implemented, they will be tested for accuracy and completeness.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> <b>NOTE:</b> Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.</p> <p><b>(Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Milestones</th> <th>Completion Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Complete review and analysis of all DV specifications for Populations 1 and 5</td> <td></td> <td>6/30/2019</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> Review has been completed for populations 1 through 4. No issues were found. Review of population 5 will begin in July 2019. It is known that the individuals who built the TDV populations as well as the 581 report misidentified the definition of large and small audit. Once identified, the users have been manually determining the numbers for report on the 581. TDV needs to be modified to reflect the correct definition before testing's for errors may begin.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> Review has been completed for populations 1 through 4. Review of population 5 will begin in July 2019.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Population 1 failed due to one scenario. UIOnline is programmed, based on specific criteria, to change an employer status from "active" to "inactive." There is a group of these employers that the system does not see and change the status. A one time data fix needs to be performed in order to manually change the status. If that had been completed, Pop 1 would have passed with 100% accuracy.</p> <p>Analysis of Population 5 was performed. The analysis shows that the coding of the 581 that counts an employer as "large" or "small" was been miscoded. The same coding error was made in the TDV Population 5 extract. Field Audit staff have begun manually calculating the large and small employer information for manual entry into the 581 to ensure accurate information. The agency will work to correctly code the 581 and the TDV Pop 5 extract to replace the manual count for the 581 and ensure Population 5 universe of data is accurate.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>												Milestones		Completion Date	1. Complete review and analysis of all DV specifications for Populations 1 and 5
Milestones		Completion Date															
1. Complete review and analysis of all DV specifications for Populations 1 and 5		6/30/2019															

2. Submit enhancements to IT to improve data accuracy of the ETA 581 Report	Completion Date 9/30/2019
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> Through implementation of TDV, due June 2019, one error was found in both populations 1 and 4. TDV staff have reached out to the business owners to begin the process of assisting them in understanding the errors so that remediation may be implemented. The error in population 1 is believed to be related suspending of accounts after eight quarters of no wages. It appears that the system is not suspending employers that were converted from the legacy system. In population 4, one employer affected the outcome. An employer had been assessed debt to due failure to file quarterly wages. The debt was written off after years of failure to report to the agency. The employer returned and filed quarterly submissions of zero wages. The system erroneously revived the debt.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> Completion of TDV for 2019 have exposed two errors in UIOnline that in turn affect the data reported on the 581. Two defects have been submitted to IT for remediation of the error.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Defects for Population 1 and 5 have been submitted of remediation. Estimated date of completion is unknown.</p> <p>Update as of 09/18/2019. Enhancements have been submitted for Pops 1 and 3. The business owner is working with IT to have the work prioritized. Pop 5 modifications are being rereviewed based on a now clear interpretation of a large versus small employer.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
3. Complete testing of enhancements made to the ETA 581 Report	Completion Date 12/31/2019
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> n/a</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> Completion of TDV for 2019 have exposed two errors in UIOnline that in turn affect the data reported on the 581. Two defects have been submitted to IT for remediation of the error. Until fixed, the 581 data may not be properly assessed. However, manual calculation shows that remediation of these two errors should bring the 581 into compliance and pass population 1 for benefit data validation.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Testing will be completed once defect remediation has occurred.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
4. Implement ETA 581 enhancements in production	Completion Date 6/30/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> N/A Year 1 of SQSP</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> pending</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> N/A at this time</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	
5. Population 3 - IT to perform data fix in UIOnline to remediate one employer account.	Completion Date 9/30/2020
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> N/A Year 1 of SQSP</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> N/A Year 1 of SQSP</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> N/A Year 1 of SQSP</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>	

6. Population 4 - IT to perform data fix in UIOnline to remediate a data element on one employer account.	Completion Date 9/30/2020
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018): N/A Year 1 of SQSP Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019): N/A Year 1 of SQSP Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): N/A Year 1 of SQSP Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019): Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019): Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020): Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020): Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018): Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019): Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019): Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019): Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020): Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020): Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	



(k) Benefit Accuracy Measurement (BAM)												
State: Massachusetts					Federal Fiscal Year: 2019-view SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report							
Back to Biennial Overview 2019		Back to Alternate Overview view			Instructions							
Performance Measures	ALP	CAP Based on SQSP 2019 Performance Level	CAP Based on SQSP view Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2018 Quarter 1	3/31/2019 Quarter 2	6/30/2019 Quarter 3	9/30/2019 Quarter 4	12/31/2019 Quarter 5	3/31/2020 Quarter 6	6/30/2020 Quarter 7	9/30/2020 Quarter 8
BAM Operations Compliant - 60-Day Monetary Timeliness	≥ 60%	49.33%		Target	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
				Actual	68.25%	71.79%	64.10%					
BAM Operations Compliant - 90-Day Monetary Timeliness	≥ 85%	77.93%		Target	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%
				Actual	94.44%	84.62%	87.18%					
BAM Operations Compliant - 90-Day Separation Timeliness	≥ 85%	84.38%		Target	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	
				Actual	94.59%	89.47%	84.62%					
BAM Operations Compliant - 90-Day Nonseparation Timeliness	≥ 85%	84.38%		Target	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%
				Actual	91.89%	84.21%	86.84%					
BAM Operations Compliant - Separation Comparison Reports	± 15%		-19.05%	Target					15%	15%	15%	15%
				Actual								
Regional Office Comments In cell below:												
<p><b>Corrective Action Plan Summary:</b> The Summary must provide:</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> A. The Reason for the deficiency. MBAM has been meeting all timeliness targets on a quarterly basis beginning Q3 2017 and has met the overall timeliness goal for the 2018 IPJA year. Because the SQSP looks at a period of time so far in the past, the numbers are no longer reflective of the BAM performance level.</p> <p>BAM went through a difficult transition starting July 2016 when the agency engaged in staff reduction. As a result, BAM experienced staff loss and had to begin training new investigators. BAM had an immediate drop in performance and no longer met timeliness performance standards. Once the new investigators were fully trained, independent, and able to complete a full workload, the BAM units number began and continued to rise until we met all standards starting Q3 2017.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.</p> <p><b>Alternate Year Plan Updates</b> <b>NOTE:</b> Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.</p> <p><i>(Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)</i></p>												
<b>Milestones</b>												
1. Continue to meet PCA 60 day timeliness											Completion Date	
											12/31/2018	
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> Data will be reported for the prior quarter ending due to BAM data lag. Target met.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> Data will be reported for the prior quarter ending due to BAM data lag. Target met for Q4 2018.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Data will be reported for the prior quarter ending due to BAM data lag. Target 0.38% short for Q1 2019.</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>												
2. Continue to meet PCA 90 day timeliness											Completion Date	
											12/31/2018	
<p><b>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</b> Data will be reported for the prior quarter ending due to BAM data lag. Target met.</p> <p><b>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</b> Data will be reported for the prior quarter ending due to BAM data lag. MBAM has lost support staff that assisted investigators in the development of case material. This has and continues to cause investigative staff to divert work hours from investigation to clerical case development. MDUA worked to create an alternative electronic method to produce necessary case material. This endeavor was not technically successful. Continued technical resources to create BAM case material is not currently available. Until staff receive additional support, manual or technical, it is expected that investigators will continue to struggle with timeliness.</p> <p><b>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</b> Complete</p> <p><b>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</b></p> <p><b>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</b></p>												

3. Continue to meet DCA 60 day timeliness	Completion Date 12/31/2018
<p>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018): Data will be reported for the prior quarter ending due to BAM data lag. Target met.</p> <p>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019): Data will be reported for the prior quarter ending due to BAM data lag. Target met.</p> <p>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): Complete</p> <p>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</p>	
4. Continue to meet DCA 90 day timeliness	Completion Date 12/31/2018
<p>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018): Data will be reported for the prior quarter ending due to BAM data lag. Target met.</p> <p>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019): Data will be reported for the prior quarter ending due to BAM data lag. MBAM has lost support staff that assisted investigators in the development of case material. This has and continues to cause investigative staff to divert work hours from investigation to clerical case development. MDUA worked to create an alternative electronic method to produce necessary case material. This endeavor was not technically successful. Continued technical resources to create BAM case material is not currently available. Until staff receive additional support, manual or technical, it is expected that investigators will continue to struggle with timeliness.</p> <p>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): Complete</p> <p>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</p>	
5. Analyze BAM sample and UIR 207 report for adherence to USDOL prescribed guidelines for counting of non-monetary separation issues.	Completion Date 3/31/2020
<p>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</p> <p>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</p>	
6. Work with IT to make modifications to the BAM non-monetary separation sample and/or UIR 207 to conform with prescribed USDOL guidelines.	Completion Date 9/30/2020
<p>Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):</p> <p>Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):</p> <p>Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):</p> <p>Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):</p>	



7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018): Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019): Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019): Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019): Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020): Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020): Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	

(I) UI Integrity Action Plan (IAP)			
Back to Biennial Overview 2019		Back to Alternate Overview view	
State	Federal Fiscal Year	Accountable Agency Official(s):	
Massachusetts	2019	Brian O'Connell Director of Program Integrity	
	Top Three Root Causes (Calendar Year 2017) <a href="https://www.dol.gov/general/maps/data">https://www.dol.gov/general/maps/data</a>	Calendar Year 2016 (% of \$ Overpaid)	Calendar Year 2017 (% of \$ Overpaid)
Root Cause #1:	Work Search	55.83%	67.47%
Root Cause #2:	Benefit Year Earnings	27.74%	13.14%
Root Cause #3:	Separation Issues	3.35%	8.05%
State	Federal Fiscal Year	Accountable Agency Official(s):	
Massachusetts	2020	Brian O'Connell Director of Program Integrity	
	Top Three Root Causes (Calendar Year 2018) <a href="https://www.dol.gov/general/maps/data">https://www.dol.gov/general/maps/data</a>	Calendar Year 2017 (% of \$ Overpaid)	Calendar Year 2018 (% of \$ Overpaid)
Root Cause Alternate Year #1:	Work Search	67.47%	65.289%
Root Cause Alternate Year #2:	Benefit Year Earnings	13.14%	14.469%
Root Cause Alternate Year #3:	Separation Issues	8.05%	9.146%
<p><b>Summary: (Provide a summary of the plan that the state has designed. The summary should include outreach efforts planned by the agency to inform all UI and workforce staff, and employers of the strategic plan to ensure everyone understands the importance of maintaining program integrity.)</b></p> <p>The first root cause of improper payments is work search and is the result of a modification to our UI Online system that created a work search issue when the claimant indicated during the weekly certification process they failed to complete the required number of work search activities during the week for which they were certifying. This resulted in a spike of work search issues placed on claims. BAM is finding that the work search issues are created by claimant error or misrepresentation. Under the current work search regulations, claimants must search for work three days a week. If a claimant answers they only searched for work 0-2 days per week, the issue is created and fact finding issued to the claimant. If the claimant then changes their answer to 3 or more days, the fact finding does not ask the claimant why they changed their answer. Benefit Integrity will work with the UI Policy and Performance department to implement a strategy to improve communications with the workforce staff as well as with claimants to avoid erroneously created work search issues. Program Integrity staff will analyze data provided by the UI Performs staff to identify the part of the benefit year that is most susceptible to benefit year earning improper payments (initial claims, re-opened claims, continued claims, etc.) and draft a best practice plan to share with other management stakeholders. Once a best practice plan is developed, Benefit Integrity staff will provide monthly updates and feedback on improper payments to senior staff and workforce staff via the "Everyone Owns Integrity" meetings. Separation issues are the third root cause during the most recent review period. DUA has found the vast majority of these improper payments are the result of the employer not responding to an initial/additional claim in a timely manner or not at all. If an employer does not respond timely or protests benefit charges after not responding to the initial claim, the separation issue is adjudicated often times resulting in an overpayment. Benefit Integrity staff will develop a communication campaign to reach out to employers and TPAs to notify them of the importance of proper reporting practices. Communication will include announcements on the UI Online web page, notices included with the employer and TPA mailings as well as communications with billing statements. In the coming months DUA will organize a cross functional integrity committee. The role of this committee will be to leverage the practical experience of our business in order to improve our improper payment rate. Through our participation in the state Council on the Underground Economy, MA DUA has been successful in detecting fictitious employers and preventing overpayments from information provided by other CUE participants. The DUA has implemented prisoner cross matches which have led to an increase in A&amp;A issues. The Program Integrity Department currently receives monthly prisoner data from four county facilities. Staff has been successful in creating incarceration issues which has led to the prevention of improper payments to prisoners. Outreach continues to bring in additional correctional facilities in the state. MA DUA is in the process of developing an Cross Functional Committee. One of the goals of the Committee will be to centralize Integrity messaging to both staff and employers. The Committee will explore opportunities to message employers on integrity issues when communications go out regarding rates etc.</p> <p><b>Instructions for the following section:</b> In each individual section below, enter a Root Cause, from above, and the top three focused Strategies that will be employed to correct or reduce this cause of overpayments. An additional line is available in each section to include other significant strategies that target the root cause.</p>			
<b>Root Cause #1: Work Search</b>			
Strategies	Actions	Targets & Milestones	Resources
1 Review work search policy and procedures	Review current work search requirements and if possible, make policy adjustments to require all claimants to submit work search logs during weekly certification process.	9/30/2020	Program staff and IT staff
2 Review messaging	Review current claimant messaging in order to enhance understanding of work search requirements.	9/30/2020	Program and IT staff
3 Improve communication	Implement messaging plan which will address identified deficiencies causing work search overpayments	9/30/2020	Program and IT staff
Additional:			
<b>Root Cause #2: Benefit Year Earnings</b>			
Strategies	Actions	Targets & Milestones	Resources
1 Improve the current NDNH cross match program	DUA will continue to share NDNH results with OnPoint Technologies (vendor).	9/30/2020	IT staff
2 Improve Report of Hire cross match	Work to resolve Report of Hire data issues	9/30/2020	Program and IT staff.
3 Verify union attachment	Require claimants who indicate union membership who are exempt from work search to verify membership in the union	9/30/2020	Vendor
Additional:			Program staff

<b>Root Cause #3: Separation Issues</b>			
Strategies	Actions	Targets and Milestones	Resources
1 Training 2 Improve communication with employers 3 Cross Functional Committee review  <b>Additional:</b>	Develop training and awareness for staff to be delivered through weekly meetings. Communicate to employers the benefits of responding to initial claims on time and with accurate information. Convene the Cross Functional Committee in order to identify efficiencies with the employer initial/additional claims process.	9/30/2020	Program staff
		9/30/2020	Program and IT staff
		9/30/2020	Program staff

Narrative	
State: Massachusetts	Federal Fiscal Year: 2019-2020 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report
Performance Narrative Requirement #1 UI Reporting Requirements, Target Pass, Actual Failed	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018): Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019): Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019): Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019): Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020): Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020): Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
Performance Narrative Requirement #2	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018): Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019): Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019): Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019): Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020): Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020): Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	

(m) Narrative	
State: Massachusetts	Federal Fiscal Year: 2019-view SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report
Performance Narrative Requirement #1 UI Reporting Requirements, Target Pass, Actual Failed	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):  Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):  Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):  Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):  Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):  Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):  Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):  Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
Performance Narrative Requirement #2	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):  Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):  Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):  Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):  Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):  Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):  Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):  Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	

Performance Narrative Requirement #3	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
Performance Narrative Requirement #4	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
Performance Narrative Requirement #5	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
Performance Narrative Requirement #6	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	

Performance Narrative Requirement #7	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	



(n) New CAP Form											
State: Massachusetts				Federal Fiscal Year: 2019-view SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report							
<a href="#">Back to Biennial Overview 2019</a>		<a href="#">Back to Alternate Overview view</a>		<a href="#">Instructions</a>							
Performance Measures	ALP	CAP Based on SQSP 2019 Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2018 Quarter 1	3/31/2019 Quarter 2	6/30/2019 Quarter 3	9/30/2019 Quarter 4	12/31/2019 Quarter 5	3/31/2020 Quarter 6	6/30/2020 Quarter 7	9/30/2020 Quarter 8
			Target								
			Actual								
			Target								
			Actual								
			Target								
			Actual								
			Target								
			Actual								
			Target								
			Actual								
			Target								
			Actual								
Regional Office Comments in cell below:											
<p><b>Corrective Action Plan Summary:</b>            The Summary must provide:</p> <p>A. The Reason for the deficiency.</p> <p>B. Provide a description of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan which will be undertaken to achieve the acceptable level of performance. Examples of major actions and activities; aka, Milestones, include IT requirements, business process analysis, training, implementing process improvements, measuring effectiveness, etc. Please include a description of these actions/activities in each stage of your "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.</p> <p>C. If a plan was in place the previous year, an explanation of why the actions contained in that plan were not successful in improving performance; and, an explanation of why the actions now specified will be more successful.</p> <p>D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Enter an "X" in the box to the right if the desired improvements will not be accomplished by the end of the current fiscal years (the two consecutive fiscal years for which the plan is in effect). Summarize, below, the major actions remaining to be taken in subsequent fiscal years and include a projected completion date as to when the performance goal will be achieved.</p> <p><i>(Remaining Major Actions in this cell.)</i></p>											
Milestones											
1. (Enter first milestone here)										Completion Date	
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):  Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):  Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):  Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):  Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):  Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):  Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):  Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):											
2. (Enter next milestone here)										Completion Date	
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):  Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):  Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):  Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):  Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):  Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):  Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):											

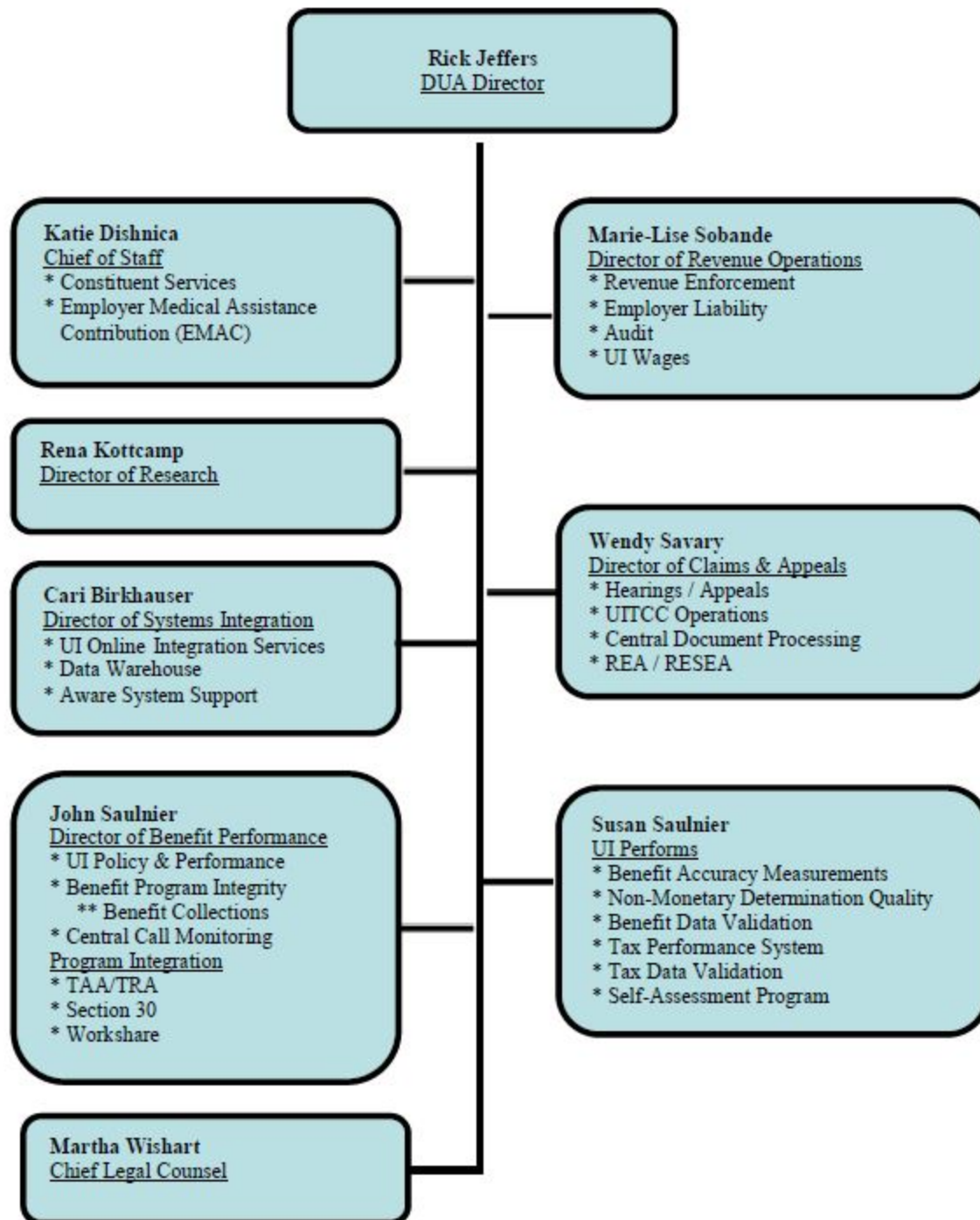


Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
3. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018): Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019): Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019): Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019): Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020): Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020): Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
4. (Enter next milestone here)	
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018): Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019): Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019): Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019): Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020): Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020): Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
5. (Enter next milestone here)	
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018): Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019): Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019): Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019): Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020): Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020): Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
6. (Enter next milestone here)	
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018): Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019): Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019): Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019): Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019): Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020): Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	
7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2018):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2019):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2019):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2019):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2019):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2020):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2020):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2020):	

## Department of Unemployment Assistance



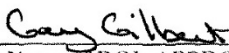
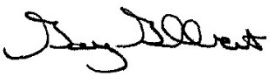


# ATTACHMENT N-3: Department of Unemployment Assistance SQSP Signature Page

## U.S. Department of Labor SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE

OMB Control No.: 1205-0132

Expiration Date: 02/28/2021

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Employment and Training Administration	FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2020	STATE MA
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE STATE QUALITY SERVICE PLAN SIGNATURE PAGE		
<p>This Unemployment Insurance State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) is entered into between the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, and</p> <p><u>Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance</u> (NAME OF STATE AGENCY)</p> <p>The Unemployment Insurance SQSP is part of the State's overall operating plan and, during this Federal fiscal year, the State agency will adhere to and carry out the standards set forth in Federal UI Law as interpreted by the DOL, and adhere to the Federal requirements related to the use of granted funds.</p> <p>All work performed under this agreement will be in accordance with the assurances and descriptions of activities as identified in the SQSP Handbook and will be subject to its terms.</p>		
TYPED NAME AND TITLE	SIGNATURE	DATE
<u>Richard Jeffers, Director</u> Printed Name of STATE ADMINISTRATOR		9/6/19
<b>Leo Miller, Regional Administrator, R1/R2</b> Printed Name of DOL APPROVING OFFICIAL (Regional Office)		9/30/19
 Printed Name of DOL APPROVING OFFICIAL (National Office) (if required)		10/4/19

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424		
<b>* 1. Type of Submission:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Preapplication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application <input type="checkbox"/> Changed/Corrected Application		
<b>* 2. Type of Application:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Continuation <input type="checkbox"/> Revision		
<b>* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):</b> <input type="text"/> <b>* Other (Specify):</b> <input type="text"/>		
<b>* 3. Date Received:</b> <input type="text"/>		<b>4. Applicant Identifier:</b> <input type="text"/>
<b>5a. Federal Entity Identifier:</b> <input type="text"/>		<b>5b. Federal Award Identifier:</b> UIPL 15-19 FY20 Guidance
<b>State Use Only:</b>		
<b>6. Date Received by State:</b> <input type="text"/>		<b>7. State Application Identifier:</b> <input type="text"/>
<b>8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:</b>		
<b>* a. Legal Name:</b> COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS		
<b>* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):</b> 04-6002284		<b>* c. Organizational DUNS:</b> 9475815670000
<b>d. Address:</b>		
<b>* Street1:</b> 1 ASHBURTON PLACE, ROOM 2112, 21ST FLOOR		
<b>Street2:</b> <input type="text"/>		
<b>* City:</b> BOSTON		
<b>County/Parish:</b> <input type="text"/>		
<b>* State:</b> MA: Massachusetts		
<b>Province:</b> <input type="text"/>		
<b>* Country:</b> USA: UNITED STATES		
<b>* Zip / Postal Code:</b> 02108		
<b>e. Organizational Unit:</b>		
<b>Department Name:</b> EXEC. OFF LABOR/WORKFORCE DEV		<b>Division Name:</b> DEPT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSIST
<b>f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:</b>		
<b>Prefix:</b> MR.		<b>* First Name:</b> AARON
<b>Middle Name:</b> <input type="text"/>		
<b>* Last Name:</b> D'ELIA		
<b>Suffix:</b> <input type="text"/>		
<b>Title:</b> CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER		
<b>Organizational Affiliation:</b> <input type="text"/>		
<b>* Telephone Number:</b> 6176267117		<b>Fax Number:</b> 6176240985
<b>* Email:</b> AARON.D'ELIA@DETN.A.ORG		

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424	
<b>* 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:</b> <input type="text" value="A: State Government"/>	
<b>Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:</b> <input type="text"/>	
<b>Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:</b> <input type="text"/>	
<b>* Other (specify):</b> <input type="text"/>	
<b>* 10. Name of Federal Agency:</b> <input type="text" value="DEPT OF LABOR - EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION"/>	
<b>11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:</b> <input type="text" value="17.225"/> <b>CFDA Title:</b> <input type="text" value="UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE"/>	
<b>* 12. Funding Opportunity Number:</b> <input type="text" value="UIPL 15-19"/> <b>* Title:</b> <input type="text" value="FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2020 STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) RESOURCE PLANNING TARGETS AND GUIDELINES"/>	
<b>13. Competition Identification Number:</b> <input type="text"/> <b>Title:</b> <input type="text" value="UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) BASE GRANT FOR FY20"/>	
<b>14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):</b> <input type="text"/> <input type="button" value="Add Attachment"/> <input type="button" value="Delete Attachment"/> <input type="button" value="View Attachment"/>	
<b>* 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:</b> <input type="text"/>	
Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions. <input type="button" value="Add Attachments"/> <input type="button" value="Delete Attachments"/> <input type="button" value="View Attachments"/>	

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424															
<b>16. Congressional Districts Of:</b> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>* a. Applicant: <input type="text" value="MA-09"/></div> <div>* b. Program/Project: <input type="text" value="MA-ALL"/></div> </div>															
Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed. <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <input style="width: 200px;" type="text"/> <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <input type="button" value="Add Attachment"/> <input type="button" value="Delete Attachment"/> <input type="button" value="View Attachment"/> </div> </div>															
<b>17. Proposed Project:</b> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>* a. Start Date: <input type="text" value="10/01/2019"/></div> <div>* b. End Date: <input type="text" value="09/30/2022"/></div> </div>															
<b>18. Estimated Funding (\$):</b> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">* a. Federal</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: right;">57,657,368.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>* b. Applicant</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>* c. State</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>* d. Local</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>* e. Other</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>* f. Program Income</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>* g. TOTAL</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; text-align: right;">57,657,368.00</td> </tr> </table>		* a. Federal	57,657,368.00	* b. Applicant		* c. State		* d. Local		* e. Other		* f. Program Income		* g. TOTAL	57,657,368.00
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* f. Program Income															
* g. TOTAL	57,657,368.00														
<b>* 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?</b> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="width: 20px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on <input style="width: 80px;" type="text"/> </div> <div style="width: 20px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.         </div> <div style="width: 20px;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.         </div> </div>															
<b>* 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)</b> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="width: 20px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes         </div> <div style="width: 20px;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No         </div> </div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">           If "Yes", provide explanation and attach <input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/> <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <input type="button" value="Add Attachment"/> <input type="button" value="Delete Attachment"/> <input type="button" value="View Attachment"/> </div> </div>															
<b>21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications** and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)</b> <div style="margin-top: 5px;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ** I AGREE         </div> <div style="font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">           ** The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.         </div>															
<b>Authorized Representative:</b>															
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Prefix: <input type="text" value="MR."/></div> <div>* First Name: <input type="text" value="AARON"/></div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Middle Name: <input type="text"/></div> <div>* Last Name: <input type="text" value="D'ELIA"/></div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Suffix: <input type="text"/></div> <div>* Title: <input type="text" value="CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER"/></div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>* Telephone Number: <input type="text" value="6176267117"/></div> <div>Fax Number: <input type="text"/></div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>* Email: <input type="text" value="AARON.D'ELIA@DETMA.ORG"/></div> <div>* Signature of Authorized Representative: </div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 5px;"> <div></div> <div>* Date Signed: <input type="text" value="9/5/17"/></div> </div>															





CHARLES D. BAKER  
GOVERNOR

KARYN E. POLITO  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

ROSALIN ACOSTA  
SECRETARY

RICHARD A. JEFFERS  
DIRECTOR

September 6, 2019

Mr. Leo Miller, Regional Administrator  
Boston/Philadelphia Regional Offices  
U.S. Department of Labor/ETA  
170 S. Independence Mall West  
Suite 825 East  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-3315

Dear Mr. Miller,

Enclosed is the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) for Fiscal Year 2020. Massachusetts will continue to manage to the two year plan that was submitted and approved in 2018. As we are currently in an Alternate Year, this package transmits the following items:

- Modified State Plan Narrative
- Corrective Action Plans
- Revised Integrity Action Plan
- Organizational Charts
- Application for Federal Assistance (SF – 424)
- SQSP Signature Page

All items have been prepared in accordance with the instructions in Employment and Training Handbook No. 336, 18<sup>th</sup> Edition, Change 4, and the UI Program Letter No 15-19 issued on June 28, 2019, initiating the FY 2020 SQSP process.

If you have any questions concerning the SQSP, please contact me at (617) 626-5194.

Sincerely,

Richard Jeffers, Director  
Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance

CHARLES F. HURLEY BUILDING • 19 STANIFORD STREET • BOSTON, MA 02114  
[www.mass.gov/lwd](http://www.mass.gov/lwd)

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**ATTACHMENT O: JVSG Staffing Directory**

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Employee Name	Program (DVOP, LVER or Consolidated)	Date Assigned	Completed all required training (Yes or No)
Ottlinger, Brian	LVER Manager	May 9, 2004	Yes
Doucette, Robert	ISC/DVOP	May 4, 2015	Yes
Mills Christopher	LVER	November 30, 2016	Yes
Schmit, James	DVOP	July 9, 2012	Yes
Campbell, Erin	DVOP	January 4, 2008	Yes
Gouzas, James	DVOP	July 22, 2019	Yes
Sutton, Matt	DVOP	January 6, 2020	Yes
Clark, Jeremy	DVOP	August 23, 2021	Yes
Gaitor, Jeremy	DVOP	May 10, 2021	Yes
Moore, Chad	DVOP	February 11, 2019	Yes
Ryan, Jooyi	DVOP	June 28, 2021	Yes
Pellegrino, Dennis	DVOP	October 1, 2012	Yes
Ryan, William	DVOP	October 4, 1992	Yes
Hess, Michael	DVOP	January 21, 2020	Yes
Bradshaw, Darren	DVOP	September 8, 2014	Yes
McKenna, John	DVOP	November 23, 2015	Yes
Yee, Albert	DVOP	May 28, 2013	Yes
Augustine, Homelyne	DVOP	June 15, 2015	Yes
Fernandez, Steven	DVOP	May 11, 2015	Yes
Andrews, Brian	DVOP	February 25, 2013	Yes
Dumont, Richard	DVOP	October 18, 1992	Yes
Evans, Rodney	DVOP	March 2, 2021	Yes
Acker, James	DVOP	March 9, 2021	Yes
Anderson, Michael	DVOP	July 9, 2018	Yes
Nash, David	DVOP	September 29, 2002	Yes
Anderson, Michael	DVOP	July 9, 2018	Yes
Colon, Jackeline	DVOP	June 14, 2021	Yes
Bellum, Collin	DVOP	December 6, 2021	No