MASSACHUSETTS PYS 2022-2023 (MOD)

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I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

This is a combined plan

COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

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)))

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))

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.))

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)

Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)

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. PLAN INTRODUCTION OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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 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 & 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 & 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 in 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 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** to instill principles and actions of racial 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 with a stronger, more resilient system that will enable residents and businesses to thrive under any circumstance.

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS/UPDATE FOR WIOA STATE PLAN MODIFICATION

The following report contains a summarized update of labor market conditions in Massachusetts since submission of the 2020 WIOA State Plan, 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. The original economic and workfore analysis submitted with the 2020 WIOA State Plan is also included for reference as much of the analysis is still relevant and continues to influence Massachusetts workforce development policy.

Highlights

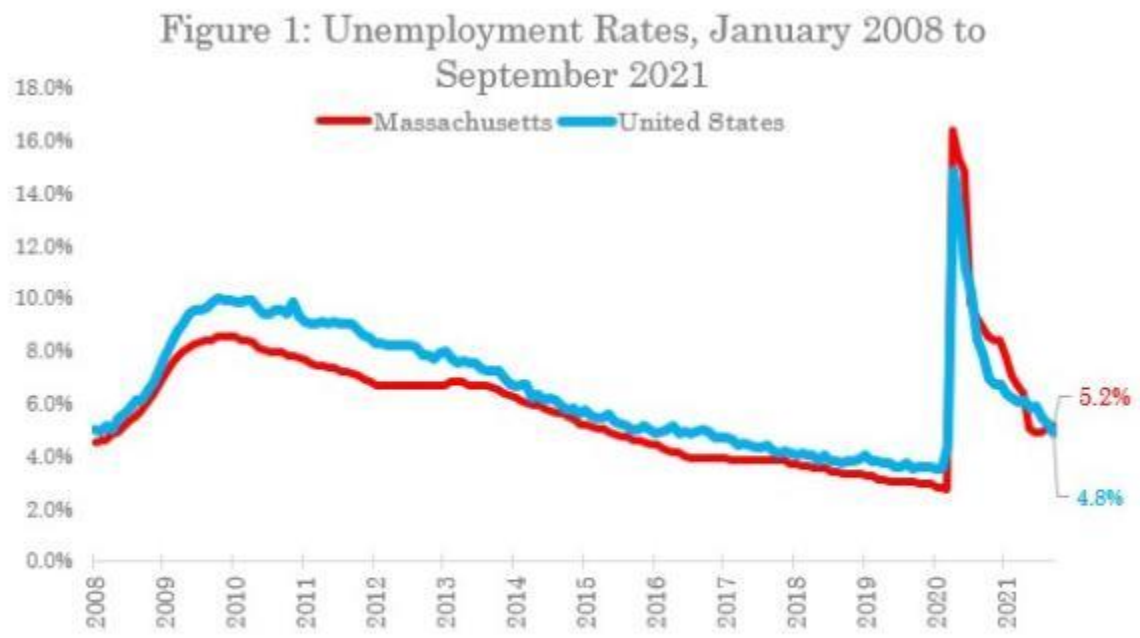
- After reaching a peak of 16.4% in April 2020, the unemployment rate in Massachusetts is at 5.2% as of September 2021. Approximately 69% of Total Nonfarm Jobs (seasonally adjusted) in Massachusetts have been recovered. The most significant losses occurred in the Leisure and Hospitality, Education and 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 and Hispanics & 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. December 2019, January 2020, and February 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.

Source: BLS-LAUS

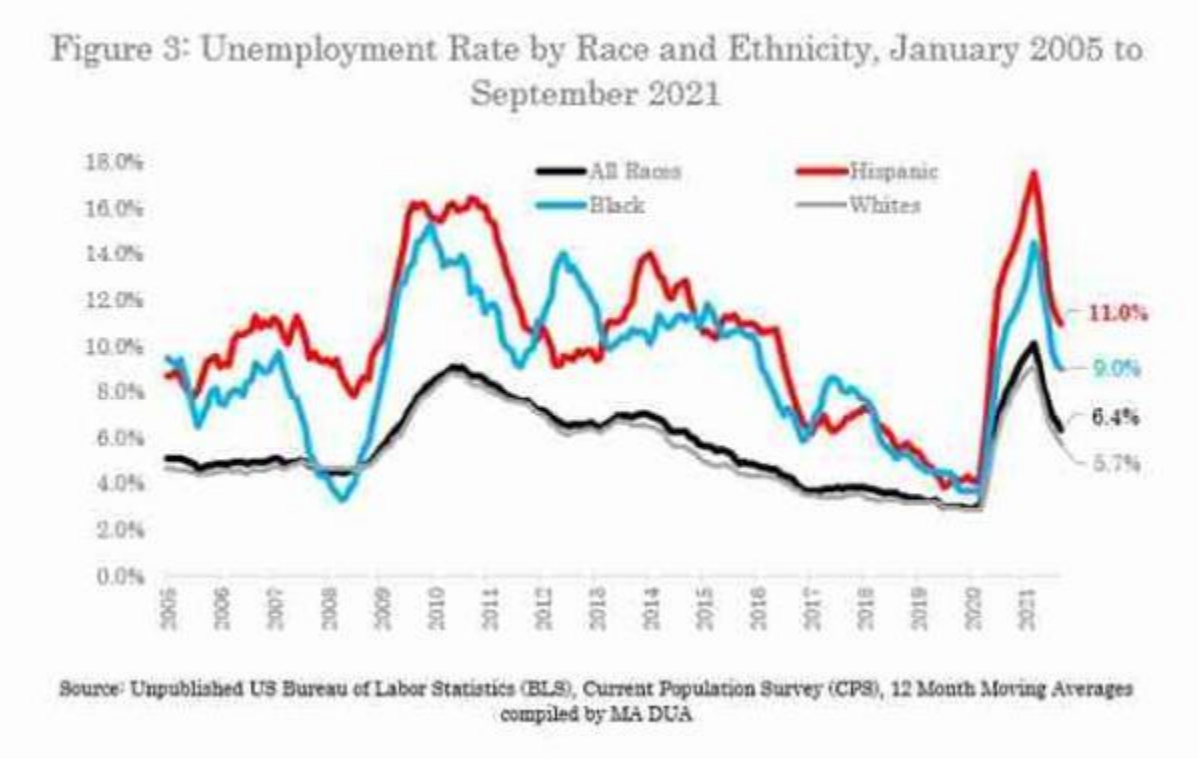
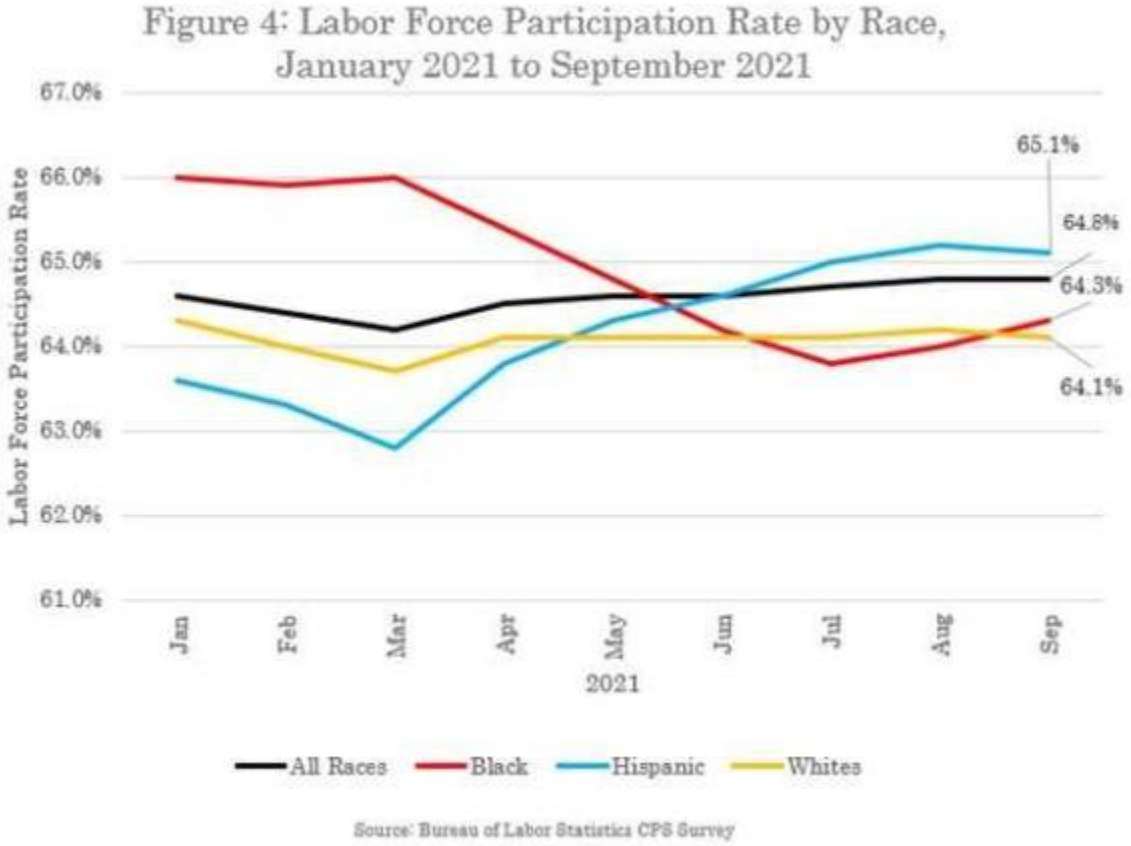


Figure 3 shows the MA unemployment rate from 2005 to 2021, broken down by race and ethnicity. In the pandemic recovery period, unemployment rates among all races have generally been declining. Hispanics consistently had the highest unemployment rate, followed by Blacks. The unemployment rate among Whites 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 MA 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%.



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

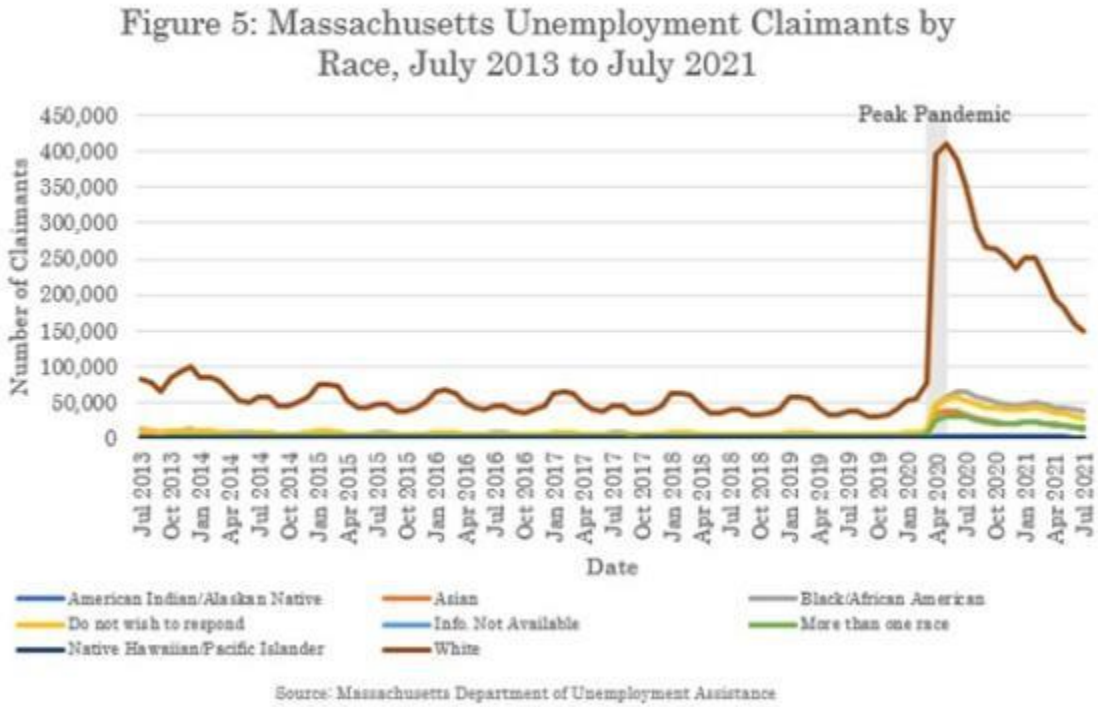


Figure 5 above shows MA unemployment claims broken down by race, from July 2013 to July 2021. At the peak of the pandemic, there were about nine times more White than Asian claimants, compared to over nine times the previous year. In addition, there were over three times more White than Black/African 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.

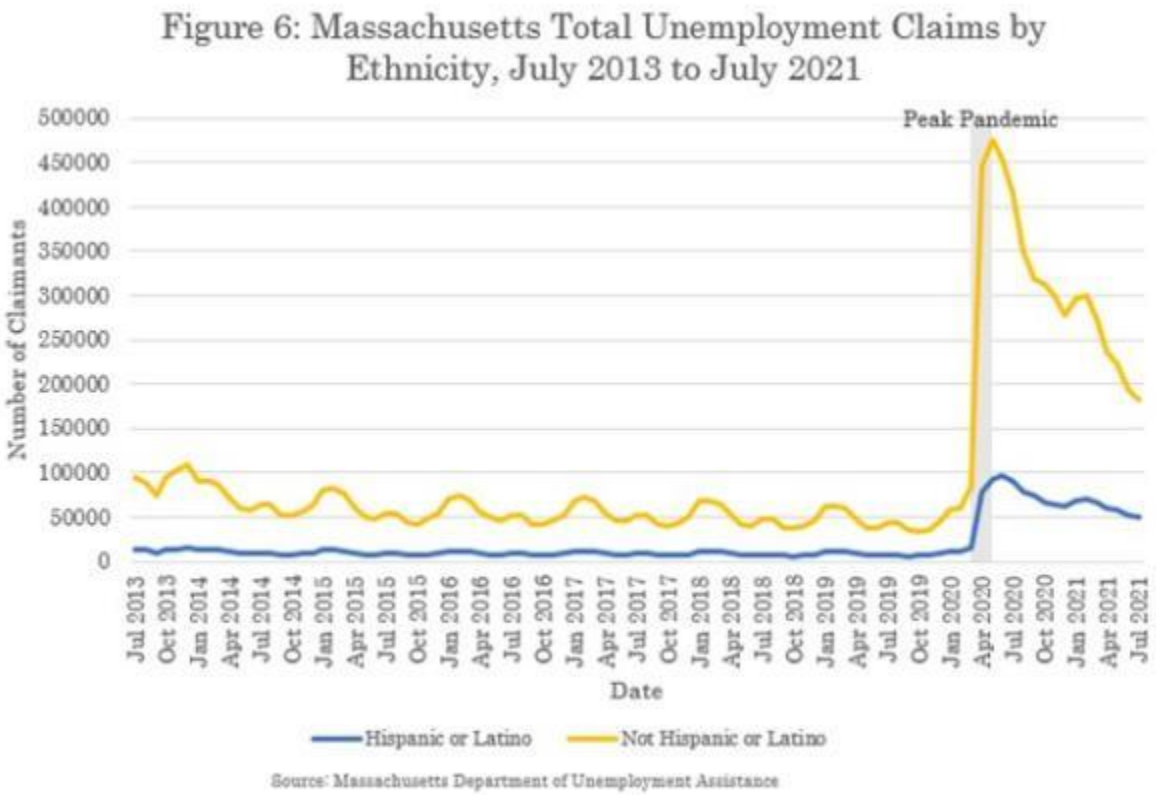


Figure 6 above shows MA total unemployment claims by ethnicity from July 2013 to July 2021. There is evidence that the pandemic showed an immediate differentiation between ethnicities. However, further data in May of 2021 shows that there were now about three times fewer claimants that are Hispanic than 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

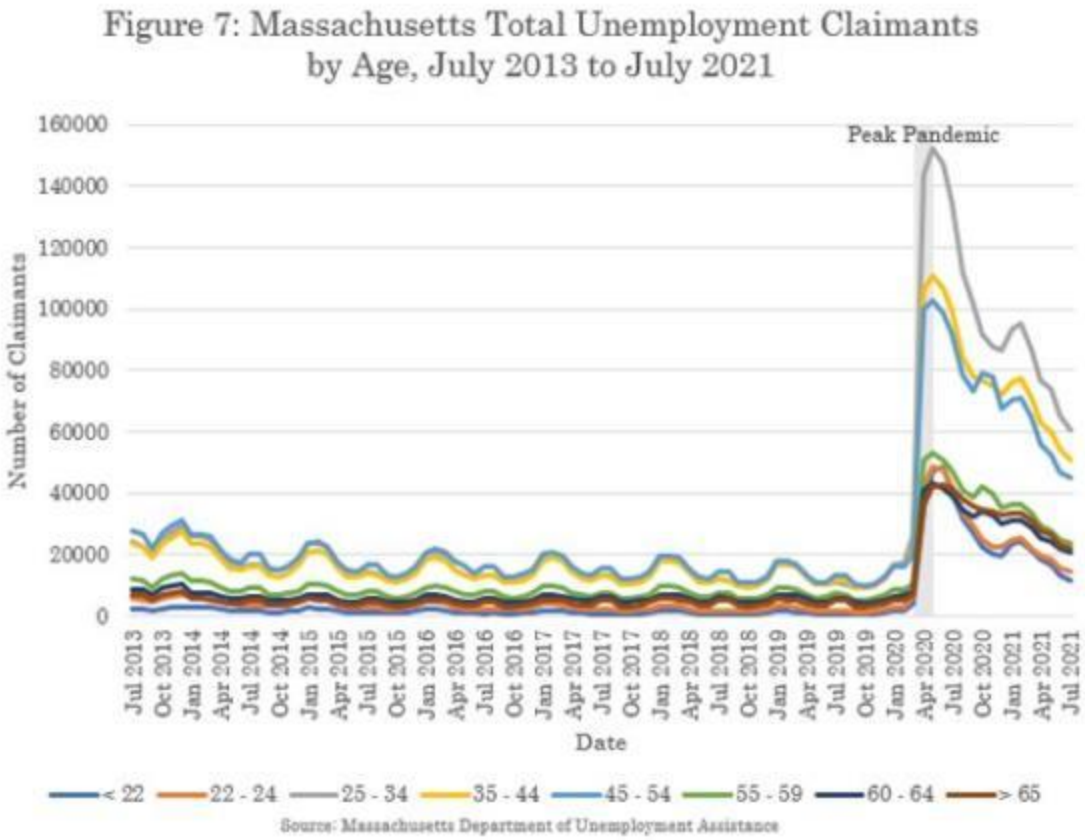


Figure 7 above shows Massachusetts total unemployment claimants divided by age from July 2013 to July 2021. From 2013 to early 2020, there was a greater number of claimants who were 65 and older than claimants who were between the ages of 22 and 24 by an average of about 59%. However, from April 2020 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.

Disability Employment Gap

Looking at employment among People with Disabilities, persistent gaps continue to exists. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that as of February 2022 nationally People with Disabilities have an unemployment rate of 9.7%, more than double the rate for people without disabilities (4.0%). BLS also estimates that only 36.6% of working-aged People with Disabilities participate in the labor force, compared to a Labor Force Participation rate of 76.9% for people without disabilities. Unfortunately, state-specific employment data on People with Disabilities was not available at the time of publication, but Massahusetts intends to focus on data production on the topic in the coming years.

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:

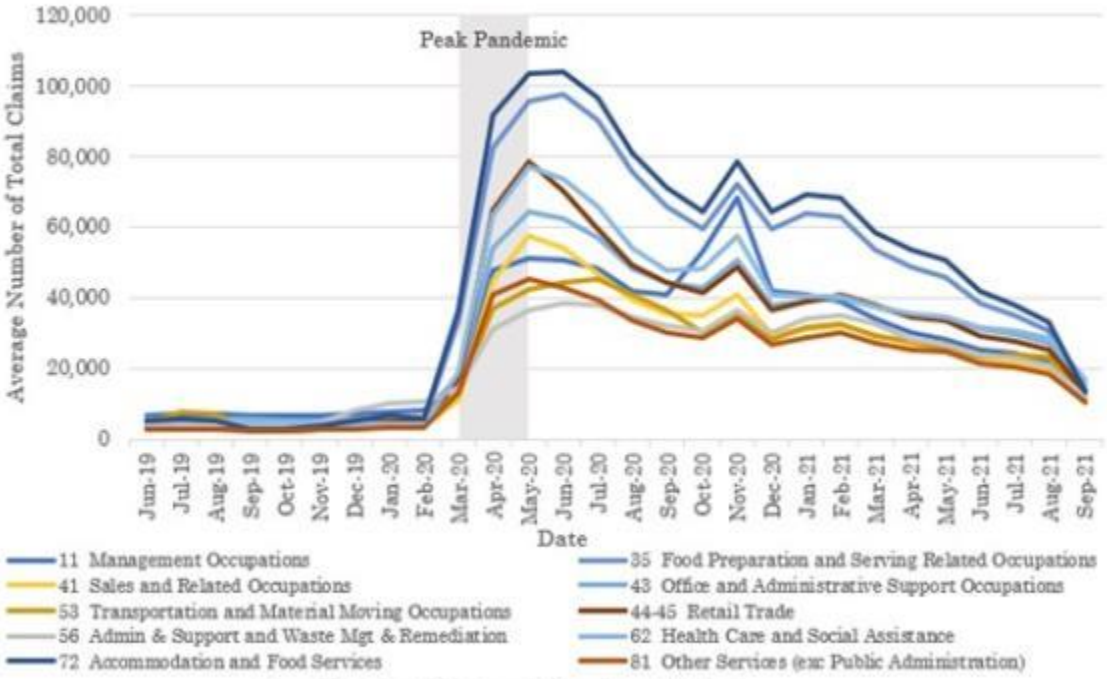
- At the height of the pandemic, across all WDAs, Food Preparation and Service-Related occupations had the highest number of unemployment insurance claims, followed by Office and Administrative Support and Transportation and Moving.
- At the beginning of the recovery period, June 2021, the most claims 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 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 as many of those businesses could not survive the COVID-19 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 a 10% loss of its establishments. Travel Arrangement & 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 & 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

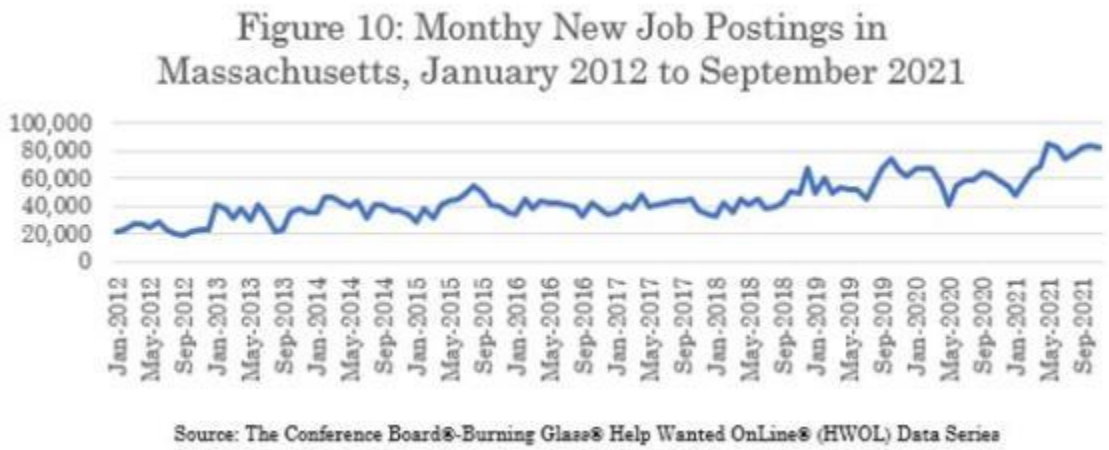
From the time the pandemic began around mid-March 2020 to mid-September 2021, there have been 1.15 million new (and distinct) job postings in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This section includes detailed information about those job postings and provides context regarding the overall labor market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

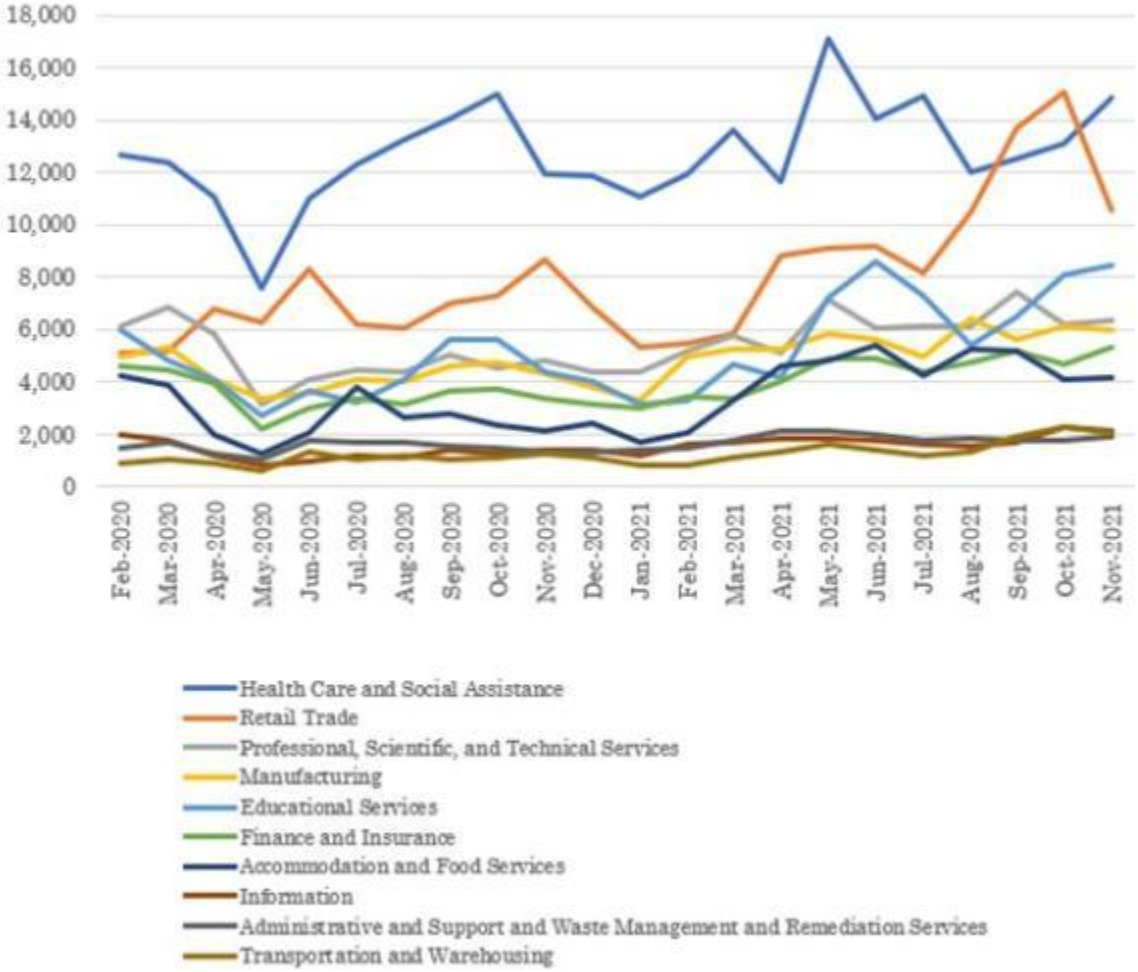


Labor by Demand Industry

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

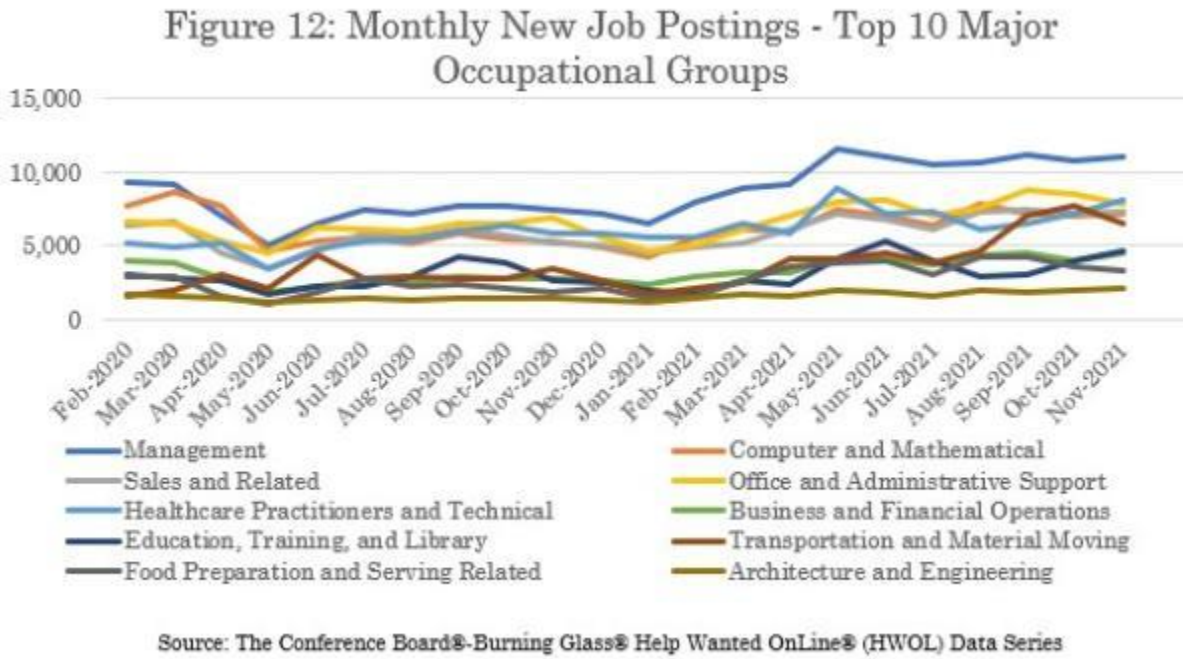


Figure 12 above shows monthly new job posting in Massachusetts, broken down by the top ten major occupational groups. Nine out of the top 10 major occupational groups are seeing upward trend in job postings. Management Occupations and Office and Administrative Support Occupations are especially seeing 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.

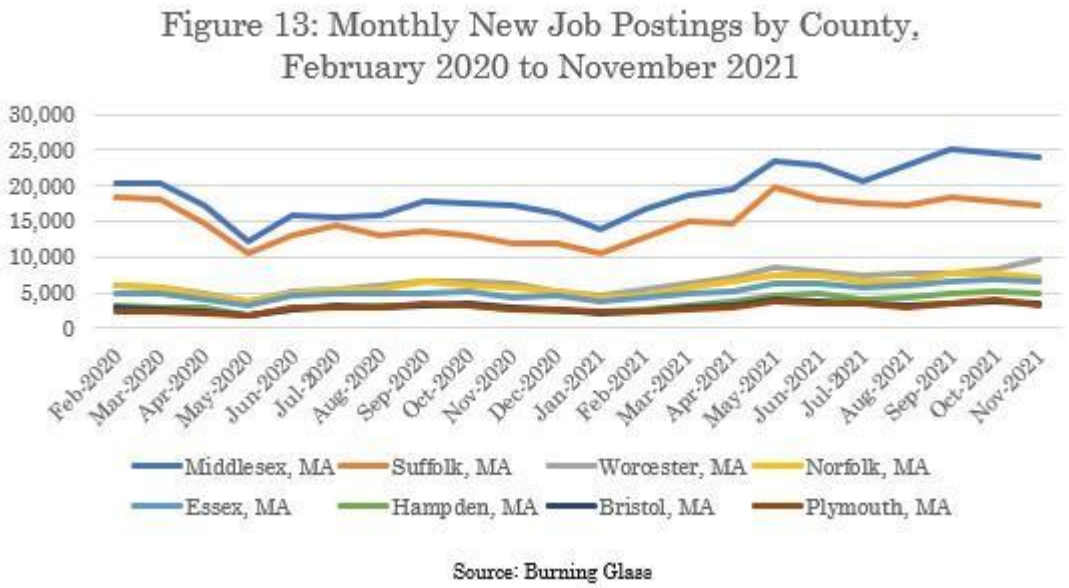
Registered Nurses remains the most in-demand occupation in the state. Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers is the second most in-demand job and has the highest market salary of this list at $103,000 a year. A vast majority of these Software Developer jobs require a 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

OES SOC (2019)	Occupation Title	Number of Job Postings	Number Employed 2020 (BLS/OES)	Mean Market Salary	Top Required Education Levels identified in job postings
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 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 workers have the opportunity to find a better, safer, and higher paying job.

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 43rd in the nation for affordability in 2018. In measuring the affordability of housing in 2018, Massachusetts ranked 41st 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.*)

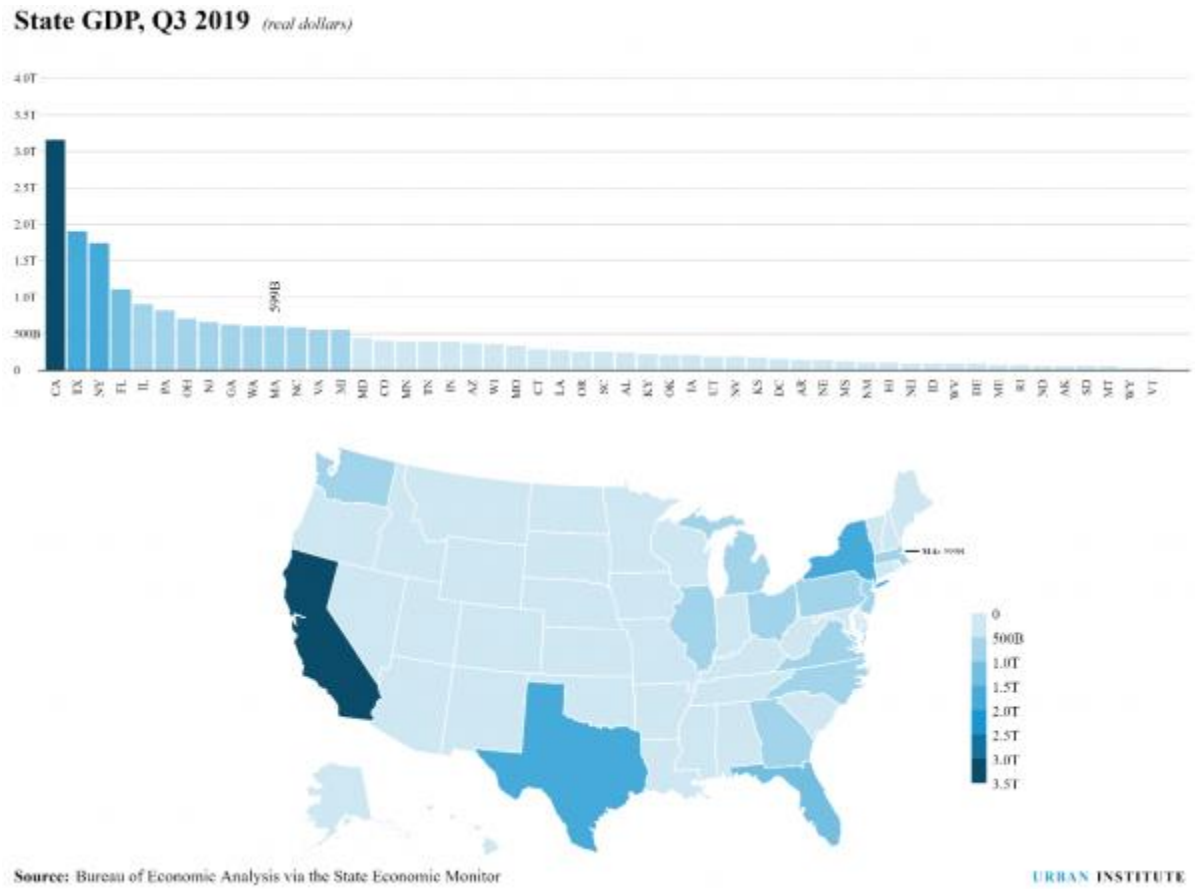
Productivity, Industries, and Occupations

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 11th in total GDP, nationally (Figure 1).

Figure 1: State Ranking of GDP and National Distribution



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

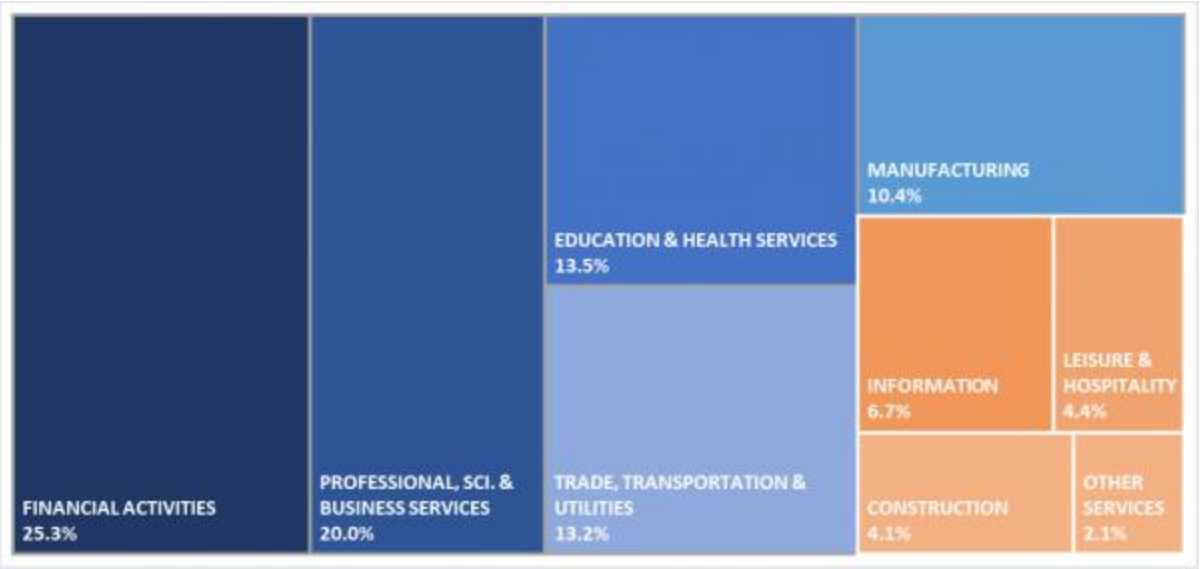
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities account for more than 13 percent each. Rounding out the top five is Manufacturing with 10.4% of GDP. See Attachment D for a profile of all major industries in Massachusetts.

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 non-agricultural employment among the states in New England, behind Rhode Island (+2.2 percent).

Figure 5 Nonagricultural Employment in Massachusetts, Seasonally Adjusted

Industry	Employment Oct-19	Employment Oct-18	Employment Oct-14	Over the Year Change Numeric	Over the Year Change Percent	Five-Year Change Numeric	Per Five-Year Change cent
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%	1,296	$60,200	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.)

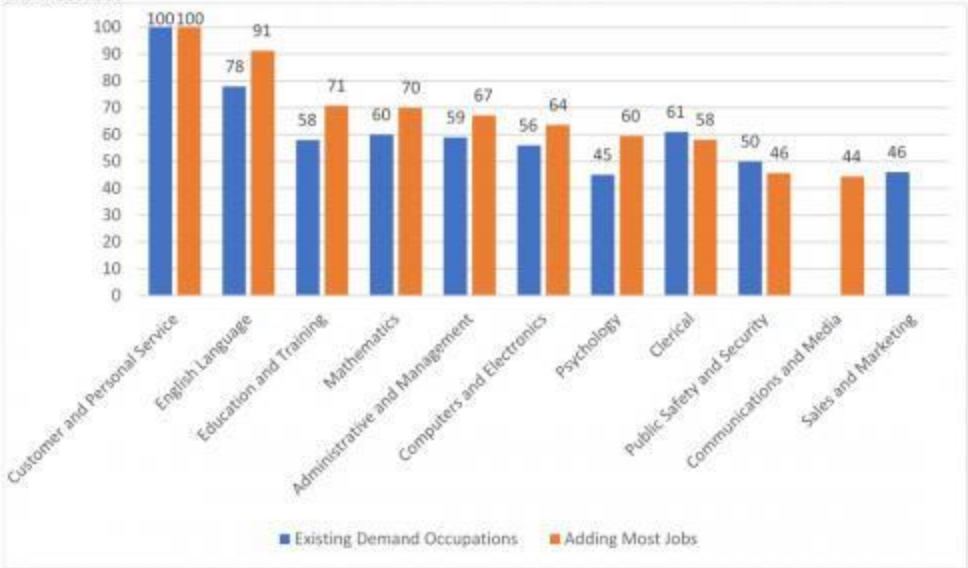
To assess the knowledge, skills and abilities associated with the top existing and emerging demand occupations, O*Net level and importance scores for the various KSAs were determined

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

Figures 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

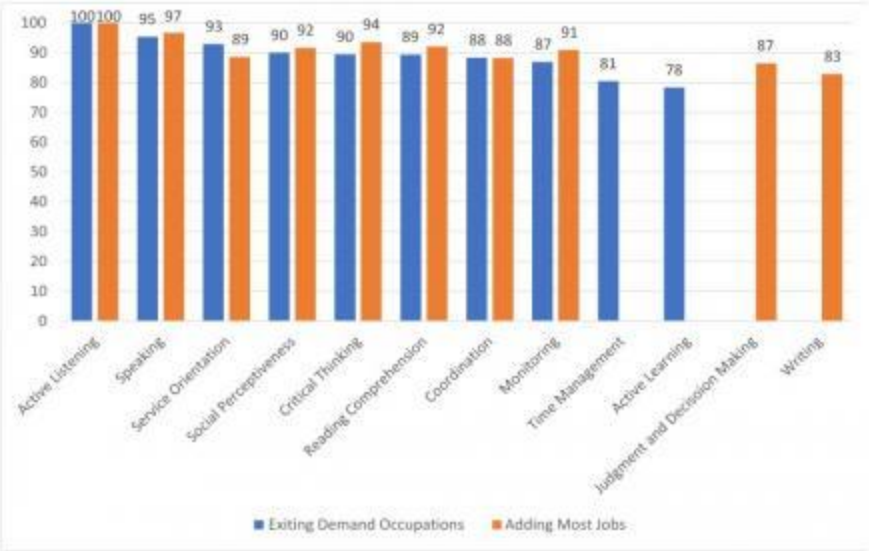


*Source: O*Net and Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019*

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

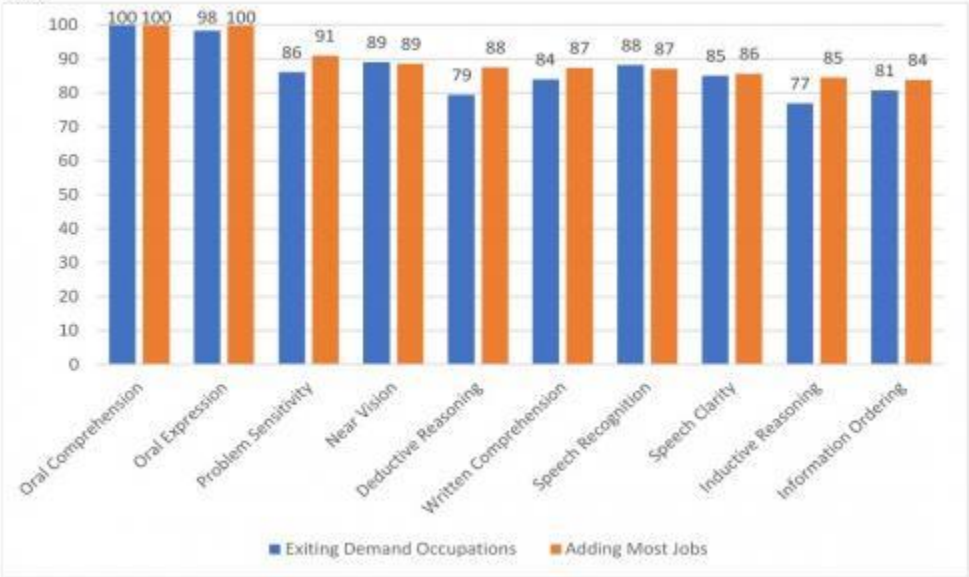


*Source: O*Net and Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019*

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 (three-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	1220	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

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

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

WORKFORCE ANALYSIS FOR WIOA STATE PLAN MODIFICATION IS IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION

\\FROM ORIGINAL WIOA STATE PLAN SUBMITTED MARCH 2020\\

Population, Employment, and Unemployment

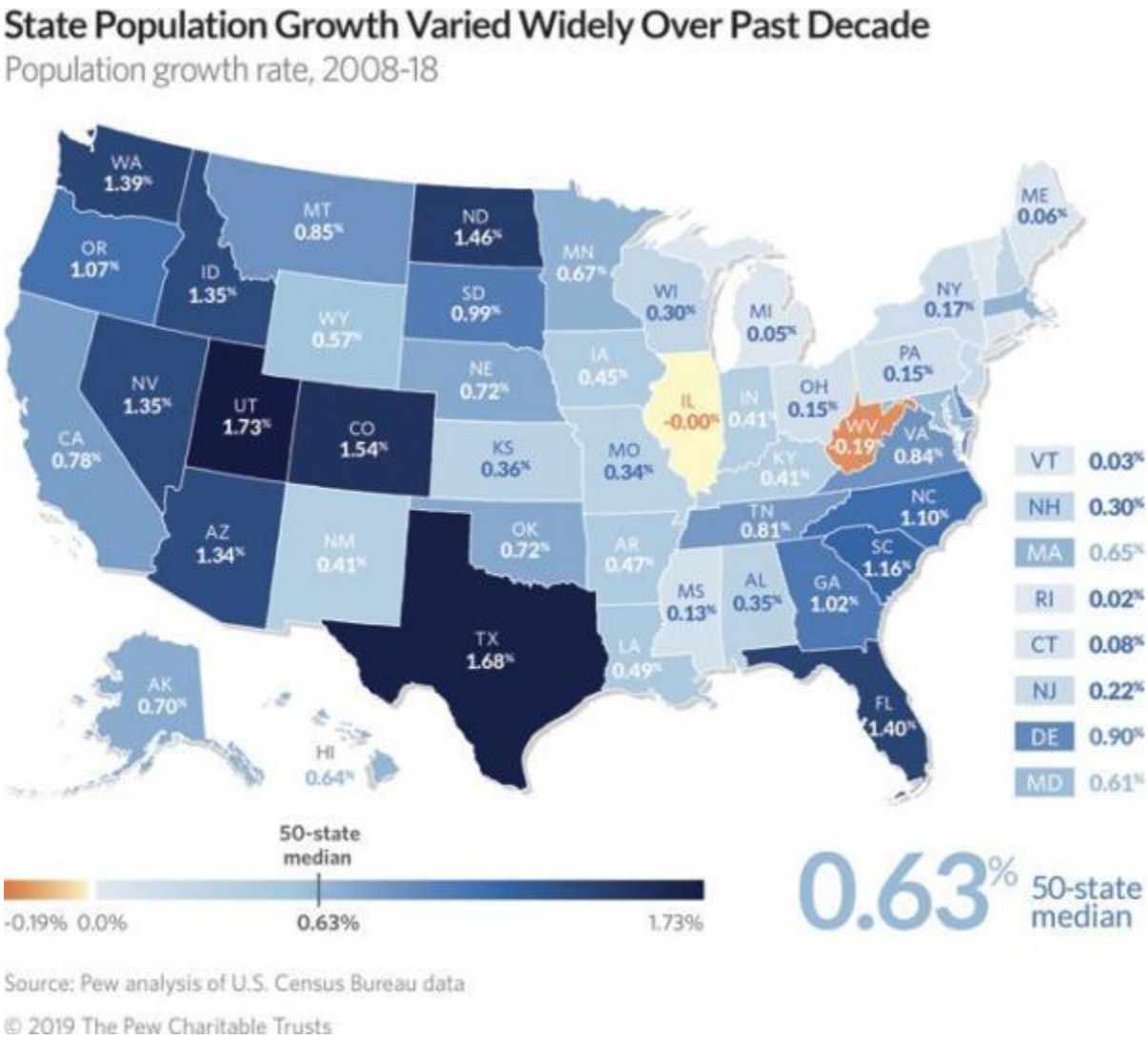
Population

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.

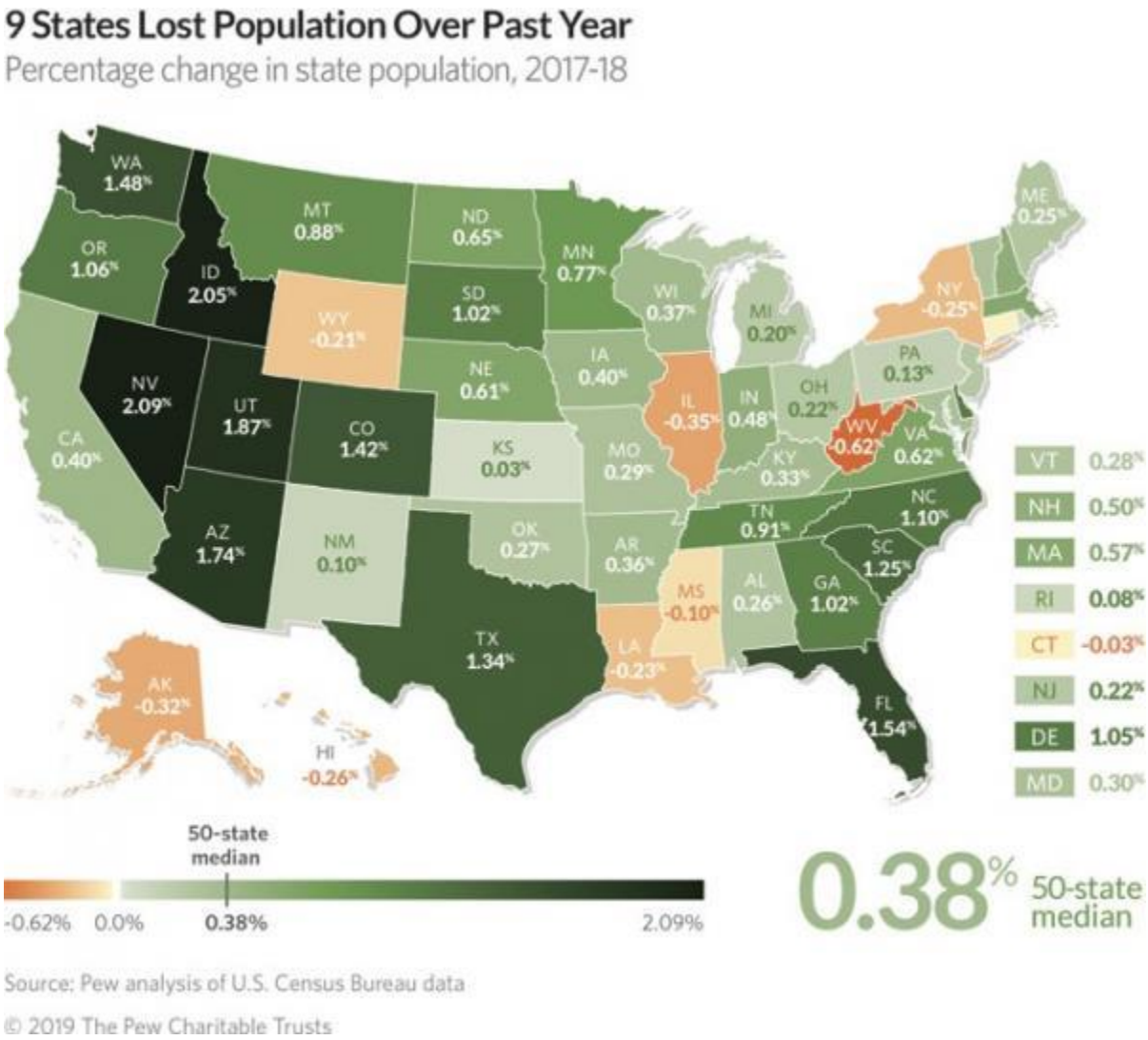
The fastest-growing states in the 10 years ending July 2018 were predominantly in the West and South. The Northeast and Midwest were home to all but two of the 15 states with the slowest population growth. For at least half a century, people have gravitated away from these regions and toward Sun Belt 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



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 change 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 U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The rate of growth for Massachusetts' young population (+1.0 percent, 32nd 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 three-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).

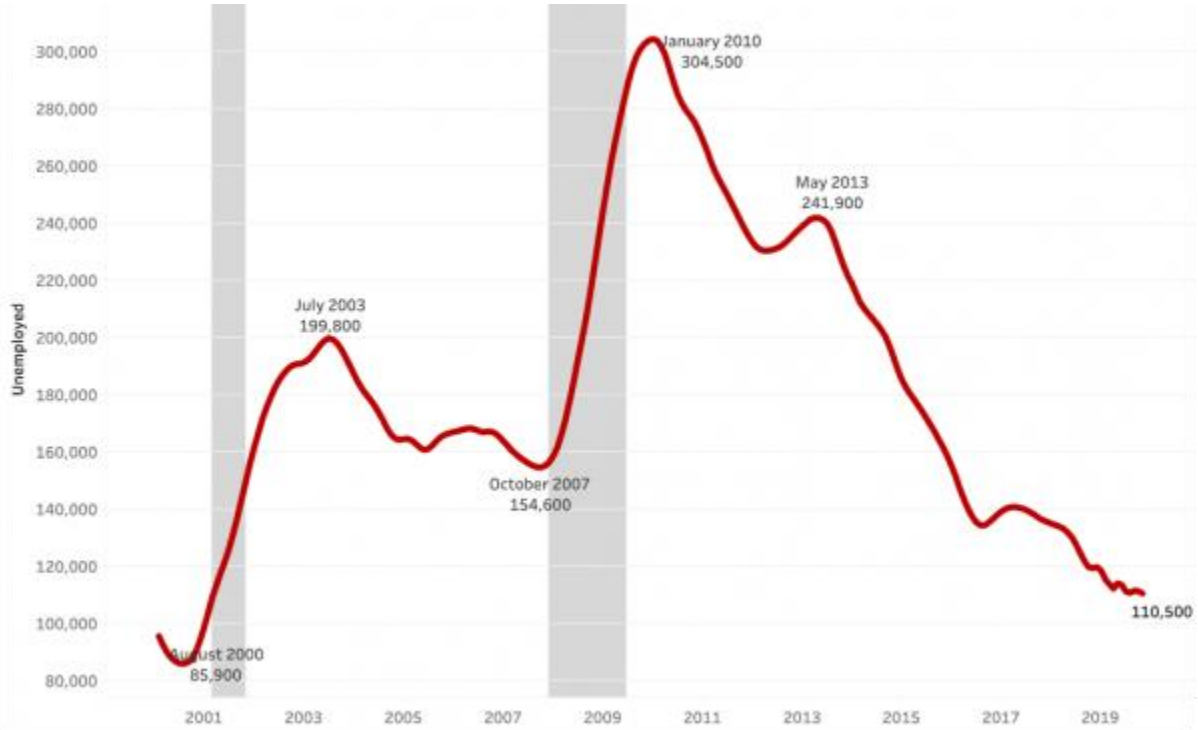
Figure 21: Massachusetts Labor Force, Seasonally Adjusted

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

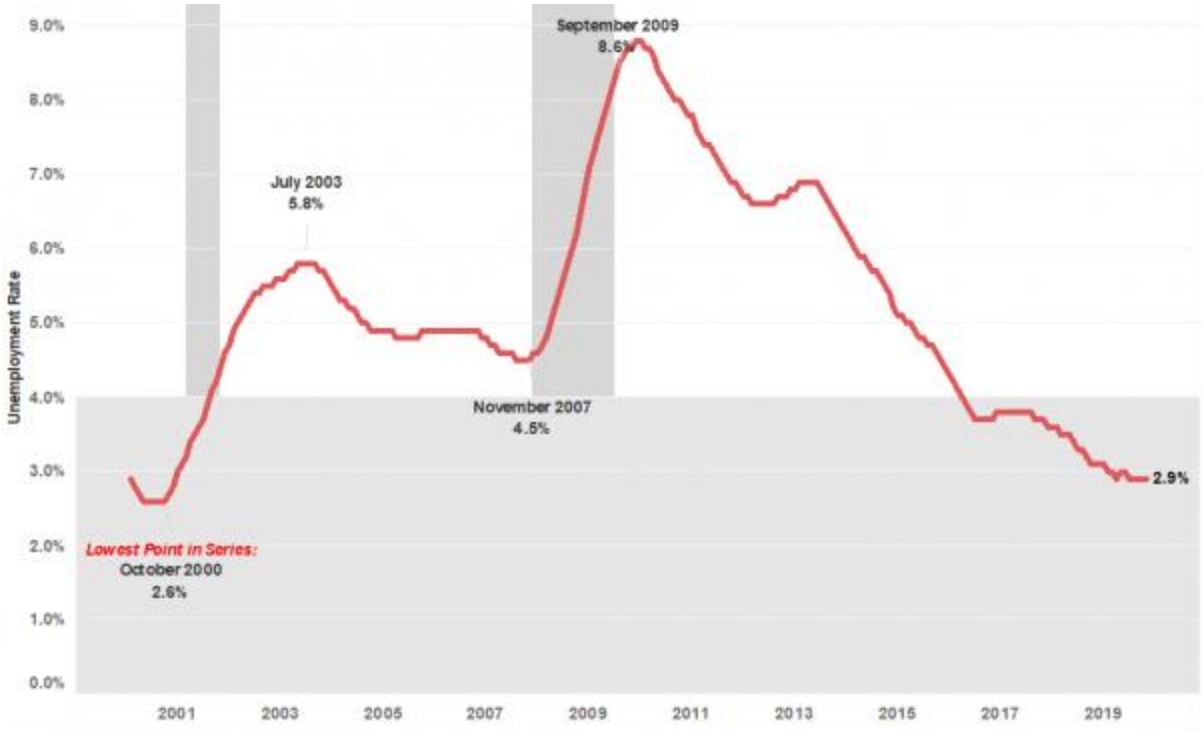
Figure 23: Massachusetts Unemployed, Seasonally Adjusted



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

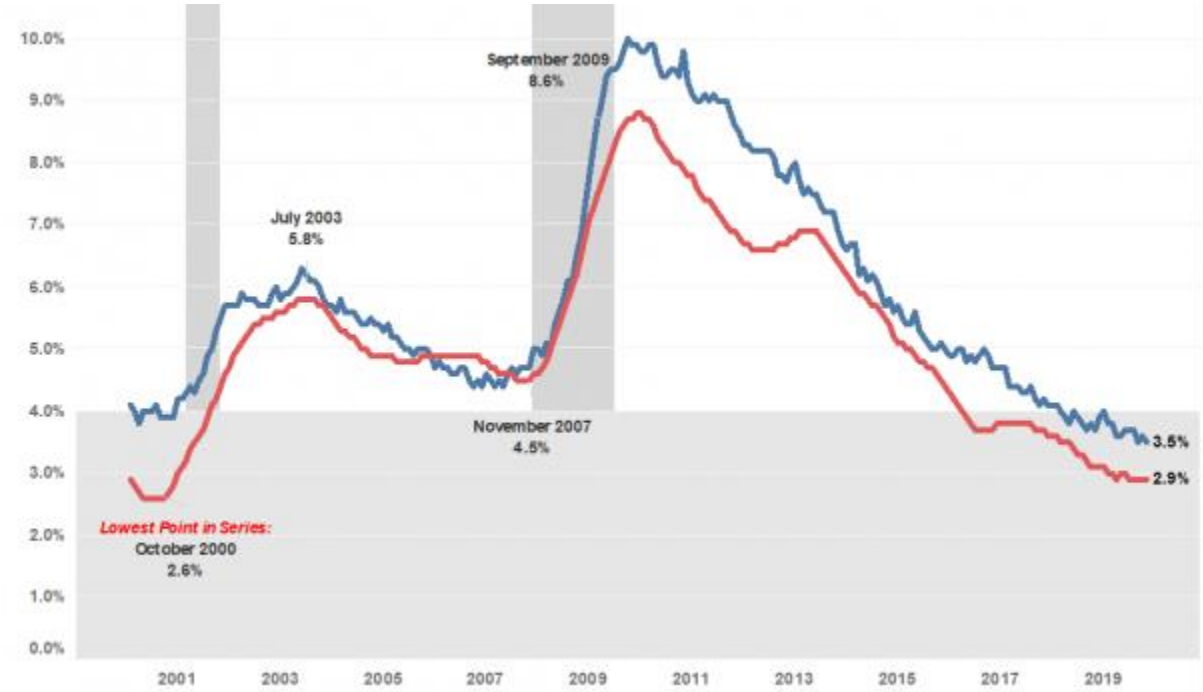
Massachusetts' unemployment rate has steadily declined since the December 2009 – January 2010 peak of 8.8 percent reached during the Great Recession (Figure 23). In November 2019, for the fifth consecutive month, Massachusetts' unemployment rate remained at 2.9 percent—six-tenths of a percentage point 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

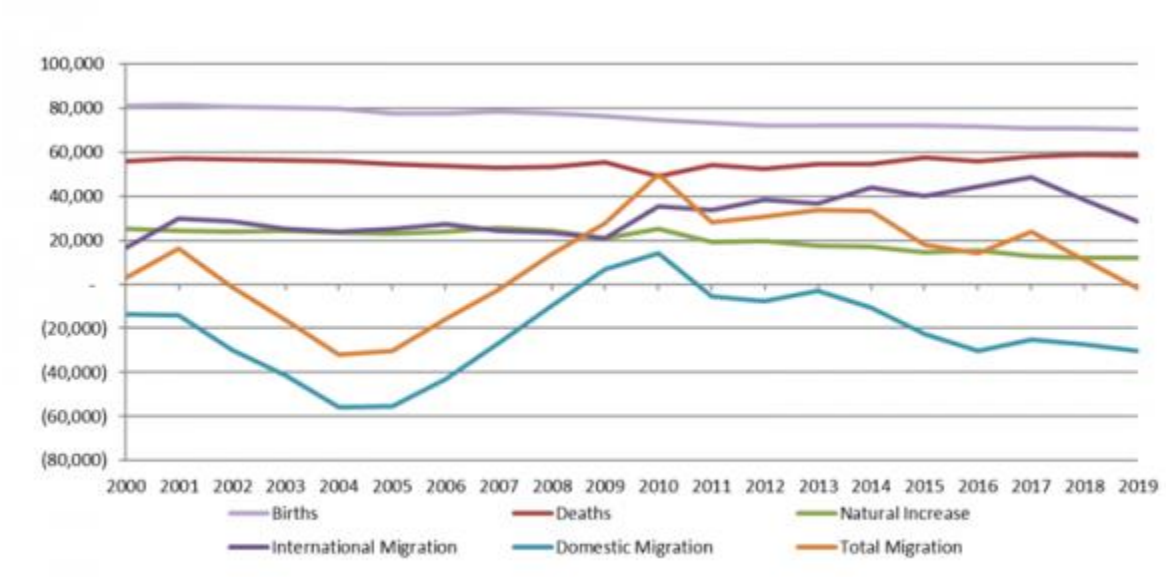
Nativity and the Labor Force

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 are 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 bachelors 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.

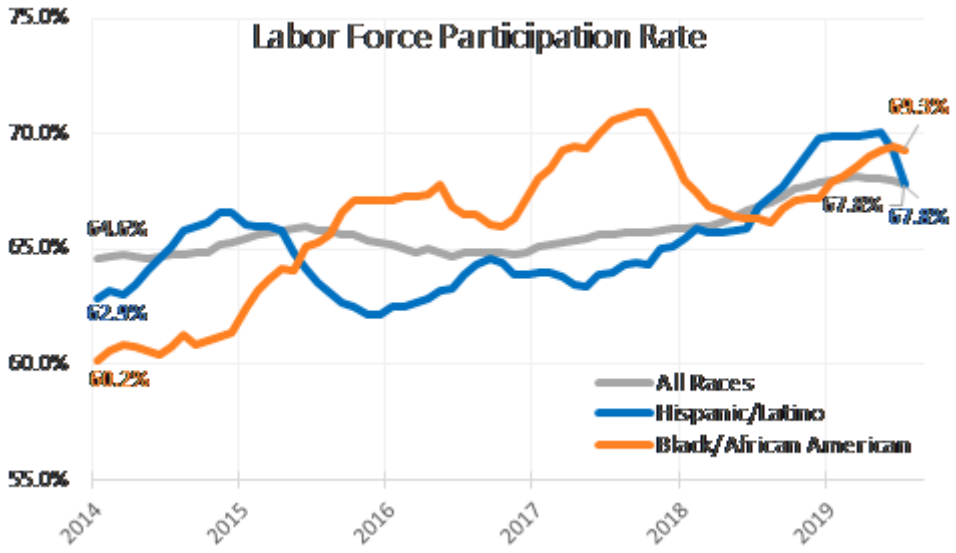
While many of the foreign born are working, the distribution of their occupations differs from that of the native U.S. born population in the Commonwealth. Compared to native U.S. born workers, a higher share of immigrant workers are in service occupations, production, transportation & material moving occupations, and natural resources, construction & 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 & 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

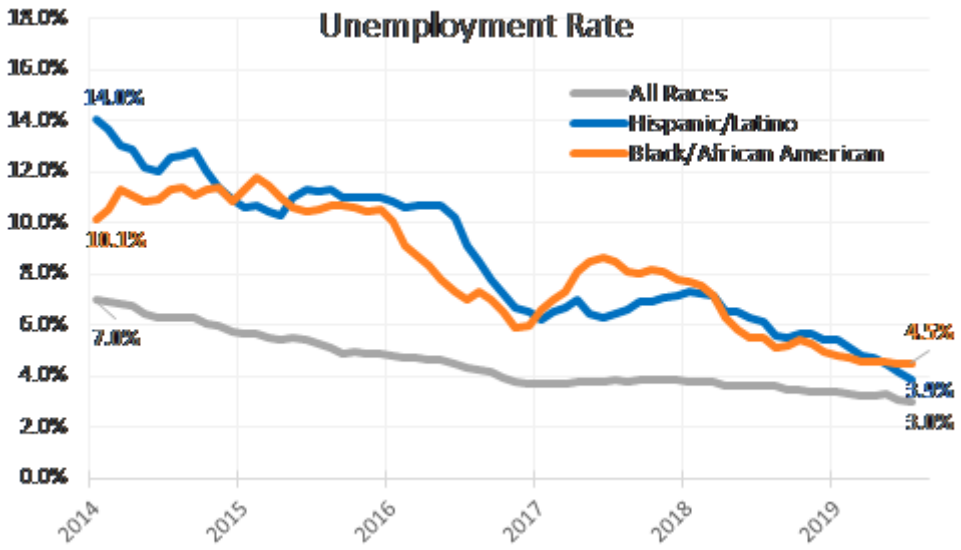
In addition to the overall population numbers and foreign-born labor, monthly labor force series estimates are published for working age Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino residents of Massachusetts. Trends in this series show the strong contribution of these two groups to the current statewide 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 27.1: Massachusetts Labor Force Participation Rate by Race and Massachusetts Unemployment Rate by Race January 2014-July 2019



Source: BLS LAUS Monthly Estimates; not seasonally adjusted.

Figure 27.2: Massachusetts Labor Force Participation Rate by Race and Massachusetts Unemployment Rate by Race January 2014-July 2019



Source: BLS LAUS Monthly Estimates; not seasonally adjusted.

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 23rd in the nation based on the education gap by race.

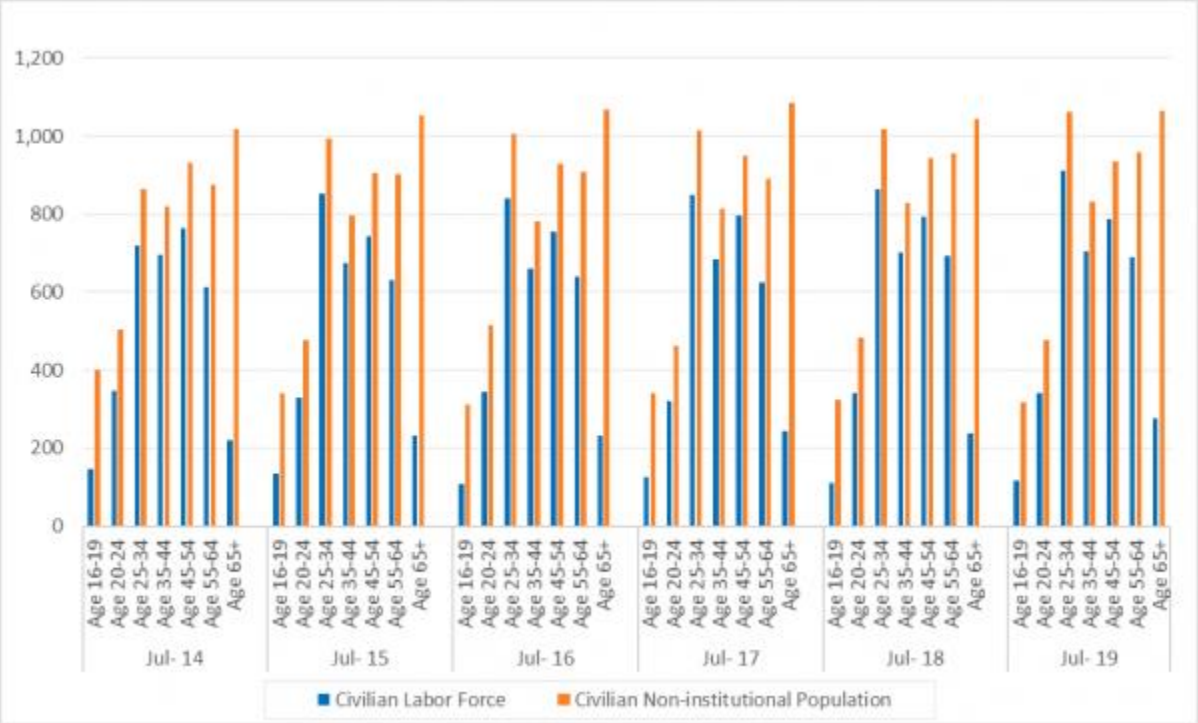
The Census Bureau's reports on employment equality by race reveal disparities between non-Hispanic white and other racial and ethnic groups. While the unemployment rate overall is fairly low in the U.S., the country has large racial disparities. According to estimates from the 2017 American Community 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 22nd 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 29th 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



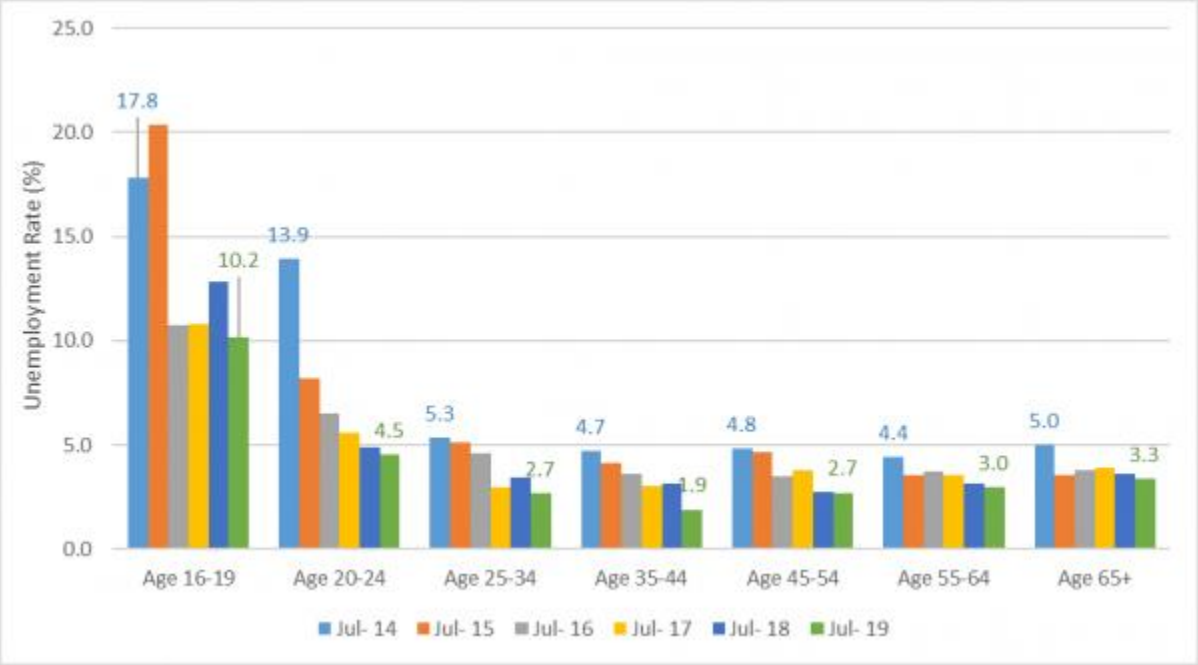
Source: Unpublished BLS CPS 12-month moving average. Compiled by Massachusetts DUA.

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 five-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

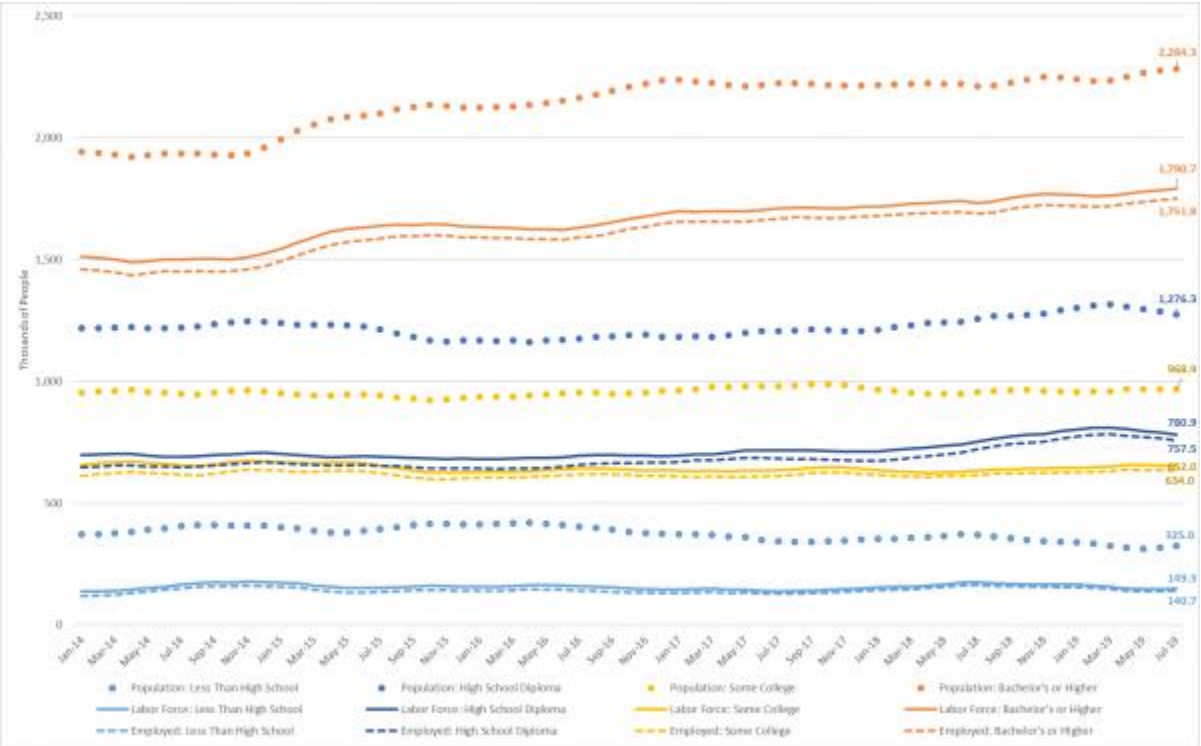
Massachusetts residents are highly educated, with two-thirds of residents having at least Some College education and 47.1 percent holding a Bachelor's Degree or Higher as of July 2019 (Figure 30). These shares are even higher for the labor force, where 72.4 percent have at least Some College education 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

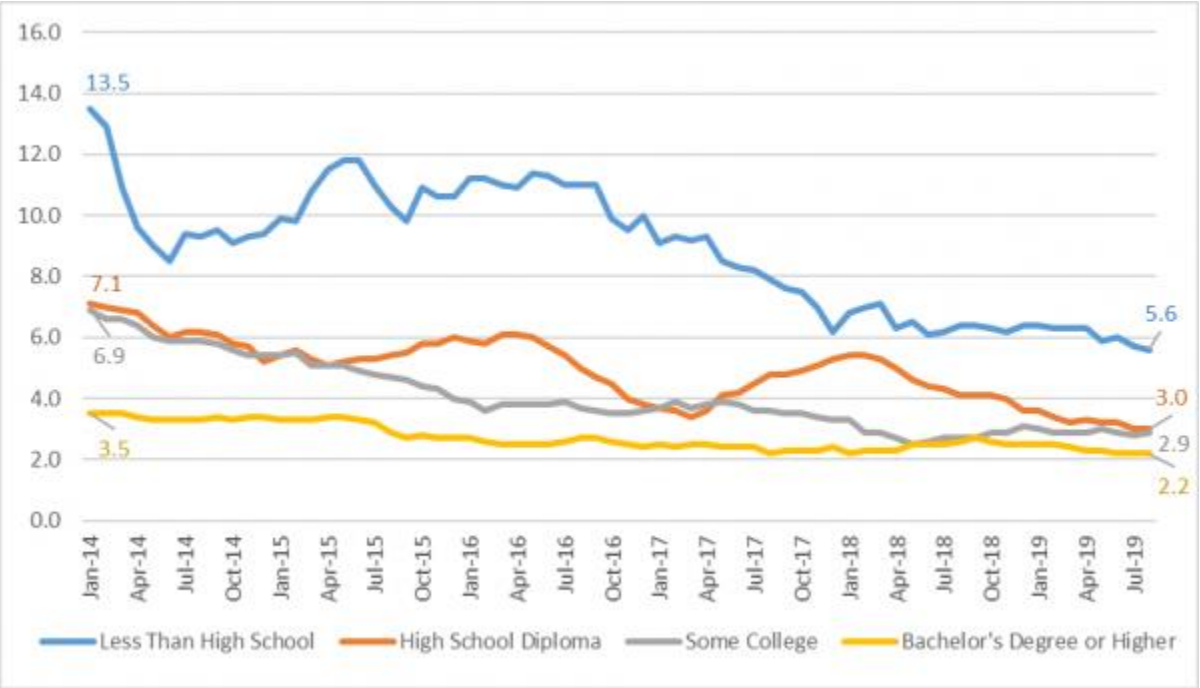


Source: Unpublished BLS CPS 12-month moving average. Compiled by Massachusetts DUA.

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 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.

TANF Caseload Demographics

As of December 2019, the total TANF caseload in Massachusetts was 30,767, a slight increase from 29,219 in December 2018.

State law requires clients who receive TANF benefits who meet certain criteria to be exempted from the work program requirement, including if: their youngest child is younger than two, they have a verified disability, they are in their 33rd week or third trimester of pregnancy, they are a teen parent attending school full time, they are over age sixty, or they are caring for a disabled household member.

TANF recipients who have a child younger than two and those who have a documented disability make up the greatest portion of exemptions, jointly comprising 42% of the exempt caseload. While not given an exempt status, relative caregivers who receive benefits only for children are not subject to work program requirements. In the state TANF caseload there are currently 8,285 adults required to be working or participating in a work-related activity such as education, training, or work readiness coaching. There are 23,212 TANF recipients currently exempt from the work program requirements. While exempt clients are not required to participate in the work program, they are encouraged to work or voluntarily participate in employment service programs. As of September 2019, approximately 16.2%, of exempt households are participating in the labor force by volunteering to work or participating in employment readiness activities, despite having an exemption. This number is up from 13.8% in September 2018. Of the exempt households that have chosen to participate, 9.8% have a child under 2 and 1.6% have a documented disability.

Source: Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children Consolidated Report, Department of Transitional Assistance, January 2020

MA TANF Population Demographics: Educational Attainment, Employment and Race

For Massachusetts' adult TANF recipients, the National TANF Data File provides the following educational attainment estimates in 2018:

- Less than high school graduate – 33.1 percent
- High school graduate (includes equivalency) – 59.9 percent
- More Than High School – 7 percent

In FY2018, 13.9 percent of all adult TANF recipients were employed in the Massachusetts workforce. In that cohort, 9.0 percent of 1,177 male recipients were employed while 14.2 percent of 16,349 female recipients were employed.

Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino recipients accounted for 57.9 percent of Massachusetts' TANF caseload

Source: National TANF Data File as of 07/24/2019

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ofa/fy18_characteristics_web_508_2.pdf

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:

- Less than high school graduate – 21.0 percent
- High school graduate (includes equivalency) – 44.3 percent
- Some college or associate's degree – 15.4 percent
- 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 that people without disabilities. Massachusetts, where persons with disabilities were 2.75 times more likely to be unemployed, ranked 43rd 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 8th in the nation based on the labor force participation gap by gender.

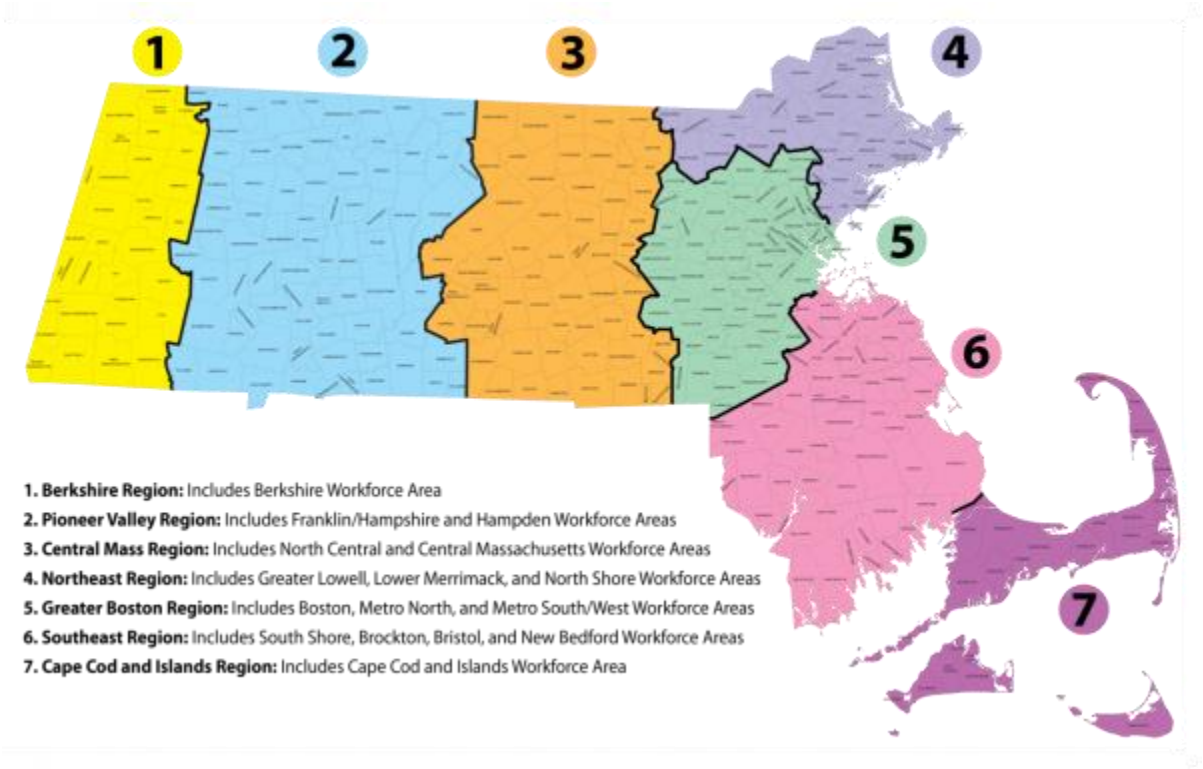
However, in comparing the median earnings of the female population to those of the male population for individuals who were employed full time year-round in 2017, in Massachusetts (ranked 12th in the nation based on the income gap by gender), women took home about 83 cents for every dollar men earned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

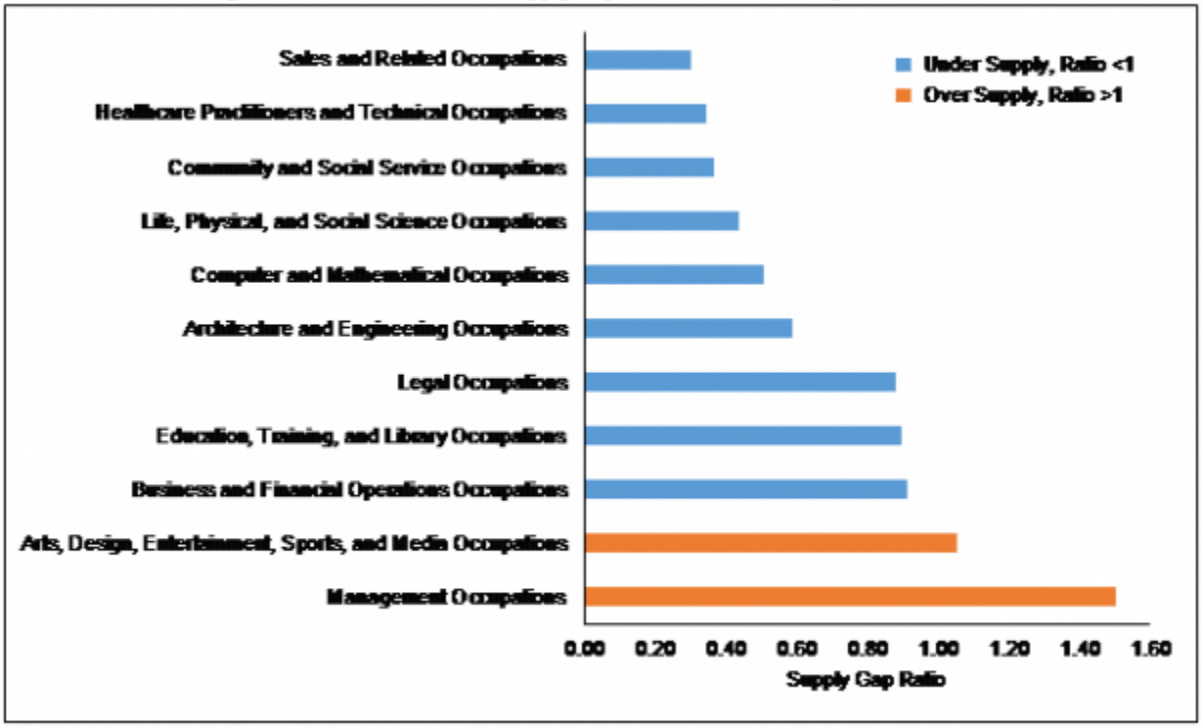
The 2019 supply and demand tool is intended to guide training investments and other workforce activities with indicators of balances or imbalances (i.e., skill shortages or surpluses) in occupational labor markets. The underlying accounting model compares the projected total annual job openings, due 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. [1]

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

[1] 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).

Figure 34: Massachusetts Supply Gap Overview Major Occupational Groups

Figure: 2.30 Massachusetts Supply Gap Overview: BA+ Occupation Clusters



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

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 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.

The Commonwealth is in the midst of an economic expansion with growth in productivity and employment. As more and more Massachusetts residents are finding work, the labor force participation rate climbs, and the unemployment rate remains at an historic low. Indeed, Massachusetts is experiencing a tight labor market, but closer examination of the growth in job demand, and those who are finding work reveals gaps in the economic and labor force landscape that the workforce system can seek to address. Much of the current and projected growth in jobs are in low paying occupations that do not meet cost of living thresholds, or in traditionally high-skilled, high pay occupations. Meanwhile, the Commonwealth's workforce grows increasingly more diverse by race, ethnicity, place of origin, and disability status. Populations with challenges to employment, such as people of color, people with disabilities, and those with Limited English Proficiency remain at higher rates of unemployment, lower educational attainment, and experience income disparities compared to the general population.

These circumstances underscore the need for the Commonwealth's workforce system to expand workforce interventions that fully maximizes the labor force to ensure all Massachusetts residents can experience economic prosperity. Regionally focused, expanded career pathway-building to bridge low-pay, low skilled jobs to high-pay, high demand careers is an opportunity to ensure the Commonwealth's economic and workforce growth is equitable and accessible to all.

Updated Response:

It is our understanding that the portal does not accept a document that isn't 508 compliant

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

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 recent branding initiative was launched to unify and re-brand the workforce system.

MassHire

The Commonwealth determined that our Businesses 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.

The MassHire brand will promote the values of collaboration, respect, reliability and ingenuity across the Commonwealth.

Workforce Skills Cabinet

Another Baker Administration initiative is the Workforce Skills Cabinet, which 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 though the MassHire Career Centers (formerly One-Stop Career Centers). As of 2020, 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;

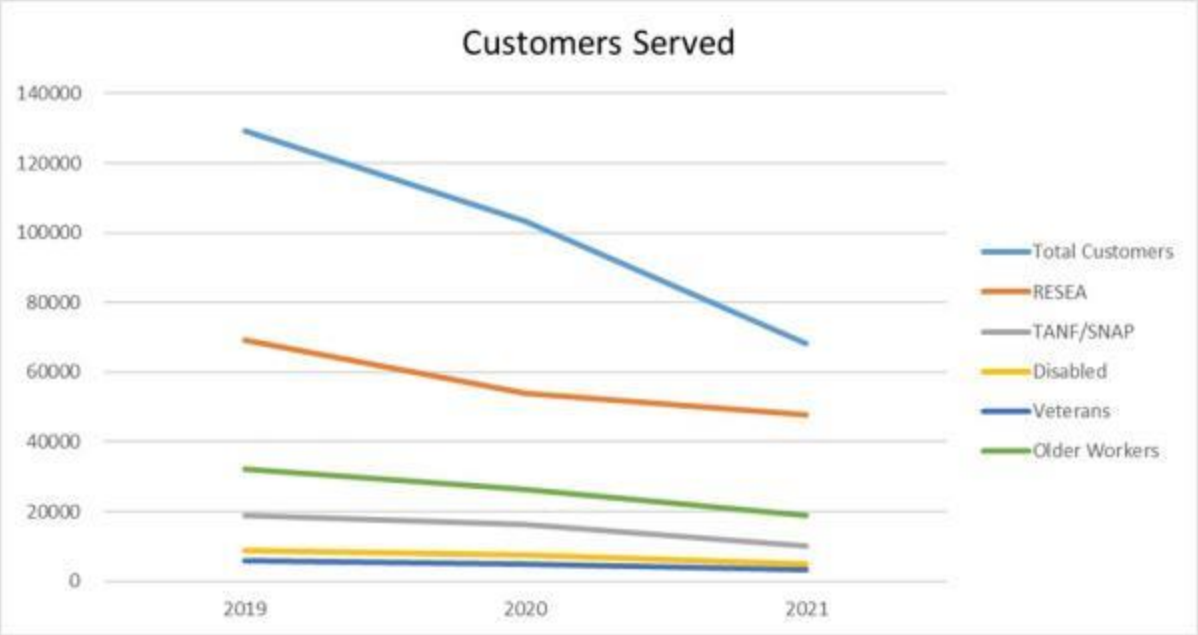
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services;
- Provision of information regarding local area performance as relates to local performance measures and any additional performance information, as available;
- Provision of information relating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

In fiscal year 2019, the Massachusetts workforce system served 129,105 jobseekers, 23% of whom were determined to have or self-reported a significant barrier to reemployment. Individuals connect to the system through the Unemployment Insurance System's Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA), referrals from partners (TANF, SNAP, Vocational Rehabilitation, etc.) and on a walk-in basis.

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;

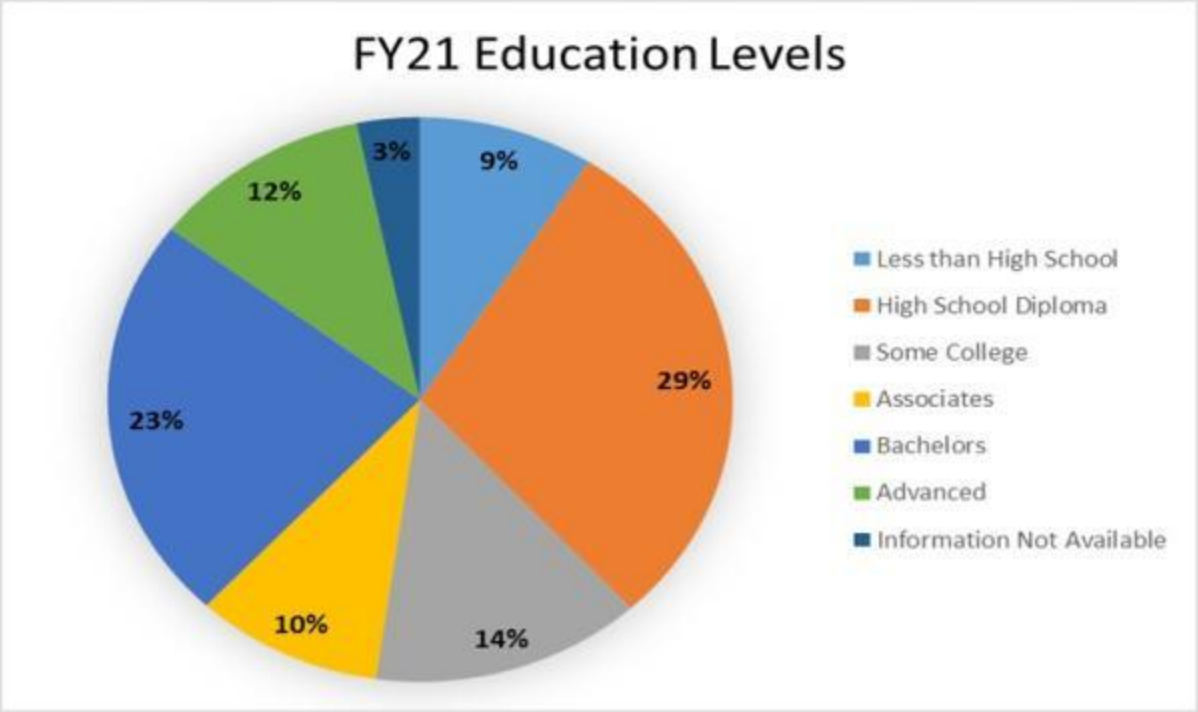
Figure 39: MassHire Career Center Customers Served



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.

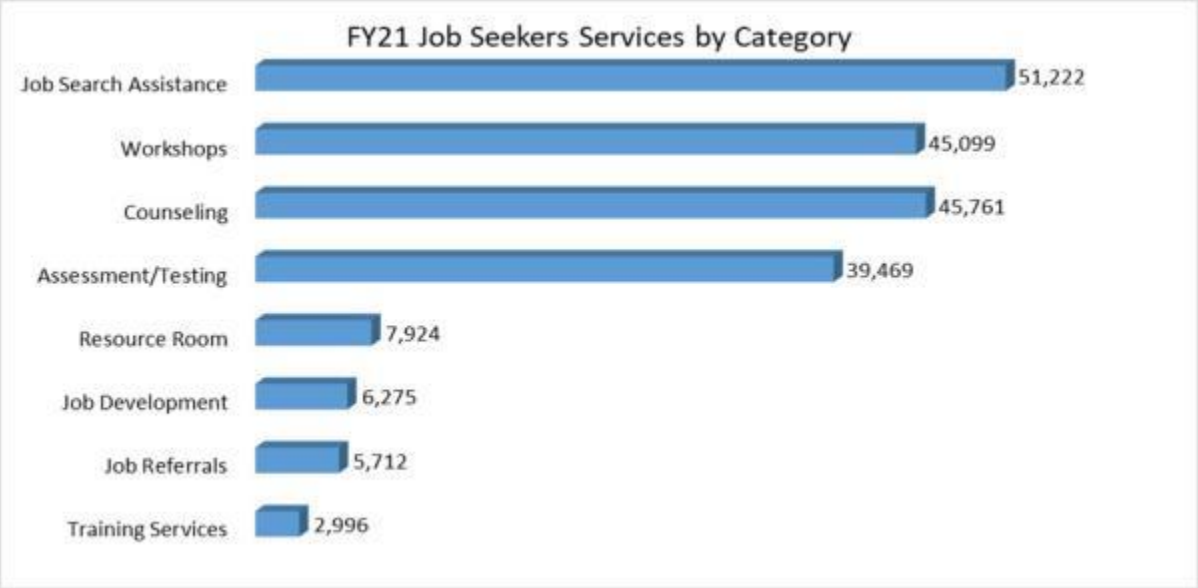
Figure 40: FY19 Education Levels of MassHire Career Center Customers



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



Source: Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System data

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

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

	FY 2020 (Year 1 of 2020 - 2024 Plan)	% of Total MassHire Customer Base	FY 2021 (Year 2 of 2020 - 2024 Plan)	% of Total MassHire Customer Base
MassHire Career Centers	103,183	NA	68,138	NA
Customers Shared with Partner Agencies				
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%
Total	**56,622**	**54.9%**	**48,853**	**71.7%**

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.

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:

1. Recruiting and hiring;
2. Training, consultation and workplace safety;
3. Layoff aversion and management;
4. Business development and partnerships; and
5. 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.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

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 pubic 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.

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:

1. assist eligible individuals in attaining a secondary school credential and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
2. 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;
3. 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;
4. 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 contextuallywith 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.

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.
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.

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 three-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.
    a. Evaluation and counseling to identify job goals
    b. Assessment of work sites and the need for assistive technology
    c. Assistive technology, orientation and mobility instruction, and rehabilitation teaching to enable blind persons to be independent at work
    d. Providing funds for college or vocational training
    e. Job counseling
    f. Pre-employment transition services
    g. Supported Employment Services
    h. Short and long-term internships
    i. 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 - 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 wascreated 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 additional 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 21st 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:

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Additionally to support student awareness of CTE opportunities and to support student success, the Commonwealth launched My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) a state wide 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 for 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 25 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 36 cities and towns and are operated by a mix of MassHire Boards, MassHire Career Centers and community-based organizations. $24M million in Youthworks funding will serve 5,771 low-income teens and young adults across the Commonwealth during the summer of 2022 and year-round during the 2022-2023 school year.

Adult Education (WIOA Title II): Both the federal WIOA Title II and Adult Education state funded programs serve a significant number of youth. In PY20 – 21, 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 - 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:

2. Enable older low-income job seekers to develop the skills and self-confidence to obtain unsubsidized jobs and become financially self-sufficient; and
3. 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 Trainingis another primary focus as well, asEOEA 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.

$65.5M 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.

115 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 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. Large employers with more than 100 employees are reimbursed 50% and small employers with 100 or fewer employees are reimbursed 100%.

The Workforce Training Fund is supported through business contributions, raising approximately $21 million each year. In FY 2021 the Workforce Training Fund, through its General Program, awarded $16.6 million through 133 grants to support 177 businesses in training 9,320 incumbent workers. Also, in FY21, the Express Program awarded $3.7 million through 573 grants to support 385 businesses in training 3,470 incumebt workers.

Career Technical Initiative

This initiative, announced by Governor Baker, seeks to address the persistent need for skilled labor in construction, trades, and manufacturing. Commonwealth Corporation administers these funds in hopes of eliminating the skills gap facing employers by providing an opportunity for youth and adults to retrain for skilled occupations, as well as transforming vocational high schools into Career Technical Institutes that run three shifts a day to bring more high school students and adults into the program.

As part of a multi-year strategy, CTI plans to train 20,000 new skilled workers in key trades and technical jobs. Among the grants approved by the Workforce Skills Cabinet in 2021, 35 new career pathway programs and 22 expansions of career pathway programs at 10 vocational-technical schools will provide training and job placement for more than 800 adults.

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.

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
All Job Seekers and Businesses	Unified MassHire brand across all career centers in the Commonwealth to help customers identify where public workforce development services can be	Improve and integrate MassHire and partner data systems to create operational efficiencies, as well as bolster the system's

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
MassHire Career Centers (MCCs) and MassHire Workforce Boards	accessed; unifies MassHire staff across workforce system to enhance and streamline the customer experience. USDOL resources integrated under one roof for "one-stop" for customers in all MCCs. Local "Umbrella" MOUs developed and signed by all required WIOA partners ensures locally driven, integrated workforce system. "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. 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.). "Customer Centered Design" elements integrated into the MCC to enhance the customer experience. One common data system (Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) - coordinate, schedule, monitor and	analytical capacity. Work in progress. More demand for subsidized training vouchers for customers compared to need. Demand has waned during COVID. MA is analyzing the landscape to determine strategies and actions toward increased training opportunities in target sectors. 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.). 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. Integrated education and training models for partner customers (e.g. ABE students).

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
	report on virtually all service activities. 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-service activities that augment the spectrum of staff supported services at MCCs. Workforce Connect *(in development)* – to allow job seekers to see their data across multiple partner organizations' systems. 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. 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. Regional planning also aligns strategic initiatives and funding to locally driven regional blueprints for create career pathway	To provide career pathway opportunities to those with challenges to employment through registered apprenticeship expansion. To better track and match job candidates to available jobs through enhanced applicant tracking capabilities. For streamlined business experience to position the workforce system as an attractive resource to meeting a business' workforce needs.

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
	opportunities for customers of the workforce system. Availability of multiple labor market tools to help inform job seekers decisions related to careers or business needs. **These include:** 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. Transferrable Occupational Relationship Quotient (TORQ): An easy to navigate, easy to understand career exploration tool based on O*NET occupational competency profiles. 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. 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	

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
	workers they employ. WorkKeys Curriculum in MCCs offer an opportunity for job seekers to enhance foundational workplace competencies (reading, math, and graphic literacy) as well as soft skills and financial literacy. Tool is also shared with many Adult Education programs. Registered Apprenticeship Expansion creates more career pathway opportunities for shared customers in the workforce system.	
Resources and Services for Individuals Receiving TAFDC **Department Transitional Assistance Employment Services Programs**	Work Program Participant Program (WPP) leverages the resources and expertise of DTA and MassHire services to boost employment outcomes for people on public benefits. Legislative reforms assist in smoothing transition period from receiving public benefits to economically self-sufficient families. Improved performance regarding labor participation rates. 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	Resources for occupational skills training or career pathways is limited. Resources do not match demand. Limited number of providers in rural areas creates barriers to those with transportation issues a limited number of entry points for TAFDC customers. Clients experience "Cliff Effects" challenges as they seek employment while on public benefits. To leverage partnerships and collective workforce system resources to serve clients of various needs.

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
	DTA case managers.	
Adult Education	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. 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. Adult Education supports postsecondary success through the Transition to College programs. Adult Career Pathways programs provide an opportunity for MassHire (Boards and Career Centers) to collaborate regionally on creating career pathways for Adult Education students. Out-stationing (an Adult Education staff person onsite at a MCC has been institutionalized over the years and connects MCC with the Adult Education system. Adult learners are exposed to level appropriate workforce preparation activities that help them plan for next steps after Adult	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. To deepen relationship with workforce system partners to ensure productive student multi-year engagement (e.g. career pathway development, etc.) To support the out-stationing model with a system to track referrals and cross agency collaborations. To partner with the Adult Education and workforce systems connect Adult Career Pathways participants to relevant training, apprenticeships, and jobs. To scale up successful regional integrated education and training (adult career pathways) models that leverage training resources for Adult Education students.

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
	Education services. 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. 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. Many MCCs have been mapping out service pathways for adult learners across adult education and MassHire, establishing referral protocols and cross agency collaborations.	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. To continue connecting Adult Education out-of-school youth population with YouthWorks programs.
Re-Entry Services	Excellent coordination at local level with sheriff's departments to provide career center services for incarcerated job seekers. Some Career Centers support long term relationships with businesses owners willing to hire individuals with criminal records, initiated through proactive business outreach. MCCs are increasingly viewing the	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. Anti-carceral youth organizations (e.g. UTEC in

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
	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.	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. 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 accessible to individuals in prisons and jails.
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. 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. To engage vocational rehabilitation services to align with state and regional priority industries and occupations. To create avenues of

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
	MRC piloted a project with MassHire to create opportunities for MRC customers to engage in occupational skills training. MRC has partnered with MassHire BizWorks to streamline employer engagement and engage in joint professional development for staff.	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** **High-Quality College and Career Pathways/Perkins** **Connecting Activities** **Youth Works**	The program operates at a large scale and impacts thousands of young people each year. In-school youth age 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. WIOA Title I is designed to serve youth with barriers to entering employment as well as completing education. Through WIOA Title I, youth are	For better alignment with other publicly funded workforce development programs. For better alignment of occupational skills training to priority industries and occupations. To build capacity for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. To engage more private-sector employers could be engaged and provide subsidized, partially subsidized or unsubsidized employment opportunities for teens. To focus on job quality of the job placement and career growth for young people. To align programmatic

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
	provided with opportunities and resources that prepare them for successful participation in the labor force. • Connectivity with target industries and occupations as identified through Regional Planning • Identification of standards for high- quality career-connected youth programming • Direct engagement and coordination between MassHire Workforce Boards and local high schools • Use of shared workforce preparation tools, such as Signal Success, across youth workforce programs The program provides work readiness training through a formal curriculum. Transitioning from a summer employment program to a year-round program.	standards for in-school youth with out-of-school youth. To streamline workforce services across the in-school and out-of-school youth program spectrum. 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.

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
	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. 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. There is alignment with Connecting Activities and other strategic partnerships with key workforce and education programs. A renewed focus on private sector	

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
	employer engagement strategy to strengthen existing local partnerships and open doors to new opportunities especially in priority sectors. Staff will receive professional development to support leadership and career development for young adults and engage existing and potential employers.	
Services for Older Workers **Senior Community Service Employment Program**	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. Provides career pathways and skill upgrading through the community service assignment for otherwise chronically unemployed individuals with multiple barriers to employment. Fosters individual economic self-sufficiency, and social and emotional well-being. Cross-training and professional development with partner agencies (e.g. MassHire, MRC) have improved staff skill set.	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. To leverage workforce partners to provide access to wider services and opportunities.
Talent Pipeline Initiatives for Business	Directly supports training for jobs that are in demand.	To leverage registered apprenticeship, WIOA,

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund	WCTF funding has focused on populations with challenges to employment, including those experiencing "cliff effects" (Learn to Earn.) Leverages private sector investments (there is a 30% required match.) 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. Now has a recurring revenue stream through the Workforce Training Fund leads to stability of this funding.	youth funding, and other federal funding streams to provide training for jobs in demand. To streamline industry sector partnerships to priority industries and occupations as identified through Regional Planning.
Talent Pipeline Initiatives for Business **Workforce Training Fund**	Dedicated funding for Incumbent Worker training tied to a business need that is related to competitive position and growth. Business-friendly and allows for the strengthening of employer relationships. Supports small businesses through the General Program, Express program, and Small Business Direct Access program. Express Program Course Directory provides a compendium of approved courses and makes it	Application process can be slow for businesses without human resources capacity. To align the Express Program Course Directory with Eligible Training Provider List as well as a Credential of Value list (in development).

Workforce Development Activity	Strengths	Opportunity
	easier for businesses to identify relevant training for employees.	

[1] "Two-Generation Playbook"Ascend, The Aspen Institute (ascend.aspendinstitute.org)

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

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 <u>families</u> 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.

- 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 strategic direction of the Workforce Skills Cabinet and the impact of the WIOA Workforce Development Partner network. State and regional partners will work to implement the following goals and strategies in pursuit of achieving the established vision for the workforce system. Many of the specific programmatic details are

included in the Operational Planning Elements and Program Specific Requirements for Core Programs. In addition, to support integrated partnership, the State Plan Advisory Committee established a statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Attachment C-1) to reaffirm 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).

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commonwealth recognizes the importance of education, skill development, and training to support a thriving workforce and healthy economy. 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 educational, societal, and economic challenges receive access to education, high-quality training programs and necessary supports that will lead to sustainable careers and competitive wages. 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.

Massachusetts will employ the following strategies and tactics to pursue this goal:

Strategy 1: 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 support and expand work-based learning programs, such as Registered Apprenticeship, as a method to strengthen the workforce. Work-based learning – combining technical skills training with applied work experiences -- deliver strong employability skills and builds the work history for individuals needed to enter the workforce or for re-careering into new fields. To support expansion of work-based learning and career pathway programming efforts, the Commonwealth will continue to expand workforce programming that offer work-based learning and career pathway programs in priority industries and occupations with successful employment placement outcomes.

Since 2018 Massachusetts has sought to expand Registered Apprenticeship in the Commonwealth as a signature effort to develop talent pipelines for in-demand industries and occupations. In 2018, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development launched a Strategic Plan for Apprenticeship Expansion in Massachusetts that outlines a systematic approach to using Registered Apprenticeship to pursue talent development, retention, and diversification of the workforce. Massachusetts continues to focus on implementing the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan applying new apprenticeship grant resources toward 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. As a result, 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, and MassStep (see "Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery"), Massachusetts seeks to spur career pathway development by increasing access to training for adult learners in high-demand/high-impact fields. These upskilling efforts will become more critical as the workforce system strives to connect job seekers, particularly those most impacted by COVID-19 (low-income workers, women, older workers, people with disabilities, to industries and occupations that are thriving in the Commonwealth's growing economy and that offer livable, family-sustaining wages.

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 levering 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 braining state and federal funding to support adults engaged in the 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 toward a more systematic approach of ensuring that all job seekers receive access to career readiness and employability skills.

Through these system modernizing efforts in the Employment Modernization and Transformation Project, 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.

In pursuit of this goal, 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; Massachsuetts 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 is 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.

While some of these efforts were put on hiatus during the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Massachusetts Workforce system plans to continue efforts to focus on industry-recognized credentials in the coming years. Clear information and guidance on industry recognized credentials is a cornerstone of the tremendous upskilling effort to meet market demand. This work will not only be integrated into the workforce system modernization project, but it will be a key aspect of a streamlined and scaled-up career development network across MassHire and partners. Moreover, credential clarity and credential crosswalks from other states, countries and the military are needed for those individuals who are new to the state, new to the country, or new to civilian life gain a foothold in the Massachusetts labor market. It will be vital that Massachusetts leverage this work on credential attainment to create pathways for skilled individuals to enter into comparable skilled positions in Massachusetts companies.

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 2: 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 Massachusetts workforce development partnership will conduct cross-training of partner program services, to enhance customer access and navigation across various programs, agencies, and programs . 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 encouraged 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 3: 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.

The State Partner Advisory Committee will has also worked to expand the workforce development partnership beyond required WIOA-partners to address barriers to employment for priority populations. New partners in the network include the Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP) to address the needs of low-income families, and the Department of Youth Services to serve justice-involved youth. The partnership will also seek to create partnerships in with agencies engaged in health care (e.g. Massachusetts State Health Connector), public transportation, and public housing. These safety net services are critical to ensuring economic stability and mobility for Massachusetts workers, particulary for priority populations.

Tactic 2: Convene the 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 develop effective on ramps to employment. 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. Business is also a key stakeholder in addressing challenges to obtaining and retaining employment. As Massachusetts scales up workforce training by streamlining upskilling opportunities, it will be critical to develop communication channels with businesses to know what skills and abilities are most needed, and what training programs are most effective and reliable in developing a talent pipeline. The Employment Modernization and

Transformation Project seeks to harness this business intelligence to provide accurate information to the job seeker on training programs that align with their job and career goals. (See "Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery", and Goal III: Business Customer.)

In addition, partnerships with business are necessary to addressing workforce sustainability to mitigate attrition and boost worker retention. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent Great Resignation has drawn more attention to job quality, focusing on characteristics such as compensation, benefits, life/work balance, and worker autonomy. Through the Reinventing Work Initiative, the Commonwealth seeks to work hand-in-hand with businesses on addressing job quality to ensure that both workers and businesses can thrive in the Commonwealth. (See Goal III: Business Customer).

Tactic 3: 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 4: Explore additional resources and supports needed to enable workforce participation

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the reality that job seekers have varying career aspirations and life circumstances that impact their labor force participation. In response, the Commonwealth will continue to explore the supports that are needed to enable worker participation and will seek avenues to address gaps. For example, caregiving was a critical barrier for caregiver-workers, especially women, who dropped out of the labor force because their working environment was not compatible with their caregiving responsibilities. Another area of exploration includes providing pay or stipends for job seekers who experience a loss of income while they are engaged in training and seeking employment. Additionally, looking at non-traditional employment models, such as entrepreneurship or part-time work, is another area for further work. Also in this category is providing training and support for working in an increasingly digital world. This includes digital literacy, coaching around remote work, and navigation in an online world. Collectively, these efforts will help to grow the labor force in Massachusetts in a manner that meet worker preferences, needs, and circumstances.

Strategy 4: Pioneer cutting-edge supports for public assistance recipients to incentivize work and address labor gaps

Tactic 1: 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 2: 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 3: 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 contextof 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 5: 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 – 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 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 (2nd shift/after school hours) and for adults (3rd 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 developedSignal 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 theMassachusetts 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.

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 CTI Collaboratives to bridge the programmatic divide between in-school and out-of-school youth programming geared toward career pathways in target industries and occupational groups.

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 1: 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 intends to develop a self-directed and mobile-friendly internet-based system to increase the ease with which an employer navigates workforce services. The workforce system will then build on this system to simplify access to business-focused programs, supports and services with the effect of minimizing the burden on businesses to understand, access /apply, and deploy the resources.

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 communication system will increase business access to workforce services and diversify business engagement among the Commonwealth's businesses. A technologically based communication system can also help to support direct business-to-business contact and collaboration among businesses. This could yield industry-supported consortium training, or streamline re-careering for job seekers who

are looking to enter a new field. with This may be in the form of a technological platform, social media, email blasts newsletters, or in-person convenings.

In addition to a tech 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 2: Improve talent recruitment systems and processes to enhance job matching.

Tactic 1: 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 use the Employment Modernization and Transformation project to adopt technology tools 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.

Additionally, technology tools can be utilized by businesses as a way to communicate to job seekers, the workforce system, training providers and other stakeholders. As discussed in the Adult Job Seeker goal, technological tools can be used by businesses to identify in-demand skills and abilities, as well as the training programs that deliver on building talent pipelines. This direct business feedback will help shape training curricula to ensure training is relevant and responsive to current needs, and it will ensure workforce system investments are cost-effective and yielding successful employment outcomes.

STRATEGY 3: 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. Through the efforts in the tactics below, the Commonwealth seeks to ensure that both businesses and workers thrive and experience economic prosperity.

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 Great Recession 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: MODERNIZING THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

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. The Massachusetts Workforce Development system intends to build on this work and continue to modernize the system to yield more efficient and effective workforce services.

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

Any new or current technological tool brings risks in security in 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. While a fully integrated system across all workforce partners will take many years, and many phases to accomplish, the Massachusetts Workforce Development system will continue to explore avenues to pursue this vision.

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 many initiatives, including the Road to Remployment 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. Meanwhile, workforce system partner agencies have adopted a hybrid service delivery model, also adopting new technological tools to streamline access and enhance service delivery. As the broader workforce system explores a fully-integrated, comprehensive system, attention will be focused on connecting existing system to ensure the system maintains a customer-centered, shared customer experience.

Tactic 5: 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 outlines these statewide metrics for each goal. (See Attachment H for a definition of these state-driven metrics.) While the Commonwealth maintains the goal to capture, track, and report on these statewide metrics, we currently does not have the data systems to do so. This would rely on realizing the Employment Modernization and Transformation Project's vision of a robust, fully-integrated system. Thus, the remaining two years of this State Plan will be focused on achieving the technological transformation needed to capture these statewide metrics. In the interim, workforce system partners will work together to identify existing data to capture as many metrics as possible.

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 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

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

Modernizing the System
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.

C. STATE STRATEGY

The state strategies in the 2020-2024 WIOA Combined Plan flow from four key goals identified for the Commonwealth. The four goals identified below build on the strategies and impact resulting from the 2017-2020 Combined State Plan and provide strategies and tactics for optimal impact to job seekers and business. 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 refined the current statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (Attachment I) 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).

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commonwealth recognizes the importance of education, skill development, and training to support a thriving workforce and healthy economy. 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 educational, societal, and economic challenges receive access to education, high-quality training programs and necessary supports that will lead to sustainable careers and competitive wages. 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.

Massachusetts will employ the following strategies and tactics to pursue this goal:

Strategy 1: 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 support and expand work-based learning programs, such as Registered Apprenticeship, as a method to strengthen the workforce. Work-based learning – combining technical skills training with applied work experiences -- deliver strong employability skills and builds the work history for individuals needed to enter the workforce or for re-careering into new fields. To support expansion of work-based learning and career pathway programming efforts, the Commonwealth will continue to expand workforce programming that offer work-based learning and career pathway programs in priority industries and occupations with successful employment placement outcomes.

Since 2018 Massachusetts has sought to expand Registered Apprenticeship in the Commonwealth as a signature effort to develop talent pipelines for in-demand industries and occupations. In 2018, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development launched a Strategic Plan for Apprenticeship Expansion in Massachusetts that outlines a systematic approach to using Registered Apprenticeship to pursue talent development, retention, and diversification of the workforce. Massachusetts continues to focus on implementing the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan applying new apprenticeship grant resources toward 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. As a result, 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, and MassStep (see "Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery"), Massachusetts seeks to spur career pathway development by increasing access to training for adult learners in high-demand/high-impact fields. These upskilling efforts will become more critical as the workforce system strives to connect job seekers, particularly those most impacted by COVID-19 (low-income workers, women, older workers, people with disabilities, to industries and occupations that are thriving in the Commonwealth's growing economy and that offer livable, family-sustaining wages.

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 levering 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 braining state and federal funding to support adults engaged in the 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 toward a more systematic approach of ensuring that all job seekers receive access to career readiness and employability skills.

Through these system modernizing efforts in the Employment Modernization and Transformation Project, 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.

In pursuit of this goal, 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; Massachsuetts 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 is 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.

While some of these efforts were put on hiatus during the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Massachusetts Workforce system plans to continue efforts to focus on industry-recognized credentials in the coming years. Clear information and guidance on industry recognized credentials is a cornerstone of the tremendous upskilling effort to meet market demand. This work will not only be integrated into the workforce system modernization

project, but it will be a key aspect of a streamlined and scaled-up career development network across MassHire and partners. Moreover, credential clarity and credential crosswalks from other states, countries and the military are needed for those individuals who are new to the state, new to the country, or new to civilian life gain a foothold in the Massachusetts labor market. It will be vital that Massachusetts leverage this work on credential attainment to create pathways for skilled individuals to enter into comparable skilled positions in Massachusetts companies.

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 2: 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 Massachusetts workforce development partnership will conduct cross-training of partner program services, to enhance customer access and navigation across various programs, agencies, and programs . 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 encouraged 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 3: 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.

The State Partner Advisory Committee will has also worked to expand the workforce development partnership beyond required WIOA-partners to address barriers to employment for priority populations. New partners in the network include the Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP) to address the needs of low-income families, and the Department of Youth Services to serve justice-involved youth. The partnership will also seek to create partnerships in with agencies engaged in health care (e.g. Massachusetts State Health Connector), public transportation, and public housing. These safety net services are critical to ensuring economic stability and mobility for Massachusetts workers, particulary for priority populations.

Tactic 2: Convene the 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 develop effective on ramps to employment. 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. Business is also a key stakeholder in addressing challenges to obtaining and retaining employment. As Massachusetts scales up workforce training by streamlining upskilling opportunities, it will be critical to develop communication channels with businesses to know what skills and abilities are most needed, and what training programs are most effective and reliable in developing a talent pipeline. The Employment Modernization and Transformation Project seeks to harness this business intelligence to provide accurate information to the job seeker on training programs that align with their job and career goals. (See "Massachusetts COVID-19 Response: Partnerships for Recovery", and Goal III: Business Customer.)

In addition, partnerships with business are necessary to addressing workforce sustainability to mitigate attrition and boost worker retention. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent Great Resignation has drawn more attention to job quality, focusing on characteristics such as compensation, benefits, life/work balance, and worker autonomy. Through the Reinventing Work Initiative, the Commonwealth seeks to work hand-in-hand with businesses on addressing job quality to ensure that both workers and businesses can thrive in the Commonwealth. (See Goal III: Business Customer).

Tactic 3: 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 4: Explore additional resources and supports needed to enable workforce participation

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the reality that job seekers have varying career aspirations and life circumstances that impact their labor force participation. In response, the Commonwealth will continue to explore the supports that are needed to enable worker participation and will seek avenues to address gaps. For example, caregiving was a critical barrier for caregiver-workers, especially women, who dropped out of the labor force because their working environment was not compatible with their caregiving responsibilities. Another area of exploration includes providing pay or stipends for job seekers who experience a loss of income while they are engaged in training and seeking employment. Additionally, looking at non-traditional employment models, such as entrepreneurship or part-time work, is another area for further work. Also in this category is providing training and support for working in an increasingly digital world. This includes digital literacy, coaching around remote work, and navigation in an online world. Collectively, these efforts will help to grow the labor force in Massachusetts in a manner that meet worker preferences, needs, and circumstances.

Strategy 4: Pioneer cutting-edge supports for public assistance recipients to incentivize work and address labor gaps

Tactic 1: 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 2: 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 3: 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 contextof 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 5: 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 – 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 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 (2nd shift/after school hours) and for adults (3rd 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 developedSignal 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 theMassachusetts 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.

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 CTI Collaboratives to bridge the

programmatic divide between in-school and out-of-school youth programming geared toward career pathways in target industries and occupational groups.

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 1: 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 intends to develop a self-directed and mobile-friendly internet-based system to increase the ease with which an employer navigates workforce services. The workforce system will then build on this system to simplify access to business-focused programs, supports and services with the effect of minimizing the burden on businesses to understand, access /apply, and deploy the resources.

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 communication system will increase business access to workforce services and diversify business engagement among the Commonwealth's businesses. A technologically based communication system can also help to support direct business-to-business contact and collaboration among businesses. This could yield industry-supported consortium training, or streamline re-careering for job seekers who are looking to enter a new field. with This may be in the form of a technological platform, social media, email blasts newsletters, or in-person convenings.

In addition to a tech 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 2: Improve talent recruitment systems and processes to enhance job matching.

Tactic 1: 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 use the Employment Modernization and Transformation project to adopt technology tools 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.

Additionally, technology tools can be utilized by businesses as a way to communicate to job seekers, the workforce system, training providers and other stakeholders. As discussed in the Adult Job Seeker goal, technological tools can be used by businesses to identify in-demand skills and abilities, as well as the training programs that deliver on building talent pipelines. This direct business feedback will help shape training curricula to ensure training is relevant and responsive to current needs, and it will ensure workforce system investments are cost-effective and yielding successful employment outcomes.

STRATEGY 3: 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. Through the efforts in the tactics below, the Commonwealth seeks to ensure that both businesses and workers thrive and experience economic prosperity.

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 Great Recession 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: MODERNIZING THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

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. The Massachusetts Workforce Development system intends to build on this work and continue to modernize the system to yield more efficient and effective workforce services.

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

Any new or current technological tool brings risks in security in 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. While a fully integrated system across all workforce partners will take many years, and many phases to accomplish, the Massachusetts Workforce Development system will continue to explore avenues to pursue this vision.

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 many initiatives, including the Road to Remployment 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. Meanwhile, workforce system partner agencies have adopted a hybrid service delivery model, also adopting new technological tools to streamline access and enhance service delivery. As the broader workforce system explores a fully-integrated, comprehensive system, attention will be focused on connecting existing system to ensure the system maintains a customer-centered, shared customer experience.

Tactic 5: 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.

Updated Response: MA appreciates the technical assistance provided.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

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 Massachsuetts Rehabilitation Commission or the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, as well as a business and industry reprentative to maintain majority business membership. Legislation to make this change was filed in February 2022 and is pending legislative approval.

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.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY

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
- *Shared WIOA infrastructure costs* between WIOA programs and MassHire Career Centers
- *Guide the maintenance and growth of* ***16 local area MOUs*** that delineate the partnerships and service delivery systems at the local level. The Local Umbrella MOUs are dynamic documents that have been updated twice since WIOA implementation.

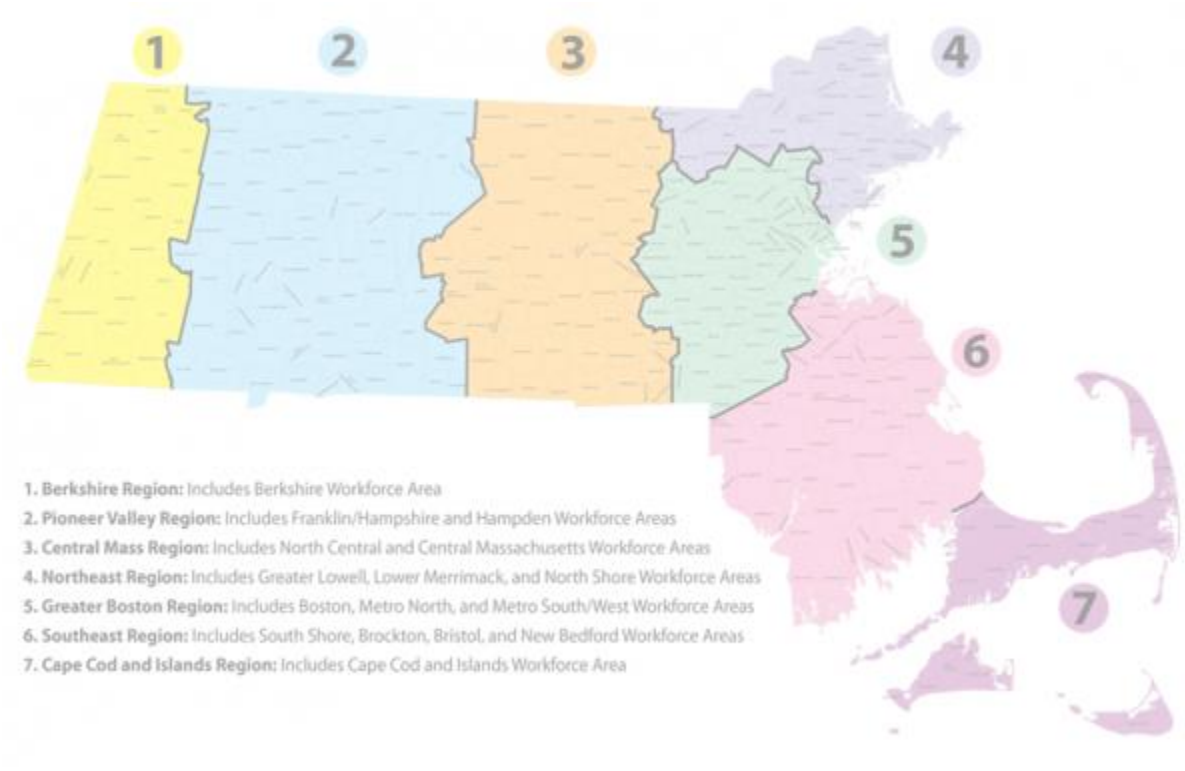
As part of the State Combined Plan Process, the State Umbrella MOU, signed by 19 Cabinet Secretaries and Agency Heads, has been updated to align with the new plan.

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.

Teams updated the Regional Planning Blueprints and reported these updates to the WSC Secretaries in the Spring of 2019 and will continue to work at refining/updating information to inform regional goals, strategies and outcomes.

Figure 49: Massachusetts State Planning Regions



MassHire Workforce Board Certification

Responding to the requirements of WIOA (20 CFR Part 679 Subpart C), the Commonwealth enhanced its strategy to continue to strengthen the capacity of the MassHire Workforce Boards by examining the challenges posed by the changing economic landscape and the needs of industry and businesses. Massachusetts continues to drive improvements for the workforce system through high standards of excellence for MassHire Workforce Boards.

The Massachusetts biennial workforce board certification process augments the standards required for certification, the genesis of which was the 2008 "High Performing Workforce Board" initiative.

The process presents a measurable set of statewide standards intended to demonstrate the continual growth and responsiveness of the MassHire Workforce Development System.

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

MassHire Workforce Board certification criteria promote 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.

MassHire Career Center Certification

WIOA 20 CFR §678.800 requires that the MassHire Career Centers be certified by the Local Boards, and that the State Board, in consultation with chief elected officials and Local Boards establish objective criteria and procedures for use by the MassHire Workforce Boards (MWB) when certifying MassHire Career Centers (MCC). The Massachusetts career center standards. consistent with the Governor's and State Board's guidance and vision, evaluate the MassHire Career Center delivery system for effectiveness in addressing business and job seeker needs in Massachusetts' business-driven workforce delivery system. Massachusetts' first round of career center certification included categories of cost effectiveness, integrated services, accessibility, effective leadership, performance and responsiveness to the demand driven model. The standards are key indicators of career center fitness, effectiveness and quality service implementation.

The certification process demonstrates that the MWBs oversee the delivery of employment and training programs and business services in their communities through a quality lens and ensure that MCCs are operating at the highest level of effectiveness and sustainability. The certification process gives the MWB the opportunity to make a formal assessment of the local service delivery system based on the established standards. Certification is one way to ensure a consistent level of quality in the services provided by each MCC, statewide.

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 https://www.mass.gov/doc/competitive-selection-of-operatorservice-provider-of-one-stop-career-center

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts authorizes/empowers the 16 MassHire Workforce Boards (Local Boards) as the entities to conduct the competition to procure a MassHire Career Center Operator/Service Provider within their Local Workforce Area (Local Area), pursuant to their responsibility under sec. 107(d)(10)(A); sec. 121(d)(2)(A) of WIOA; COFAR/Uniform Circular 2 CFR 200 and MassWorkforce Issuance 100 DCS 01-102 (Procurement and Contracting)https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2016/08/sy/01-102.pdf.

This authorization is limited to permitting the Local Boards to conduct the procurement of the operator or operator/service provider, only. It recognizes the Local Board's authority and negotiating and oversight roles, but does not empower local boards outside that authority and role to execute MassHire operator contracts or contracts for operator space, nor relieve Local Boards from compliance with municipal rules and the CEO-designated authority of the Fiscal Agent.

Local Boards use a competitive process that fulfills the requirements of sec. 121(d)(2)(A) of WIOA while remaining consistent with the principles of competitive procurement set forth in the Uniform Administrative Guidance set out at 2CFR 200.318 through 200.326 and MassWorkforce Issuance 100 DCS 01-102 (Procurement and Contracting). At the conclusion of the competitive process, the recommendation to award a contract to the selected MassHire Lead Operator/Service Provider is to be ratified by a quorum-vote of the full Local Workforce Board at a properly posted public meeting.

The Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD)/MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) will continue to provide extensive written and in-person guidance in advance of and during the procurement process.

The Jobs for Veterans State Grant

Title 38, United States Code, Section 4102A (b) 5 (38 U.S.C. §4102A (b) 5) authorizes funds provided to each state to staff and support Disabled Veteran Outreach Program, (DVOP) specialists and Local Veteran Employment Representatives, (LVER) staff. The Jobs for Veterans State Grant, (JVSG) is a formula based formula grant to 54 State Workforce Agencies (SWAs) to hire dedicated staff to provide individualized career and training-related services to veterans and eligible persons with significant barriers to employment, (SBE) and to assist employers fill their workforce needs with job-seeking veterans.

DVOP services include comprehensive assessments, development of an individual employment plan, career planning services, job referrals and job development. The LVER is a fully integrated member of the Business Services Team who promotes veteran hiring to employers, employer associations, and employer resource groups. The LVER conducts job development for veterans, with an emphasis on SBE Veterans.

JVSG staff are fully integrated into the MassHire Career Center System. All SBE Veterans seeking employment receive individual career services within the framework of career planning. In addition to the Massachusetts One Stop Employment System, (Moses), JVSG staff receive daily job openings from Vet Central by Direct Employers Association for federal contactors throughout Massachusetts. These openings are received by area JVSG staff and shared with MassHire Business Services and Career Center staff. JVSG veterans will be co-enrolled into applicable programs based on individual needs and program eligibility requirements.

The JVSG Program relies on many partnerships to locate, serve, and improve employment outcomes for Massachusetts veterans with significant barriers to employment. JVSG staff have a robust partner network of service providers that aid veterans by providing supportive services. These services range from housing and financial assistance to assisting ex-offenders to reenter the workplace. There are currently seven formal Veteran Collaborative Organizations in Massachusetts assisting area veterans and their families. These regional veteran partners include federal, state, and community based organizations. Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are quickly referred to our Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program partners, (HVRP) for supportive services such as housing, and job ready HVRP veterans are referred to DVOP staff for employment services. HVRP veterans include, returning citizens, homeless or at risk for homeless, homeless and female veterans and veterans with families. There are five HVRP Grantees in Massachusetts. Service connected disabled veterans whose disability limits their employment potential are referred to the Veterans Affairs Veterans Readiness and Employment Program, (VR&E). Last Program Year we have served 172 VR&E Veterans. Our staff also provides labor market information for those entering the VR&E program so their rehabilitation plan includes up to date LMI. Upon program completion all VR&E veterans are referred to DVOP staff for employment assistance. Veterans who do not meet VR&E eligibility are referred to our MRC partners for assistance.

The JVSG Program uses monthly and quarterly reports to help us assess our overall effectiveness. JVSG and supervisory staff receive individual and quarterly trainings help us to increase staff knowledge, improve processes, and performance outcomes. We also provide specific labor market information to individual regions on job availability, required skill sets, and available trainings that fill skill gaps for those open positions. Data on veteran population is also provided to address SBE veteran outreach in the community. Our post covid JVSG performance outcomes have been recognized by U.S. Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Service, (DOL/ VETS) as one of three states that improved all three performance outcomes in program year 2022.

The JVSG Incentive Award Program assists us in recognizing promising practices and promotes continuous improvement. This yearly award recognizes the entire workforce teams for their contributions to improve the service delivery and outcomes for veterans. Success stories are included on our State Quarterly Reports and are shared with MassHire staff.

Massachusetts recognizes our veterans to be a valuable component of the workforce. We have the Valor Act to ensure veterans receive academic and vocational credit for their military training and experiences while in the Armed Forces, as well as ensuring credit is applied for credentialing, licensure and certifications. We are committed to streamlining the process so that veterans can transition into the workforce quickly with the proper employment credentials.

FY2022 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 FY2021 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 an initial $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.

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).

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 FY22, with an infusion of an additional $550,000 into the MassHire Career Center system.

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.

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

State partners – both mandatory WIOA partners and optional partners like economic development, education, human service 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).

Updated Response

MA appreciated the technical assistance provided.

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

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 MOUteams, 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:

- Staff training on issues and resource regarding disabilities.
- Benefits planning for individuals on either SSI or SSDI.
- Engagement with MassMatch the state's assistive technology agency.
- Exposure to Employment Networks and Ticket to Work.
- Implementation of IRTs (Individual Resource Teams).
- 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; 1st 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 Veterans 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 theU.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.

MA Response:

MA appreciates the technical assistance provided.

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

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:

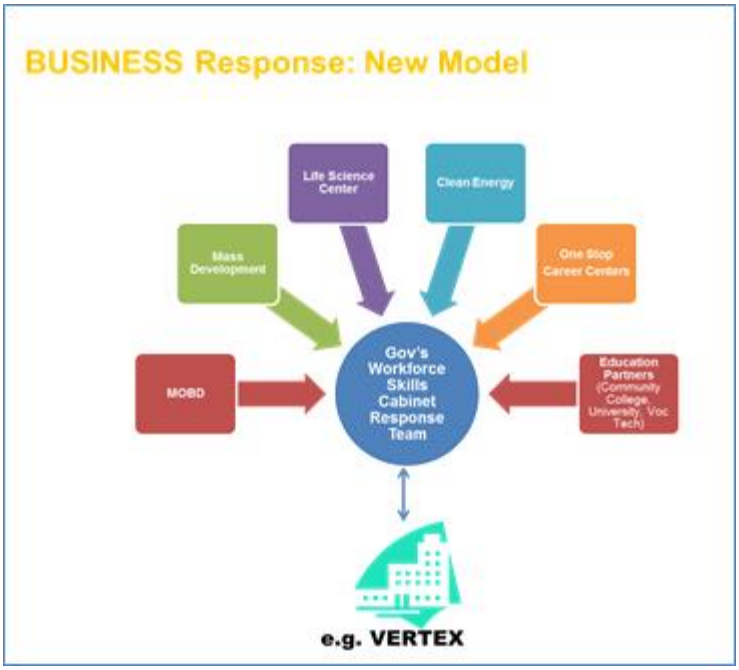
1. There is “no wrong door” for business services; business assessments are consistent, regardless of the entry point.
2. A single point of contact within a coordinated regional structure/strategy is a key business-serving tenet.
3. All staff, regardless of their role, are to be well versed in the leading 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.

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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

See below in section H Improving Access to Post-secondary Credentials.

G. LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

See below in section H Improving Access to Post-secondary Credentials.

H. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

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 the our state strategies engage education partners include:

- *Tri-Chairs for the Workforce Skills Cabinet Regional* Team, lead 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

Updated Response:

MA appreciates the technical assistance provided.

I. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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 teamsled 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.

B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

See response below.

1. THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF–

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.

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. MDCS and DTA operate an interface between BEACON and MOSES by which MDCS 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.

2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (E.G., CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

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:

- All partners have a joint funding responsibility to support and maintain an effective local integrated service delivery system
- The major funding sources (WIOA and W-P) were distributed through a federal formula process
- State Partner funds had certain imposed caps on funding for infrastructure costs
- All other funding was part of specific grant funds, e.g., Jobs for Veterans State Grant, NDWGs, TAA etc. with specific guidelines
- Technically, local partner staff did not have the authority to negotiate infrastructure or shared cost
- Local Partners did have the authority to negotiate through MOU and budget process the use of the funds, individualized based upon each Partners' contribution
- 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
- This process allowed Local Partners to focus on customer service
- 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 the 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 sharedand 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

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

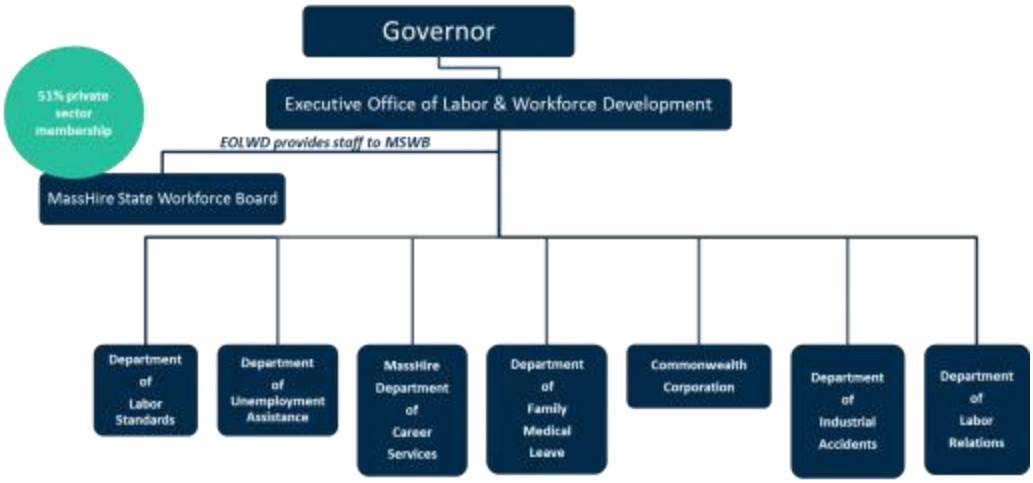
The Governor serves as the grant recipient for the Commonwealth. The Governor appoints most members of the MassHire State Workforce Board (State Board) [1] who in conjunction with the Governor provide leadership across the workforce system to ensure businesses secure a skilled workforce. The Executive 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.

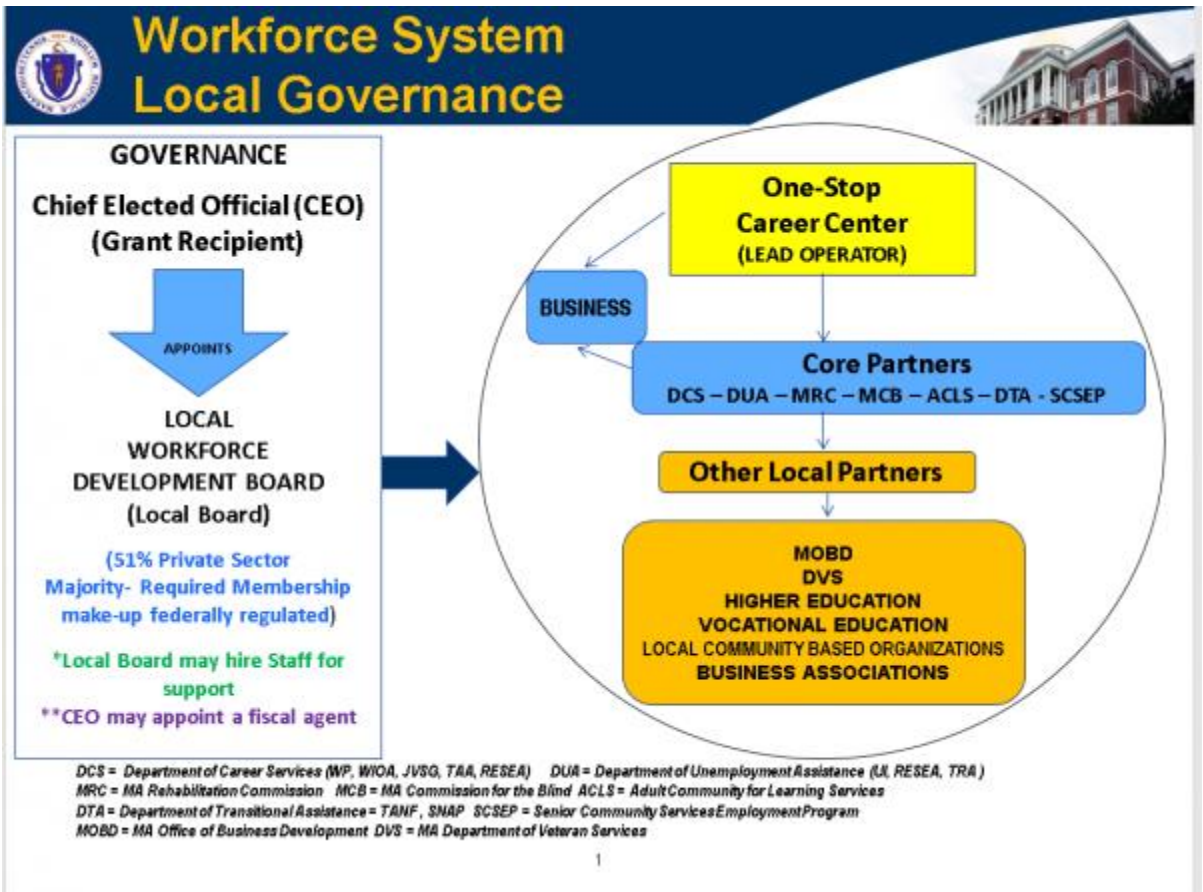
Figure 51: Massachusetts Workforce System Governance Structure



[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

Updated Response:

Please also see MA Workforce System Local Governance Structure with WIOA Partners.



Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Organizational Structure

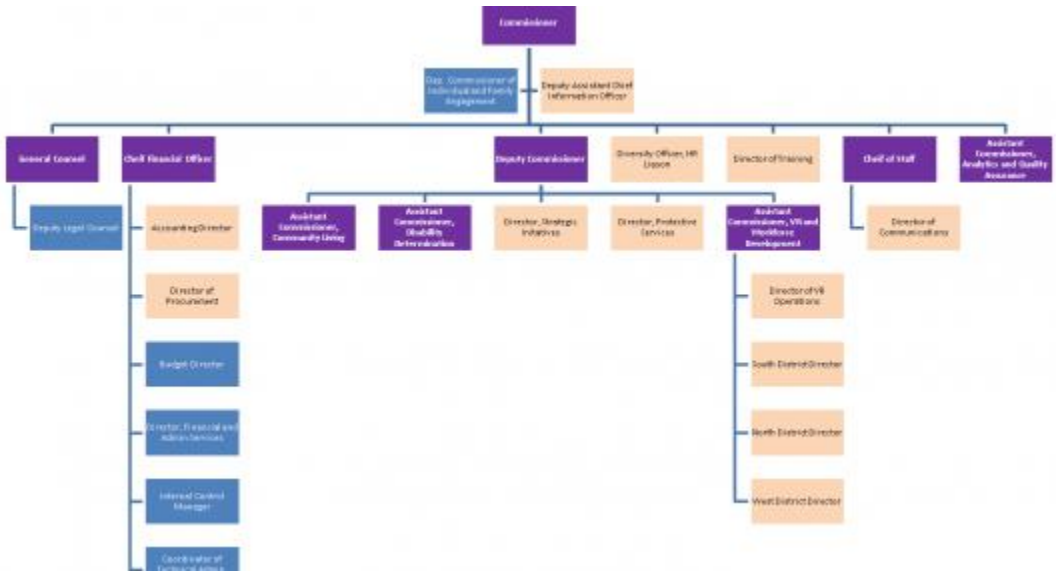
The Massachusetts Commission (MRC) assists individuals with disabilities to live and work independently in the community. The Executive Office of Health and Human Services has oversight the MRC.

As a key partner in the statewide Workforce Investment system, MRC continues to work towards strengthening the alignment of the Vocational Rehabilitation (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:

1. Design career pathways across partners aligned with business demand;
2. Improve foundational skills and transition to postsecondary education and training for individuals with barriers to employment;
3. Assist individuals to achieve economic self-sufficiency through support services, labor market driven credentialing, and employment; and
4. Meet the needs of job seekers and businesses who engage in the public workforce system (including partner programs).

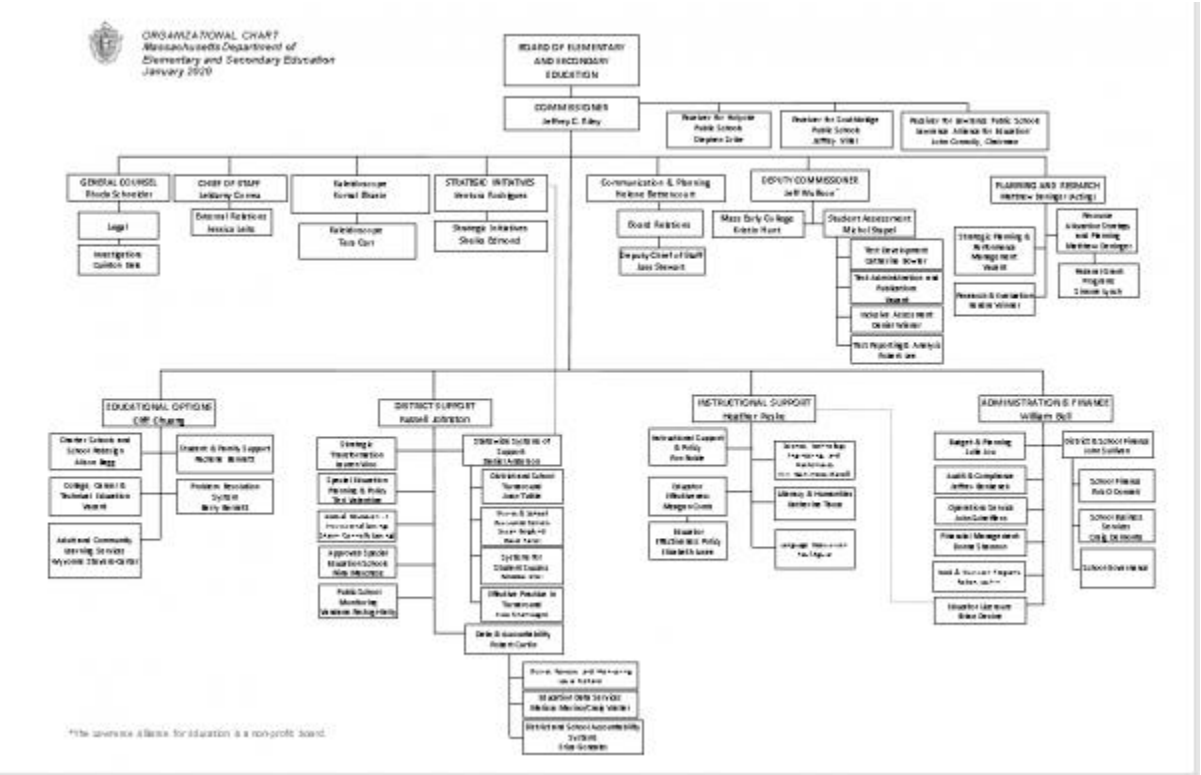
As part of implementing strategies to meet this common vision, MRC is collaborating with other core partners in the workforce investment system to reduce unemployment of individuals with disabilities, to provide effective services to employers throughout the state, and to seek out collaborative opportunities, including possible projects and grants that may assist individuals with disabilities across Massachusetts in obtaining competitive employment.



Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Organizational Structure

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind falls within the purview of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The agency provides vocational rehabilitation services through six regional offices: Boston Region, Metrowest Region, Northeast Region, Southeast Region, Central Region, and Western Region.

Adult Education Organizational Structure

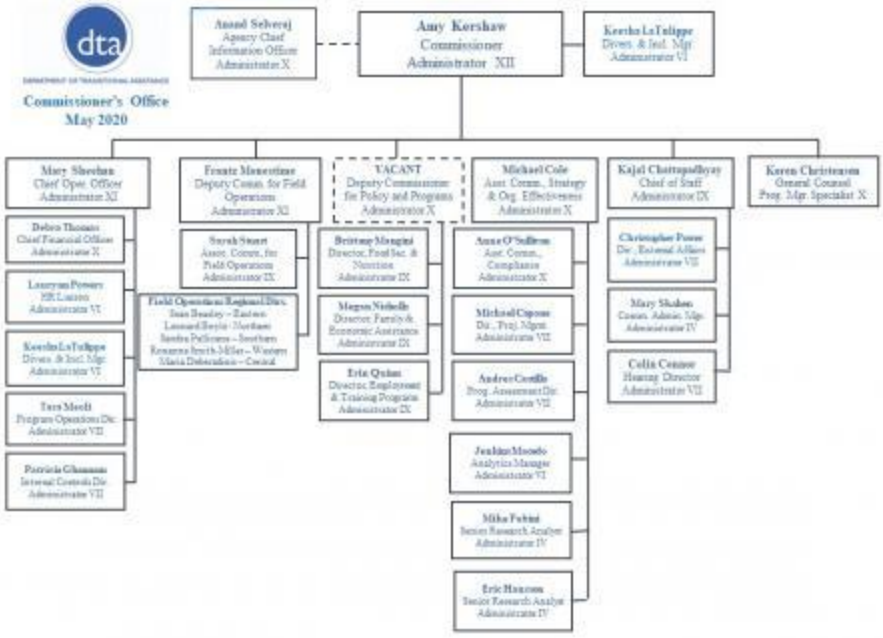


Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) is a unit at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), within the Executive Office Education. Through both federal and state grants, ACLS funds a broad network of education providers, including local school systems, community-based agencies, faith-based organizations, community colleges, libraries, volunteer organizations, correctional facilities, and others.

Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) Organizational Structure

EOEA is a grantee and administers state Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) slots through three sub grantees: Operation ABLE, Elder Services of Berkshire County and Citizen for Citizen Inc.

Department of Transitional Assistance Organizational Structure



The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) assists and empowers low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, improve their quality of life, and achieve long term economic self-sufficiency. DTA serves one in nine residents of the Commonwealth with direct economic assistance (cash benefits) and food assistance (SNAP benefits), as well as workforce training. DTA is the single state agency responsible for administering the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Transitional Aid to Needy Families (TANF) in Massachusetts. DTA operates statewide in 14 counties served by 22 DTA Local Offices and self-service kiosks located within partner organizations.

B. STATE BOARD

The MassHire State Workforce Board (MSWB) is a 35-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.

I. 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

3 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

Maria Ferreira-Bedard, Executive Director, Southeastern Massachusetts SER-Jobs for Progress

1 Community-Based Organization seat vacant

Titles I and III Representative

Secretary Rosalin Acosta, Secretary, Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Title II Representative

Robert LePage, Assistant Secretary for Career Education, Massachusetts Executive Office of Education

Designee for Secretary of Education, James Peyser

Title IV Representative

Toni Wolf, Commissioner, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Chief Elected Officials

2 Chief Elected Official seats currently vacant

Other Representatives

Marylou Sudders, Secretary, Health and Human Services

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

The Governor Baker and the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions is working on filling the MassHire State Workforce Board's vacancies, including two Chief Elected Official seats, three Business and Industry seats, and one Community-Based Organization seat. Massachusetts intends to appoint eligible members to these seats by September 30, 2022.

II. BOARD ACTIVITIES

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 Moderization 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 haitus 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-19 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.

4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

A. 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.

Massachusetts One Stop Employment System

The primary Federal and State workforce development programs are administered by the Massachusetts 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, MassHire Workforce Boards and Partner Agencies. MDCS coordinates implementation of state workforce strategies through the Massachusetts One-Stop Employment System (MOSES) -- a case management system that serves as the unified management information, client tracking, case management and reporting system used by staff at career centers, workforce boards and other workforce development service providers in Massachusetts. MOSES is cloud based and distributed to MassHire Career Centers and Workforce Boards and other workforce partners through Amazon WorkSpaces (AWS).

MOSES collects information on participants and services for the following programs: Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth; Rapid Response; Wagner-Peyser; National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs); Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), Disability Employment Initiative Grants (DEI); Trade Expansion, and UI Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA), Job Corps, among other programs. Customers receiving services at MassHire Career Centers and partner agencies are registered in the MOSES database. These shared partner agencies include MA Commission for the Blind (MCB), MA Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS), Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), Department of Housing Programs (DHP), YouthBuild, Re-Entering Citizens Programs, and Native American Programs.

Web-based applications that interface with the MOSES database include MassHire JobQuest which is used by job seekers to access job listings, services and workshops at career centers, locate eligible training providers, courses and training programs, and provides access to TORQ and the MassHire Career Information System. MassHire JobQuest is also used by employers to post jobs and search for qualified applicants. MassHire TrainingPro 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).

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 2nd Quarter After Exit	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
Employed 2nd Quarter After Exit	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
Employed 4th Quarter After Exit	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**
Median Earnings 2nd 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.

B. ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS

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

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 **customers enrolled in training and employed** in a training related job 2nd Quarter After Exit	*Career Center customers enrolled in a training program*	*Title II individuals enrolled in a training program*	*Title IV individuals enrolled in a training program*
Number and Percent of **Veterans Employed** 2nd Quarter After Exit	*Career Center customers who self-declare Veterans*	*Title II individuals who self-declare Veterans status*	*Title IV individuals who self-declare Veterans status*
Number and Percent of **Individuals with Language Barriers at Registration Employed** 2nd Quarter After Exit	*Career Center customers who self-declare ESOL status*	*Title II individuals with ESOL status*	*Title IV individuals who self-declare ESOL status*
Number and Percent of **Individuals without High School Equivalency at enrollment that obtained a HS equivalency and who are Employed at 2nd Quarter After Exit**	*Career Center customers without HS Equivalency at intake (WIOA Title I, III, Vets, TRADE, etc.)*	*All Adult Education Participants (WIOA Title II)*	*All Vocational Rehabilitation Participants without HS Equivalency at intake (WIOA Title IV)*

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 **Individuals with a Disability** Employed 2nd Quarter After Exit	*Career Center customers who self-declare disability*	*Title II individuals who self-declare disability*	*Title IV individuals who self-declare disability*
Number and Percent of **Individuals receiving TANF or SNAP Employed** at 2nd Quarter After Exit	*Career Center customers receiving TANF or SNAP required to enroll in job assistance services (WIOA Title I, III, Vets, TRADE, etc.)*	*All Adult Education Participants receiving TANF or SNAP (WIOA Title II)*	*All Vocational Rehabilitation Participants receiving TANF or SNAP (WIOA Title IV)*
Number of **Older Workers (50+)** who were employed in the 2nd quarter after exit	*Career Center customers 50+ years and SCSEP participants served at Career Centers*	*All Adult Education Participants 50+ years*	*All Vocational Rehabilitation Participants 50+ years*
Number of **New Businesses** served	*New business customers of Career Centers*	*NA*	*NA*
Number and percent of **Businesses** registered with MassHire Career Centers **that hired Customers referred by Career Centers**	*Career Center customers who were hired by businesses registered with Career Centers*	*NA*	*NA*
Number and percent of **Adults and Youth** participating in Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning (WBL) Programs	*Career Center customers (Adults and Youth) in Apprenticeship or WBL Programs*	*Title II individuals enrolled in Apprenticeship or WBL Programs*	*Title IV individuals enrolled in Apprenticeship or WBL Programs*
Number of **Businesses** sponsoring apprenticeship or WBL programs	*Career Center Business customers Sponsoring Apprenticeships or WBL Programs*	*NA*	*NA*
Number of **Shared Customers** Across Partner Agencies	*Career Center customers that are also receiving services from a Partner program*	*All Title II participants who are also receiving services at Career Centers*	*Title IV participants who are also receiving services at Career Centers*

C. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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
MDCS Title I Adult	68.7%	66.9%	$6,180	71.1%	31.1%
MDCS Title I Youth	66.6%	63.8%	$3,462	61.6%	30.3%
MDCS Title I Dislocated Worker	75.9%	76.6%	$10,895	69.4%	44.7%
MDCS Title III Wagner Peyser Employment Service	56.7%	59.6%	$7,931	***	***
DESE/ACLS Title II Adult Education	41.8%	45.0%	$6,852	28.3%	41.5%
MRC/MCB Title IV Rehabilitation Services*	50.9%	48.4%	$4,444	16.9%	21.0%
Program Year 2019 Performance					
MDCS Title I Adult	77.1%	76.2%	$6,655	72.6%	44.3%
MDCS Title I Youth	71.7%	70.4%	$3,486	64.5%	24.9%
MDCS Title I Dislocated Worker	81.7%	80.4%	$10,984	74.9%	42.2%
MDCS Title III Wagner Peyser Employment Service	66.3%	68.4%	$7,892	*	*
DESE/ACLS Title II Adult Education	47.3%	51.2%	$6,744	26.7%	23.9%
MRC/MCB Title IV Rehabilitation Services*	52.2%	22.9%	$4,353	4.7%	7.3%

**** 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

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.

D. EVALUATION

As previously noted, the 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.

Additionally, In September 2020, Massachusetts was one of six state teams selected through an application process to participate in the Evaluation Peer Learning (EvalPLC) cohort. The EvalPLC is an interactive technical assistance forum with a focus on assisting states to assess readiness to design and conduct evaluations.

The Massachusetts state team consists of Core WIOA partner agencies and local MassHire Workforce Boards. Agencies participating on the team include Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development /MassHire Department of Career Services (Title I and III), Adult Community Learning Services (Title II), Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (Title IV), Department of Transition (TANF/SNAP), the MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board, the MassHire Metro North Workforce Board, and Commonwealth Corporation.

Participation in the EvalPLC cohort resulted in an evaluation action plan that identifies areas of strength and focused areas of opportunity for improvement in evaluation. Through this process Massachusetts seeks to enhance the capacity to conduct evaluations.

The Massachusetts team has also used participation in the EvalPLC cohort as an opportunity to focus on the development of a WIOA Evaluation Agenda. The WIOA Evaluation Agenda will guide the design and analyses of evaluations to review program impact and identify promising practices across WIOA Core Programs. Suggested areas of evaluation across partner programs included:

- Evaluate outcomes of shared customers based on services received, e.g. look at clusters/cohorts of populations that received same services and compare against those that did not receive the same service
- Evaluate tracking methods of WIOA Partner shared customers
- Evaluate the impact of the delivery of virtual services on customers/business and staff
- Evaluate the effectiveness of tools in place relative to support delivery of virtual services
- Evaluate the impact of COVID19 on target populations *(older workers, low-income, limited English, etc.)* related to ability to access services
- Evaluate the impact, effectiveness, and consistency of MassHire's brand

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

I. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

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.

II. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

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.

The state's unemployment rate for Program Year 2017/Fiscal Year 2018 (July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018) was 3.6% and, therefore, in PY2019/FY2020 Massachusetts had substate Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASUs) defined in accordance with the methodology proscribed by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and Employment and Training Administration (ETA). It is anticipated that the State will have

sub-state ASUs for the program years beginning July 1, 2020 (PY2020) and July 1, 2021 (PY2021).

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 *(Census Bureau, American Community Survey)*	1/3	X	
Average Number of Economically Disadvantaged Adults *(Census Bureau, American Community Survey)*	1/3		X
Number of Unemployed in Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASUs) *(EOLWD/Department of Unemployment Assistance, Economic Research, BLS methodology)*	1/3	X	X
Number of Excess Unemployed in Areas of Substantial Unemployment (ASUs) *(EOLWD/Department of Unemployment Assistance, Economic Research, BLS methodology)*	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.

III. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED

. The Task Force's recommendations for PY 2022 are still forthcoming.

Figure 57: Data sources for Title I Dislocated Worker Formulas

WIOA 133(b)(2)

Required Information Element/Factor Program Year 2019	**Data for PY22**	**Data Source**	**Factor Weight** **PY22**
Insured Unemployment Data	CY 21 Average Monthly UI Claimants	UI Claimant Data *DUA Economic Research*	27.78%
Unemployment Concentrations	CY 2021 Average Annual Unemployment Rate	Labor Force Data *DUA Economic Research*	27.78%
Plant Closing and Mass Layoff Data	CY 2021 UI Claimants in Layoffs of 25+	UI Claimant Data *DUA Economic Research*	0% (Data Not Available)
Declining Industries Data	3-Year Job Loss in Declining Industries	Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) *DUA Economic Research*	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 2021 Average Long-Term UI Claimants (26+ Continuous Weeks)	UI Claimant Data *DUA Economic Research*	16.67%
Long-Term Unemployment Data	CY 2021 Annual Total of UI Claimants Exhausting Benefits	UI Claimant Data *DUA Economic Research*	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.

B. FOR TITLE II

I. 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

Updated Response:

ACLS will award multi-year grants and contracts in compliance with 34 CFR part 463, subpart C. The Open and Competitive Request for Proposals is planned to be released in the summer of 2022 for implementation in July 2023. Grants and contracts will be awarded to eligible providers within the State to develop, implement, and improve adult education and literacy activities outlined in the RFP and consistent with the requirements of AEFLA funding. The RFP will address all 13 WIOA considerations as stated in 34 CFR part 463, subpart C.

The Open and Competitive RFP will require an eligible provider to demonstrate past effectiveness by providing performance data on its record of improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition. An eligible provider must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

The Open and Competitive RFP will require an eligible provider that has been funded under title II of WIOA to provide performance data required under section 116 to demonstrate past effectiveness.

The Open and Competitive RFP will require an eligible provider that has not been funded under title II of WIOA to provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of success in achieving outcomes in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition. An eligible provider must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

ACLS will issue the last year of funding for the cycle through our continuation grant process. The continuation grant will be posts in the spring of 2022 and grants will be awarded for FY23 implementation. Each continuation application is assessed on the merits of its proposed program design, budget, and narrative responses related to activities aligned with WIOA (if applicable). Awards were contingent upon the provider demonstrating satisfactory performance and average monthly enrollment relative to target.

Planning Grants

With the availability of significant additional state funding (not included in state match 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

The Massachusetts SEA, DESE, will post an Open and Competitive Request for Proposal in early July 2022. In response to the RFP, eligible agencies, organizations, and consortia will demonstrate effectiveness, respond to narrative prompts that address the thirteen WIOA considerations and the Massachusetts' Ten Indicators of Program Quality, and provide a budget.

Applicants will enter enrollment and outcome data in a protected spreadsheet. Current Title II grantees will submit data for all years that they have received funding. Applicants not currently funded by Title II will submit at least one year of data. All applicants must demonstrate at least one year of having exceeded ten percent of MA MSG target for whichever service (ABE or ESOL) they are applying.

Massachusetts will compete core ABE and ESOL, IET, and IELCE services within each local workforce area. There are 16 local workforce areas in Massachusetts. DESE staff and staff from the local workforce boards will review, score, and recommend funding to the adult education

state director. Corrections education and the education of other institutionalized individuals will be competed statewide.

These CALC activities are funded with federal and/or state funds:

- 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;
- 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;
- 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).
- 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 distance learning (DL) to increase student access to educational services, instructional intensity, and technology skill development; and

- 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 outstationed 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 outstationed 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.

II. 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

Updated Response:

All organizations as listed in §463.23 that have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities will be eligible to apply during the O&C RFP for grant or contract for adult education and literacy activities. The state will use the same announcement and application process for all applicants. The RFP announcement will also be shared with all WIOA partners to be shared within their network of providers. The state will hold bidders' conferences across the state to present the O&C RFP and answer questions as well as a statewide webinar for any interested applicants. All questions and answers from the bidders' conferences will be posted on the Department's website as well as the Department will hold a Question and Answer (Q&A) period during which applicants can submit their questions that will be answered and posted for all to see on the Department's website.

The applications will be reviewed within each of the 16 local workforce areas and informed by the regional data and for some programming, such as adult education in correctional institutions and workplace education, the competition will be held statewide. All review teams will be trained and use the same process to review applications. Representatives from the local workforce boards will be part of the review teams.

F

Massachusetts will compete core ABE and ESOL, IET, and IELCE services within each local workforce area. There are 16 local workforce areas in Massachusetts. DESE staff and staff from the local workforce boards will review, score, and recommend funding to the adult education state director. Corrections education and the education of other institutionalized individuals will be competed statewide.

DESE will ensure direct and equitable access to eligible providers by posting the same RFP containing the same requirements, posting all necessary resources, and conducting two virtual bidders' conferences that will be open to all. All applicants will provide data to demonstrate effectiveness to determine eligibility for compete for Title II funding. Current grantees will be required to submit WIOA data from Tables 4 and 5 from the state adult education MIS. Applicants not currently funded will provide their own data.

The projected timeline for implementing the FY23 Open and Competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) follows:

Step	**Timeframe**
Post RFP Announcement	March 2022
Draft RFP	April 2022
Final Draft	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. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

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.

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

Updated Response:

The Commonwealth's current Massachusetts One Stop Employment System (MOSES) database which is the job seeker and business services case management system is already interoperable to collect and report service delivery information and data on all shared customers of the WIOA State Partners.

However, to ensure that Massachusetts continues to maintain and expand a world-class workforce system, the Commonwealth is incorporating the use of modern tools and techniques as 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 MassHire/Workforce Connect (currently 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. Massachusetts has been working on MassHire Workforce Connect that will feature a single sign-on, a job seeker dashboard with the capability for partners to share information with their customers, and a case management dashboard that will permit case managers to view selective customer information with partner case managers for comprehensive service provision. 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. 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. The new IT system functionality will 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.

See response to 1 above.

Updated Response:

MA appreciates the technical assistance provided.

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.

- Safeguard the integrity of the system by enhancing security and reliability.
- 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.
- Develop integrated data system between unemployment insurance (UI Online) and MassHire (MOSES/Workforce Connect) that accelerates progression from job loss to job gain.
- Increase availability and delivery of virtual workforce services (e.g. career exploration, virtual job fairs, skill development, etc.).
- 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.

Updated Response:

MA appreciates the technical assistance provided.

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.

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

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. The state is pursuing an interface with core partner systems that will also provide information on shared customers and partner services

C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA

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.

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

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 6103and 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)

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

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:

- Ensure that covered persons are identified at the point of entry and given an opportunity to take full advantage of priority of service.
- 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.
- 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.

Links to MA's policies on the delivery of priority of services for Veterans and eligible spouses are below:

100 DCS 15.100.1: Implementing Priority of Service for Veterans

100 DCS 08.116: WIOA Priority of Service for Job Seeker Customers

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.

8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

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 the100 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 Trackballmouse, and other assistive technology.

Updated Response:

MA appreciates the technical assistance provided.

9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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 the updated Mass Workforce Issuance 100 MDCS 08.101 Updated Language Services Guidelines to Assist Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Customers

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, multicultural, and multilingual expertise, including collective fluency in 12 languages, resulting in excellent and meaningful communication with the LEP community. The Multilingual Office acts as the central internal language facilitation unit for all EOLWD departments, including the MassHire Career Centers 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, concerns or general questions about their Unemployment Insurance claim, MassHire Career Center Seminar (CCS) or Re-Employment Services & Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program.

Interpreter Services: In addition, the MassHire Career Center Staff have access to a professional over-the-phone language services (vendor providing over 350 languages) to provide language services to customers needing interpreter services.

Video Remote Interpreting (VRI): American Sign Language (ASL) VRI capabilities for Deaf & Hard of Hearing individual needing Ad Hoc ASL services to effectively participate to MassHire programs, services, and activities.

American Sign Language Interpreters (ASL): MassHire Career Center staff and its partners can request ASL interpreter services through the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH) to provide equal access to MassHire programs, services, and activities for Deaf & Hard of Hearing customers needing ASL 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, including ASL 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.

Language Access Assessment: As part of the Field Management and Oversight Program yearly review and monitoring, Multilingual Services reviews and updates language access best practices, new material, and tools for all MassHire Career Centers.

Websites: The Office of Multilingual maintains several language access sites:

1. Multilingual Services webpage at https://www.mass.gov/orgs/office-of-multilingual-services
2. MassWorkforce System resources at https://www.mass.gov/service-details/multilingual-services-staff-resources
3. Multilingual Intranet: https://massgov.sharepoint.com/sites/EOL-Multilingual

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

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 issuedJoint Partner Policies andJoint 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.

State Plan Advisory Committee

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 provided 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 was held 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 were held on February 14, 2022, and February 16, 2022. Both sessions were 90 minutes in duration. The virtual public sessions were held ins 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 collectively provided 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.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The State Plan must include	Include

The State Plan must include	Include
1. 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;	Yes
2. 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 activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes
3. 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;	Yes
4. (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 administrating the core programs, required one-stop 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; (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;	Yes
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;	Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
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);	
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
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;	Yes
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;	Yes
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
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.	Yes

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

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

Updated Response:

The Governor and the Secretaries engaged Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), Local Workforce Boards (Local Boards), other Workforce Partners and stakeholders to establish seven planning regions utilizing the required WIOA Regional Planning criteria.

Please see below, a map of the 7 planning regions and a list of the WIOA workforce areas within each region. The existing 16 WIOA workforce areas continue to serve as the policy, operations, and contracting structure for all federal workforce funding. However, the new regional planning process organizes higher-level strategic activities (data analysis, strategic planning, service mapping, etc.) for the 16 areas into a seven-region structure. Regional strategies use region-based information to identify regional service gaps and to identify what initiatives are better executed jointly over larger geographic areas.

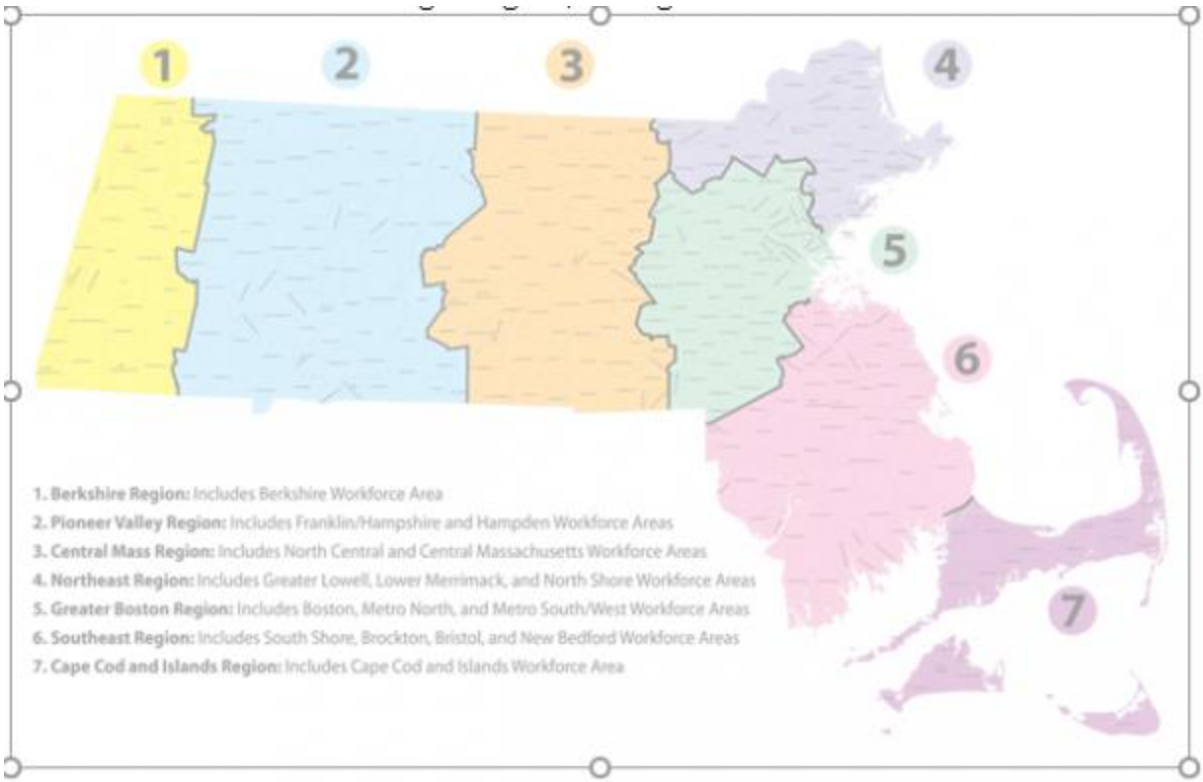
Consistent with WIOA §106(a)(2)(B)-(C) and §679.200, the 7 planning regions are provided with labor market data and technical assistance to assist with regional planning and subsequent service delivery efforts.

The Massachusetts regional planning process, called the "Regional Workforce Skills Planning Initiative", is a signature strategy of the Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC). The Cabinet, created by Executive Order No. 560, brings together the Secretaries of Education, Labor and Workforce Development, and Housing and Economic Development. The WSC has the task of building collaborative solutions that align Massachusetts economic, workforce and education initiatives to better meet the needs of regional economies. The WSC has developed a regional planning process that both meets WIOA requirements and serves as a key strategy to align and coordinate multi-Secretariat investments, policies, and programs.

The WSC regional planning process aligns with a number of Secretariat-level initiatives at the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED), Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), and Executive Office of Education (EOE).

The Commonwealth established the seven Regional Planning Areas in FY16, with an address to the Regional Planning teams by Governor Baker 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; determinedpriority industriesand occupations; created an asset mapof existing pipeline programs for priority industries/occupations; and identified regional strategiesto 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.

Teams updated the Regional Planning Blueprints and reported these updates to the WSC Secretaries in the Spring of 2019 and will continue to work at refining/updating information to inform regional goals, strategies and outcomes.



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 163 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:

1. Berkshire Region: Comprises the Berkshire Workforce Development Area

2. Pioneer Valley Region: Comprises the Franklin/Hampshire and Hampden Workforce Development Areas

3. Central Massachusetts Region: Comprises the North Central and Central Massachusetts Workforce Development Areas

4. North Shore Region: Comprises the Greater Lowell, Merrimack Valley and North Shore Workforce Development Areas

5. Greater Boston Region: Comprises the Boston, Metro North and Metro South West Workforce Development Areas

6. South Shore Region: Comprises the South Shore, Brockton, Bristol and Greater New Bedford Workforce Development Areas

7. Cape Cod and Islands Region: Comprises the Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Workforce Development Area

Updated Response

SUSTAINED FISCAL INTEGRITY: language from the MA Local Area Designation Policy – Definition:The local area sustained fiscal integrity (the Secretary of USDOL has not made a formal determination that either the grant recipient (CEO) or the administrative entity of the area "fiscal agent" misexpended funds due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration.

MA is aware that this determination comes from the Department and not the State.

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING PLANNING REGIONS

In accordance with WIOA §106 and NPRM §679.210, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, in consultation with the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, the Executive Office of Education and the Governor, reviewed potential regional configurations of the 16 local workforce areas that meet the WIOA criteria to: (i) share a single labor market (ii) Share a common economic development area; and (iii) possess the Federal and non-Federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under WIOA subtitle B.

In addition, in compliance with WIOA requirements, other factors the Governor considered included:

1. Existing Workforce Investment Area boundaries

2. Existing economic development regions

3. Voluntary regional partnerships between regions (through sector grants such as the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund or other initiatives)

4. Alignment with higher education strategic planning

5. Industrial composition (including Gateway Cities)

6. Labor force conditions

7. Geographic boundaries

8. Commuting patterns along major highways (90 Mass Pike, I91, 495, 95, 93, Route 20, etc.)

9. Population Centers

After consideration of all the factors identified above, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) on behalf of the Governor presented the draft proposed regions to the Workforce Skills Cabinet (Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development; Secretary of Economic Development; and Secretary of Education) for review.

In consideration of the above factors, the seven regional configurations currently designated under the Workforce Competitive Trust Fund were desginated as the Massachusetts WIOA Planning Regions. The Massachusetts WIOA Regions either consist of (1) one local area or (2) two or more contiguous local areas within the Commonwealth.

The WIOA Planning Regions support the WIOA criteria to determine regional boundaries for regional planning activities in the following ways:

1. Existing Workforce Area boundaries: The proposed regions roll up the 16 local areas without breaking up a local area as well as group contiguous local areas.
2. Alignment with economic development regions: the regions better align with the seven Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) regions, except that the Southeast and the Cape will be maintained as separate regions under this model due to the different labor force conditions and industry concentrations within those two unique local workforce areas. EOHED is considering the option to set up MOBD regions in the same fashion.
3. Voluntary regional partnerships between regions: Many of the local areas have worked with one another within the proposed regional configuration to administer competitive grants such as sector grants through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund or other initiatives. There is a history and natural partnership between the local areas that in many cases reflects the proposed WIOA regions.
4. Alignment with higher education strategic planning: the Executive Office of Education's (EOE) strategic planning process for higher education aligns with the proposed WIOA regions, which include at least one Community College, several vocation technical schools and other four-year institutions.
5. Industrial composition (includingGateway Cities): each of the regions has communities that share industry patterns of growth and historical de-industrialization that has impacted the cities. Each region includes at least 1 "gateway" city.
6. Labor force conditions: generally, the proposed regions bring together the smaller local workforce investment areas into a regional structure that aligns communities with similar labor force conditions.
7. Commuting patterns: the regions reflect the impact of major highway routes where roadways become a defining characteristic in access to jobs or communities, for example, the I91 corridor connects Franklin Hampshire and Hampden local areas and shows relevant location of manufacturers along the corridor even into Connecticut.
8. Population Centers: Each of the regions contains a city with highly concentrated population centers to ensure adequate WIOA formula resources covering the region. No one region is solely rural.

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/

Updated Response:

- **APPEAL POLICY for LOCAL AREA DESIGNATION: within the Combined State Plan, MA provided a link to the state policy that contains the appeals process for initial (includes new requests) and subsequent appeals for local area designation. The pertinent section of that policy appears below.**

III. APPEAL OF NON-DESIGNATION OF INITIAL OR SUBSEQUENT LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

A unit of general local government (including a combination of such units) or grant recipient that requests but is not granted initial or subsequent designation as a Local Workforce Development area under WIOA Section 106(b), paragraph (2) or (3) may submit an appeal to the State Board.

The appellant must establish that it was not accorded procedural rights under the appeal process set forth in the State Plan, or establish that it meets the requirements for initial or subsequent designation or in WIOA section 106(b)(2) or 106(b)(3) and 20 CFR679.250.

The appellant may request a state-level appeal and/or formal appeal hearing in writing within **20 days** of receiving the denial of initial or subsequent designation as Local Workforce Development Area.

The request for appeal and/or formal appeal hearing must be sent to:

Office of Director

Massachusetts Workforce Development Board

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 Board 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, they do not respond within the given time frame the complaint 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 that 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 Hearing Official 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 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 Hearing Official's written determination must include:
- the results of the State level investigation;
- conclusions reached on the appeal;
- an explanation as to why the decision was upheld or not upheld.

A unit of general local government (including a combination of such units) or grant recipient whose appeal or denial of a request for initial or subsequent designation as a Local Workforce Development Area to the State Board/Governor has not resulted in such designation may appeal the State Board's/Governor's denial to U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (USDOL ETA). The appeal must be submitted to DOL/ETA within 30 days of the receipt of written notification of the denial from the State Board/Governor. All appeals must be submitted in writing by certified mail; return receipt requested, to the Secretary, US Department of Labor, Attention: ASET. A copy of the appeal must be simultaneously provided to the State Board. USDOL must submit a written determination to the Governor/State Board and the appellant.

U.S. Department of Labor

Employment and Training Administration

200 Constitution Ave, NW

Washington, DC 20210

Attention: ASET

and

MA Workforce Development Board

Charles F. Hurley Building

19 Staniford Street 4th Floor

Boston, MA 02114

Attention: Director

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:

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The notice must inform the parties of the following conditions of the hearing process:

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- 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.

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- 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:
- the results of the State level investigation;
- conclusions reached on the appeal;
- 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).

2. STATEWIDE 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.

Additionally, a MassHire Board may transfer up to 100 percent of its fiscal year allocation for either Adult or Dislocated Worker employment and training activities between the two programs. The provision to allow transfer of funds between the two programs provides local areas with a significant level of flexibility to meet local service needs.

The link to the Commonwealth's policy regarding the transfer of WIOA funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker programs is below.

Issuance: 100 DCS 01.108.1: WIOA Funds Transfer Authority

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:

• Of insufficient size to meet application requirements for a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG); or

• For which a high number of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)-related layoffs require additional funds to support staffing needs; or 167

• 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

Updated Response:

RAPID RESPONSE SET-ASIDE, RAPID RESPONSE SERVICE COORDINATION and LAYOFF AVERSION

Rapid Response Set Aside:

Rapid Response Set-Aside (RRSA) funds represent a portion of the Commonwealth's allotment of WIOA Dislocated Worker funds that are reserved at the state level (WIOA Sec. 133(a)(2)).

RRSA funds are specifically held aside for layoff or plant closing events:

- Of insufficient size to meet application requirements for a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG); or
- For which a high number of Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)-related layoffs require additional funds to support staffing needs; or
- 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.

This policy issuance provides guidance on the process and forms for the RRSA grant application and the utilization of RRSA funds, including a description of two new categories of

potential use of these funds – (1) vouchering for NDWG bridge funding and (2) administration, and also provides instruction with regard to participant enrollment requirements.

Policy:

1. Rapid Response Set-Aside (RRSA) Request for Funding

a. Massachusetts RRSA funds may be requested by a WDB when the level of local layoff and/or plant closing activity is such that current resources are insufficient to meet the needs of the affected workers.

b. Local Workforce Development Boards requesting RRSA funding will adhere to the Commonwealth's application and review policy and procedures as delineated herein and in Attachments A, B, C and D.

2. Utilization of RRSA Funds: applications for RRSA funds are limited to the following:

a. Career Services: to provide person-centered re-employment services to workers who have been or will be adversely affected by an announced layoff or plant closing event.

The program of services may include, but is not limited to such re-employment activities as:

1. in-depth assessment and career counseling;

2. job search-related workshops;

3. occupational skill training;

4. basic skills training, in conjunction with occupational skills training; and

5. supportive services

RRSA funds used for this purpose may be used to contract specific services (such as Individual Training Accounts (ITA) or supportive services) to qualified third-party providers or to cover the cost of added staffing when current staffing resources are insufficient to meet local needs.

b. Feasibility Study: toconduct a study to determine the feasibility of either a full or partial buyout of the company by members of the workforce as part of an overall layoff aversion strategy.

To support a feasibility study, RRSA funds may be used to:

1. Identify the size and potential of the market that must be captured,

2. Determine management structure and skills that need to be obtained by the new company,

3. Determine the structure of a potential financing package, and

4. Develop and submit preliminary financial projections for the new company.

c. Vouchering (NDWG Bridge Funding Only): in cases where RRSA funds are being requested for NDWG "bridge funding," it may be determined that there are eligible workers who may want to access services at a career center that is located in a different workforce area. The RRSA operator may elect to include NDWG "vouchering" payments to other career centers and ITA payments for customers of those career centers within its application. The local operator would be subject to terms, conditions and process established in the NDWG Master Agreement. The vouchering payment for career services provided to RRSA enrollees is limited to $1,500 per participant. Note: vouchering payments, as with all RRSA expenditures, are subject to

recapture by DCS upon NDWG award. Please refer to Attachment D: RRSA Vouchering Payment Instructions.

d. Administration: local areas may request up to 5% of the total budget for costs related to administration. Please refer to WIOA §181 for the administrative costs definition.

3. Participant Enrollment

a. All individuals served with RRSA funds must be enrolled in MOSES, including customers served at other career centers through the vouchering program. A Career Center-specific program will be set up in MOSES for this purpose.

b. All RRSA customers must be co-enrolled in the Dislocated Worker program.

Required: Please assure that all relevant local policies and procedures

The Massachusetts Department of Career Services (MDCS) uses the Rapid Response team for many important services. The team provides layoff aversion and early intervention services to companies and their employees for free. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds this federally-mandated program. This results in a smooth transition for all affected employees.

RAPID RESPONSE SERVICE COORDINATION

Rapid Response tries to identify the exact needs of a company in crisis. Once the needs are assessed then the team tries to help the company establish partnerships with other organizations and build networks to help them try and acquire those needs meant to reduce the possibility of layoffs or a plant closure.

Some of the resources available to companies to maintain their workforce include:

- Matching businesses that are in transition with businesses that are hiring for similar
- Communicating directly with employers on their needs and what is necessary to avoid layoffs
- Educate employers on various state and local programs and agencies including:
- WorkSharing Program
- Workforce Training Funds
- Career Centers
- Tax Incentives
- Business Loans
- Growth based systems for manufacturing
- Employee Ownership and succession plans
- Export opportunity identification
- SBA information

<u>Meet and plan with the company</u>

When the Rapid Response Team becomes aware of a layoff or closing, we:

Contact company officials to arrange a meeting to establish a good working relationship

Inform you of the available services

Plan for implementation of those services at your organization

Responding to the results of our concise survey and the needs of the company, we will make every effort to schedule meetings and our on-site services in a manner that will be most convenient with your daily operations.

Conduct employee information and orientation session

After establishing your company's schedule of reemployment services, we meet with your employees to:

Inform them of their eligibility and benefits as laid off workers

Answer their questions about job search and unemployment insurance

Register and refer them to One Stop Career Centers

Conduct a survey of employee needs (such as retraining and skills upgrading)

Orient them to the content and timetables of the various on-site services

Provide on-site individual counseling

Based, in part, by the information gathered from the employee surveys, our team will meet with each employee to discuss his or her needs and to formulate a customized plan of action. These confidential, individual sessions allow your employees to discuss matters that they may not be comfortable discussing in a group.

Conduct job search workshops

The Rapid Response Team offers a variety of optional job search workshops. These workshops are tailored to meet the individual needs of your employees.

Develop job leads and provide job placement services

The Rapid Response Team markets the dislocated worker program to companies in your area and/or industry, and often brings current job leads to the employee meeting to see if there are qualified candidates interested in the positions. As part of the process, resumes are collected and submitted to the appropriate job leads. We contact and meet with businesses that are hiring in order to meet our objective of placing employees in new positions before they are laid off.

Massachusetts AFL-CIO Rapid Response services for unionized workers

The Massachusetts AFL-CIO Rapid Response Team partners with the State Rapid Response Team to assist unions and workers who are experiencing lay-offs or downsizings. We help people get new jobs, training, job counseling and more. We can provide information at employee meetings, workshops, and union meetings.

Rapid Response benefits for employers

The Rapid Response Team provides layoff aversion and early intervention re-employment services at no cost to companies and their employees affected by layoffs and closings.

Early intervention

Early intervention allows employers and employees to communicate about worker concerns. The DCS Rapid Response Team services are customized to each layoff and to each company's needs and expectations, and all services are provided at no cost to the employer.

Employers who have received the DCS Rapid Response Team services have reported many benefits such as:

- Higher productivity during the layoff event
- Lower absenteeism among workers
- Lower unemployment insurance costs as employees are re-employed more quickly when services are provided prior to layoff
- Potential higher morale due to reduced stress—employees felt the employer worked hard to help them in a difficult time
- Decreased likelihood of work disruptions
- Media and rumor management; the DCS Rapid Response Team understand the often confidential nature of layoffs, and will work with the company to ensure confidentiality at all times
- Better public relations for an employer
- Providing information regarding any state or federal requirements or laws for notification, including the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notice (WARN)

Expansion and growth

The Rapid Response Team also works with businesses to develop growth and expansion plans including:

- Linking growing companies to skilled workers from similar businesses that have downsized
- Providing access to job posting boards, job fairs and recruitment activities
- Assistance finding qualified, pre-screened candidates
- Testing and accessing applicants
- Information on the labor market, training grants and tax credits

Benefits for employees

The DCS Rapid Response Team are experienced in assisting workers cope with job change. During the Rapid Response sessions, they will begin to gather information on the employees' needs and begin to organize services necessary to help them get back to work. Additionally, Rapid Response meetings will introduce them to many other programs that will help during this time of transition.

The decision to lay off employees is one no employer wants to make. However, as layoffs do occur, inviting the DCS Rapid Response Team to meet with affected workers prior to the layoff will allow your employees to access services and programs which will help them through this difficult time.

The Rapid Response Team will refer the affected workers to the Massachusetts One-Stop Career Center system which provides the support the workers need throughout their transition from unemployment to re-employment. The Center's staff will help them with all their job search and training needs.

The DCS Rapid Response Team provides employees with information and services, including:

- Explanation of Unemployment Insurance Benefits
- Information and Referrals to Career Centers

- Career Counseling
- Job Search Assistance
- Resume Workshops
- Interviewing Workshops
- Other Job Search Related Workshops
- Information on the Local Labor Market
- Information About Grant Opportunities
- AFL-CIO Rapid Response Services for Unionized Workers

LAY OFF AVERSION

BizWorks program where pulled together all of the agencies and services / programs to help business through the business cycle is one the best forms of Layoff Aversion that exists in the country.

Our strategy for the Rapid Response team is a layoff aversion mind set so that from the onset of starting our relationship with the business is to pull together every resource regardless of agency or entity to help that business succeed and thrive .

The MA Rapid Response team is the Marketing arm for the Workshare program, which helps to avert layoffs and company closings.

MA Rapid Response's link with Economic Development and all of their resources strengthens the coordination of services that helps to strengthen business.

Layoff aversion activities have been ingrained in the Rapid Response program from the start and has grown to include all activities that provide business services that results in a better business growth and retention plan / process.

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.

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.

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

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.

2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

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 15M. 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), State Apprenticeship Expansion 2020 (SAE2020), and the State Apprenticeship Equity, Expansion and Innovation (SAEE) grants support the development of apprenticeship industry intermediaries that will sponsor and develop programs in the state's priority industries as well as support MassHire Career Centers to offer apprenticeship business development, apprentice placement services, and subsidize related technical instruction among other workforce integration services.

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 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 aRegistered Apprenticeship Tax Credit. Employers are eligible for up to $4800 in tax credits for each qualified apprentice. Recent efforts have also prioritized the Life Sciences and Financial Services industries and expanded apprenticeship growth efforts to sectors and occupations identified by WIOA regional blueprints.

DAS frequently informs MDCS of apprentice recruitment opportunities, and provides marketing materials, informational resources, and how-to guides to apprenticeship. 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 operations, registered apprenticeship sponsors receive 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). Job-seekers 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), apprenticeship grant funding information, 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. DAS used the updated package to create a seamless, online apprenticeship application, which is used by employers, sponsors, and intermediaries for all apprenticeship business transactions.

EOLWD has further aligned apprenticeship efforts with WIOA through USDOL grants and apprenticeship state line-item funding ($1 million budgeted in FY22) through funding

opportunities competitively awarded to multiple workforce boards and MassHire career centers, which incorporate regional blueprint strategies and target jobseekers prioritized by WIOA. Additional apprenticeship program efforts include formal alignment and coordination between MDCS, DAS and WIOA partners, including Youth Build, Job Corps, and multiple entities serving individuals with disabilities.

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.

3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

As the Commonwealth's designated Workforce Agency and administrator of WIOA programs, the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) is responsible for maintaining the Statewide List of Eligible Training Service Providers/Courses. MDCS and Local Boards will work together to accomplish identification of ETPs for the state Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). MDCS has the responsibility of making eligibility determinations for training providers seeking inclusion on the MA ETPL. As required by WIOA, MDCS must ensure that Massachusetts providers meet the following:

- Financial Stability and Capacity
- Programmatic Capacity
- Verifiable Performance

Entities that carry out programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act (29 U.S.C. 50 at seq.). Note: Sponsors of apprenticeship programs registered with the Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS), the State Apprenticeship Agency in Massachusetts, or with the US Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship (USDOL/OA), are automatically eligible for inclusion on the Massachusetts ETPL. Sponsors are not subject to the same application and performance information requirements or to a period of initial eligibility or the initial eligibility procedures as other MA ETPL applicants due to the rigorous application and vetting process required for registered programs.

The application process to become a registered apprenticeship program is similar to the process outlined in Section A "Financial Stability and Capacity", in the policy, and does not need to be replicated by MDCS for ETPL approval. Massachusetts DAS will notify registered apprentice program sponsors by letter of ETPL automatic eligibility. The letter of eligibility provides the sponsor with a list of required information and the link to TrainingPro.

MDCS asks all programs excluding RA programs, for the following information:

- The course information required for providers includes:
    - Name
    - Title
    - Address
    - Email
    - Phone
    - FEIN (License #)
    - Eligibility requirements
    - Targeted occupations
    - Credit/Course Hours (total, average hours/week, average no. of weeks)
    - Course result (e.g., certificate) and description including whether provider is in partnership with a business
    - Course schedule
    - Cost information (financial aid availability, refund policy)

- Performance (enrollments, completions, entered employments, hourly placement wage) – waived for Registered Apprentice Programs (RAPs)

MDCS requires the following information for Registered Apprenticeship Programs:

- The name and address of the Registered Apprenticeship program sponsor
- Occupations included within the RAPs
- The name and address(es) of the Related Technical Instruction provider(s), and the location(s) of instruction if different from the program sponsor's address (Note: If the provider of Related Technical Instruction is different from the program sponsor, cost of the instruction may be requested)
- The method and length of instruction
- The number of active apprentices

Massachusetts reviews training providers on a yearly basis and re-determines eligibility for re-approval. Currently active RA Programs are automatically reapproved each year.

The Massachusetts Eligible Training Provide List (MA) Initial and Subsequent Eligibility Process has been revised to include the following:

• A description of how Eligible Training Provider (ETP) performance minimums will be aligned to WIOA performance indicators

• Clarification that the Local Board approval is not required for Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) to be included on the ETPL

• Clarification that MDCS makes the eligibility determination to include training providers on the MA ETPL

• Clarification that Local Boards may apply additional criteria to training providers identified from the MA ETPL

• As part of the course description, providers will include information as to whether they are in partnership with a business

• Clarification on what information Registered Apprenticeship Programs is required to provide MDCS

• Defined the meaning of substantial violation as it relates to a training provider that provides information found to be deliberately falsified

The link to the policy is found here: MA Workforce Policy Issuance 100 DCS 14.100.7

Performance:

Massachusetts had a waiver from submitting performance for all students of ETPL providers through June 30, 2021. As of January 2022, MDCS developed and provided all ETPL training providers access to a Portal for collecting the individual student information needed for MDCS to obtain wage information to report Employment Rate Q2/Q4, Median Earnings, and Credential Attainment data for all training courses, excluding registered apprenticeships. We anticipate that by PY23 we will have collected the full set of data through the Portal to make the Performance data public and use it for initial and subsequent eligibility.

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND 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

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.

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS

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

C. WITH RESPECT TO YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED IN SECTION 129 OF WIOA—

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS 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 OR CONTRACTS.[11]

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.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AS DESCRIBED IN 129(A)(1)(B), INCLUDING HOW IT WILL LEVERAGE AND ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

Massachusetts will work toward establishing local youth Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) between the local area's WIOA Title I Youth Program Operator, MassHire Career Center, Title II Adult Education Providers, Title IV Mass Rehabilitation Commission and Mass Commission for the Blind, Job Corps, YouthBuild, YouthWorks service providers, and other local area partners that provide services to youth including out-of-school youth. The local youth MOU will build on and augment the 16 local area "umbrella" MOUs currently in place that bring WIOA core partners together for regular engagement to discuss strategies and address challenges for serving target populations.

The local youth MOU will be the mechanism for leveraging partner program services necessary to develop career pathways that will meet the needs of out-of-school youth. Through the local youth MOUs the roles and responsibilities of each partner to support out-of-school youth will be identified. These roles and responsibilities include collaborating to ensure a continuum of services is available for out-of-school youth, making appropriate referrals, regular communication between partner staff to share information about program services, sharing resources and tools, as well as tracking enrollment of youth in partner programs. The local youth MOU will be a living document, updated as needed, and will serve as a foundation for improved outcomes for out-of-school youth.

Out-of-school youth are engaged by local area youth service providers through a variety of outreach methods, including word of mouth, social media, and targeted outreach. In 2018, Massachusetts' Greater Lowell Workforce Area participated in DOL' Workforce Innovation Cohort on Out-of-School Youth Engagement. MA will work towards scaling the following engagement strategies identified through the cohort: empowering youth as active participants in their objective and goals; using technology in innovative ways through programming; effective marketing of services to inform out-of-school youth of available programming, and embedding youth voice to develop meaningful programming and experiences that will promote lifelong learning.

WIOA Title I Youth Programs and Adult Education Title II providers will work together to identify students age 16 -24 enrolled in Adult Education programs that would benefit from

youth workforce development programming. Adult Education provider staff will connect with the WIOA youth program staff and make referrals as appropriate. WIOA youth program staff will also make referrals to local area Adult Education provider staff for program services to support youth needs including, ESOL and GED or HiSET prep.

Massachusetts will continue to partner closely with WIOA Title VI partners, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) to coordinate services to in-school and out-of-school youth with disabilities. Building on existing state and local partnerships MRC and MCB will make appropriate referrals to local youth workforce development programming. Youth service provider staff, MRC, and MCB staff will use a co-case management approach to serve youth with disabilities enrolled in workforce development programs. Youth service provider staff will also connect with MRC and MCB to seek assistance for youth with disabilities enrolled programs including support with assistive technology and assistance in providing necessary accommodation for youth to participate in programming.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is an increasingly important option for Massachusetts students and their families and a critical asset to the state's employers and workforce development partners. Massachusetts Perkins V plan, developed in collaboration with a wide array of public and private stakeholders and in alignment with WIOA State plan, will be used as a roadmap for using federal resources to accelerate the growth of this essential component of the public education system. The Perkins V plan is dedicated to the continuous improvement of and relevancy of CTE to meet the ever-changing needs of learners and employers. The plan commits to continued alignment to the priorities of the WIOA Regional Blueprints and builds on continued and deeper collaboration with MassHire Boards, Career Centers and employers to build High Quality and Career Pathways, College and Career Advising (MyCAP), Teacher Pipeline and Professional Development, and work based learning opportunities. A copy of the plan can be found at http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/cvte/perkins-v/state-plan.docx

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS UNDER THE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM ELEMENT. [12]

Updated Response:

Work experience and pre -apprenticeships represents a positive strategy for in-school and out - of school youth that introduces youth and young adults to the education, training, expectations, and industry recognized credentials that lead
to quality careers. Massachusetts sees youth pre-apprenticeships as an opportunity to build a much-needed talent pipeline into manufacturing and related priority industries and will work toward developing new programming and expanding the capacity of existing pre-apprenticeships programs that lead to apprenticeships in priority industries identified in the Massachusetts WIOA Regional Plans.

Massachusetts recently submitted an application to DOL for the Youth Apprenticeships Readiness opportunity. Through this application MassHire Workforce Boards approved as registered apprenticeship sponsors, will work with YouthBuild, local technical and comprehensive high schools and other training providers to deliver training to WIOA eligible

youth and develop an apprentice pipeline for priority industries. Massachusetts will work toward scaling this model across the state.

Finally, local area youth service provides offer a variety of work experience, pre-apprenticeship, and occupational skills training programs that are made available to youth through outreach strategies to engage youth in available programs.

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.

4. 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 SECTION 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). IF THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.

The State policy100 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 section129(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.

5. 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 AND PROVIDE THE STATE POLICY FOR DETERMINING WHETHER A YOUTH IS ATTENDING OR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL.

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.

6. IF USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE STATE DEFINITION WHICH MUST FURTHER DEFINE HOW TO DETERMINE IF AN INDIVIDUAL IS UNABLE TO COMPUTE OR SOLVE PROBLEMS, OR READ, WRITE, OR SPEAK ENGLISH, AT A LEVEL NECESSARY TO FUNCTION ON THE JOB, IN THE INDIVIDUAL'S FAMILY, OR IN SOCIETY. IF NOT USING THE PORTION OF THE DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INDICATE THAT IS THE CASE.

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

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)

2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)

3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS, INCLUDING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

Not Applicable

Please note this section was not flagged for correction, please explain.

4. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

Not applicable.

5. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.

Not applicable.

6. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.

Not applicable.

7. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS. 107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(I) AND WIOA SEC. 232.

Not applicable.

8. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

Not applicable.

E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

- Massachusetts requested the approval of 2 WIOA waivers with the submission of the 2020 State Plan:
- 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.

USDOL approved this waiver for Massachusetts, effective through June 30, 2022. Due to pandemic-related reduced customer interest in training opportunities, MA did not utilize the waiver between July 2021 and present.

MA will not request the approval of the continuation of the OJT for Small Employers waiver with the submission of this modification.

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 an 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. MA'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 ETPS, 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

USDOL approved this waiver for a one-year period; it expired on June 30, 2021. MA is in-process of adapting its ETPL system accordingly.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
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 and basic skills deficient;	Yes
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;	Yes
3. The State 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;	Yes
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);	Yes
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;	No
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;	Yes
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);	Yes
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;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
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;	
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes
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);	Yes

ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	79.0%	79.0%	79.0%	79.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	78.0%	78.0%	78.0%	78.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,200	$6,300.00	$6,200	$6,400.00
Credential Attainment Rate	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
After Exit)				
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$8,800	$10,000.00	$8,800	$10,500.00
Credential Attainment Rate	66.0%	71.0%	66.0%	71.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	40.0%	45.0%	40.0%	45.5%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	72.0%	72.0%	72.0%	72.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$3,600	$3,600.00	$3,600	$3,700.00
Credential Attainment Rate	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	45.0%	45.0%	45.0%	45.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF

1. 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.

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.

Additional Response:

There are 16 local workforce areas in Massachusetts. In 12 of the local areas Wagner-Peyser Act labor exchange services are delivered through state merit staff employees.

Under section 3(a) of the Wagner-Peyser Act, beginning in the early 1990s, the Department authorized demonstrations of the effective delivery of Wagner-Peyser Act services utilizing non-State agency employees in the States of Colorado, Massachusetts and Michigan. These three demonstrations were permitted as exceptions to the merit staffing regulations in order to assess the effectiveness of alternative delivery systems—specifically, whether using non-state agency employees was an effective and efficient way to deliver Wagner-Peyser services.

In Massachusetts, four local workforce areas applied for the demonstration and have been permitted to operate under this demonstration ("waiver"). The four local areas are Boston, Brockton, Hampden County and Metro North. In these four workforce areas, Wagner-Peyser/Employment Service (ES) funding is provided to the local area (subrecipient) and each subrecipient hires staff in compliancewith local hiring practices and HR policies; in each area, local staff performance is evaluated using a system similar to the state merit staff performance evaluation system. The individuals who are paid with ES funds deliver the same services, to the same level of quality as the merit-based (state-employed) staff in the other 12 workforce areas.

Staff in all MassHire Career Centers (AJCs) deliver WP/ES services within the AJC structure as a seamless part of the holistic service delivery model that has become a hallmark of excellence in the Commonwealth.

Universal services provided by ES include job search, referral and placement assistance for job seekers. Additionally, re-employment services are available for unemployment insurance claimants, as well as recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services, and staff assisted service delivery approaches.

In addition to the referral of job seekers to available job openings, services offered to employers include: assistance with the development of job order requirements andmatching job seeker skills and experience with job requirements, including skills and business culture; assisting employers with special recruitment needs and facilitating job fairs. ES also supports assistance to employers in analyzing hard-to-fill job orders, assisting with potential job restructuring (including access to the Workshare program) and helping employers avert or manage layoffs.

For this period, the Commonwealth will endeavor to continue the flexibility to seamlessly integrate Wagner-Peyser and WIOA services that has been afforded to these four large Massachusetts metropolitan workforce areas under the Wagner–Peyser Merit Staff pilot demonstration for the past 27 years, which has allowed these MassHire Career Centers (AJCs) to provide exceptional integrated service and leadership to our statewide system as well as innovation models that benefit both their and our statewide Employer and Jobseeker customers.

2. 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 MassBizWorks 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.

3. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF 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.

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE

Updated Response:

Massachusetts provides UI navigation services at every MassHire Career Center. In cases where more technical assistance is needed, claimants may be directed to the Department of Unemployment Assistance Customer Service number, staff assist through a Career Center Que line that has been designated for staff only. Lastly, there is a system and process whereby

MassHire staff raise problems to be addressed by designated Unemployment Insurance staff through a dedicated Problem Resolution Mailbox.

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.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Online Navigation Trainings

Massachusetts provides UI navigation services at every MassHire Career Center. In cases where more technical assistance is needed, claimants may be directed to the Department of Unemployment Assistance Customer Service number, staff assist through a Career Center Que line that has ben designated for staff only. Lastly, there is a system and process whereby MassHire staff raise problems to be addressed by designated Unemployment Insurance staff through a dedicated Problem Resolution Mailbox.

C. 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.

D. 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 in section below: Referrals and applications for education and training.

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Described in section below: Referrals and applications for education and training.

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.

E. 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 AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED. AN ASSESSMENT NEED DESCRIBES 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.

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 lack of trained and designated outreach staff precluded MDCS from conducting most of the required outreach and field visits activities. Notwithstanding, the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) in accordance with 20 CFR 653.108(l) conducted a limited number of outreach, field checks / visits. During these visits deficiencies at the housing facilities were noted and notices for immediate corrective action were issued to employers whose housing facilities or working conditions were not up to standard.

Below is a sample of some of the common deficiencies found during field visits:

- Reluctance of employers to file first incident reports when workers suffer work related accidents.
- Field Sanitation - lack of fresh water in the field, toilets (in the field), soap and water for hand washing, etc.
- Housing conditions – food left unattended at room temperature for extended periods of time.

Listed below are some areas of concern identified by the SMA while conducting field visits to determine if MSFWs placed by MDCS or through the Intra/Interstate clearance system were receiving fair and equitable treatment:

- Fear of retaliation if worker reported substandard conditions at work or the labor camp,
- Language / cultural barriers at labor camps,
- Housing conditions not up to minimum standards,
- Workers being transported to the work site(s) in vehicles that were not in compliance with safety standards,
- Employers paying substandard wages,
- Compliance with field sanitation standards (State / Federal),
- Lack of public or private transportation to OSCCs,

To the extent possible, efforts were made by MDCS to mitigate and / or improve on some of the barriers affecting the MSFWs by providing them and the employers with information, referrals to community-based organizations and legal aid.

Although, it is difficult to predict agricultural labor needs from one season to the next, during the last few years the labor requirements of Massachusetts agricultural employers utilizing the SWA services have slightly fluctuated up and down. In PY 2013 employers requested a total of 551 workers through the H-2A Program; for the same period in 2014 the total went down to 439. In 2015 the total number of workers requested went up by .046% (20 workers). At the "peak" of activity in 2002 approximately 1100 workers were requested through the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) and H-2Aprogram, the most recent figure of 459 represents approximately 41.7% of the total workers employed at the peak of activity. Nonetheless, Massachusetts's agricultural workers were provided with the full array of services available at MDCS. Additional services are also available for employers through other departments at the State Agency. Informational meetings for agricultural employers were conducted by the SMA and other State Agencies serving the agricultural community.

Estimated Agricultural Workers and Farms by County						
County	Number of Farms	Number of Workers	Number of farms	Working more than 150 days	Number of farms	working less than 150 days
Massachusetts	2,534	15,649	641	2040	1034	3563
Barnstable	132	773	31	65	59	164
Berkshire	158	661	52	104	52	156
Bristol	231	1133	48	225	121	297
Dukes	48	243	15	n/a	16	90
Essex	207	1438	56	224	47	244
Franklin	248	1893	50	147	126	585
Hampden	139	1050	41	83	66	336
Hampshire	245	1370	56	229	105	403
Middlesex	285	2324	73	242	81	237
Nantucket	8	30	n/a	n/a	5	5
Norfolk	122	626	42	112	30	112
Plymouth	342	1612	89	305	159	475
Suffolk	9	39	1	n/a	3	6
Worcester	362	2457	87	273	164	453

Farm worker needs include, but are not limited to the following:

- Timely labor market information to facilitate planning for continuous employment.
- Occupational guidance and training to maintain a job or transition into a different occupation or industry.
- Transportation to seek employment or supportive services.
- Worker rights information.
- Supportive services to enable MSFWs to obtain and maintain off-farm employment.
- Fair and equitable pay that includes health benefits; this is a necessity for the
- laborers, as well as for the safety of our nation's food supply and reducing health cost.
- Pesticide and heat stress prevention training.

Typical barriers that agricultural workers confront include, but are not limited to the following:

- Decreased demand for a farm laborer due to innovations in technology
- Lack of timely, reliable data and information pertinent to intrastate and interstate job openings,
- Service provider hours of operation that conflict with worker's work schedules.
- Limited employment opportunities in rural areas of the state,

- Underemployment or unemployment due to limited literacy education, Limited English Proficiency skills, and lack of non– agricultural job experience,
- Lack of full–time, year–round work, combined with low wages, that relegates MSFWs to living below the poverty line,
- Competition from undocumented workers who work for less pay and substandard living and working conditions,
- Challenges with automation (use phones and computers), resulting in limited access information, services, and benefits,
- Stigma associated with working/living a seasonal lifestyle, etc.

2. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 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

1. **Top five labor-intensive crops / geographic area of prime activity / Months of heavy activity**

The top 5 labor-intensive crop activities in Massachusetts are vegetables, nursery/greenhouse, cranberries, apples and livestock (poultry). Typically crop harvest or peak season and the ability to grow certain crops vary by region in the state. In northern and central Massachusetts apples, peaches and pears are harvested during the months of August through early November. In western and northeastern Massachusetts all sorts of vegetables are harvested from June through November. In Central and greater Boston nurseries and greenhouses are the predominant crop activities and they tend to take place most of the calendar year with emphasis during the months of April through May and October to November. In south eastern Massachusetts cranberries are the main crop activity, Livestock activities are generally found in western Massachusetts, central and greater Boston areas. Finally, tobacco is harvested in western Massachusetts in the Connecticut river valley during the months of June through August. The "Massachusetts Grown Produce Availability Calendar" from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources MDAR) was used to reference the peak harvest months.

Agriculture Production by County & Month of Peak Activity	
Top 5 Crop Activities	**Geographic Area**
1. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture	Statewide
2. Livestock, poultry, and their products	Berkshire County
3. Fruits, tree nuts, berries	Plymouth County
4. Vegetables, melons, potatoes	Hampshire & Middlesex Counties
5. Other animal products	Statewide
Months of heavy activity	May through November

Table 2. To 5 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
5. Cattle and calves	5. Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture
Bristol	**Middlesex**
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
Dukes	**Norfolk**
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
Essex	**Plymouth**
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
Franklin	**Worcester**
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, 2017 Census of Agriculture,
Information obtained from the UMASS Extension Service & NASS 2011 Report

2. Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State

In recent years, there has been a slight increase of H-2A clearance orders submitted to the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS), however the quantity of workers requested remain about the same. In Massachusetts, agricultural employers are genuinely concerned about the lack of U.S. domestic workers in the State. Employers believe there are several factors that are contributing to a lack of domestic workers, and they cite an aging workforce that is not being replenished by younger workers as the primary factor. Currently most farm workers in the State are seasonal farmworkers that work and live in local area. However, as older domestic agriculture workers in the State continue to age, we project a statewide increase in the number H-2A related job orders that will be submitted to the MDCS.

3. Identify any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State.

Growers' share concerns over the effect that the weather will have on crops, as well as the noticeable trend of migrant, seasonal and H-2A workers aging or not returning to work the following season.

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, 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 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

Data indicates that migrant/seasonal farmworkers in Massachusetts are primarily from Mexico, Guatemala, and Puerto Rico. In addition, there are workers arriving yearly from Jamaica through the H-2A Visa Program. The primary languages spoken by migrant farmworkers include Spanish, and English. During peak season, there are approximately 13,142 migrant, seasonal or H-2A workers in the State and as few as 6,000 during non-peak season.

Farm worker needs include, but are not limited to the following:

- Timely labor market information to facilitate planning for continuous employment.
- Occupational guidance and training to maintain a job or transition into a different occupation or industry.
- Transportation to seek employment or supportive services.
- Worker rights information.
- Supportive services to enable MSFWs to obtain and maintain off-farm employment.
- Fair and equitable pay that includes health benefits; this is a necessity for the
- laborers, as well as for the safety of our nation's food supply and reducing health cost.
- Pesticide and heat stress prevention training.

Typical barriers that agricultural workers confront include, but are not limited to the following:

- Decreased demand for a farm laborer due to innovations in technology

- Lack of timely, reliable data and information pertinent to intrastate and interstate job openings,
- Service provider hours of operation that conflict with worker's work schedules.
- Limited employment opportunities in rural areas of the state,
- Underemployment or unemployment due to limited literacy education, Limited English Proficiency skills, and lack of non– agricultural job experience,
- Lack of full–time, year–round work, combined with low wages, that relegates MSFWs to living below the poverty line,
- Competition from undocumented workers who work for less pay and substandard living and working conditions,
- Challenges with automation (use phones and computers), resulting in limited access information, services, and benefits,
- Stigma associated with working/living a seasonal lifestyle, etc.

4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Increased collaboration between the MA SWA and other organizations, such as the US Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, etc. has provided trainings on the Migrant Seasonal Protection Act, field checks, and housing inspections. Collaboration with the Brigham and Women's Hospital allowed for Human Trafficking training and the EO officer provided sexual Harassment training.

Outreach worker will continue to collaborate with the WIOA 167 grantee on the conduct of outreach activities as well as in the streamlining referral methods to ensure MSFWs referred are provided the full range of services available at both agencies.

The State Outreach Worker was provided with training on services to MSFWs, outreach, field checks, H-2A program, housing inspection, complaint system, processing apparent violations, MOSES and core services provided by the Career Centers.

Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities

The MA SWA ability to connect with the MSFW population has become quite challenging in recent years because most farm workers who visit the MassHire Career Centers (MCCs) come to seek Unemployment Insurance assistance or to report a problems that occurred at their workplace. In addition, the recent NASS, Census of Agriculture shows that the number of agricultural workers in the state went down by approximately 2,315 workers from the previous Census.

In compliance with Federal requirements, the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) ensures that the same level of services that are available to the public are also available to the MSFW population. To ensure that MDCS and MCCs are reaching out to this population, the State Outreach Worker is committed to meeting with potential MSFWs wherever they meet and/or congregate. This may include but is not limited to their living, working and gathering places but events hosted by churches, Migrant, Health, Migrant Education, etc. Recently, the Outreach Workers started experimenting with the use of technology to communicate and disseminate information to workers and community organizations alike. This new approach will emphasize providing on-point information to agricultural workers (including LEPs), employers, and others to allow them to make informed decisions when it comes to accessing the full range of WIOA services through technologically supported entry points as well as in-person when visiting an office.

Outreach activities include:

- Coordination of activities with the NFJP partner.
- Communication with the Department of Public Health (MDPH) on the availability of new labor camps.
- Conducting MSFW orientations at the beginning of the season to provide information on workers' rights, Career Services, Complaint System, training assistance, and local support services and worker's rights.
- Coordinating with Migrant Farmworker Programs offered in some school systems to support the migrant population.
- Participating on health and local community activities that draw-in farm workers.
- Collaborating with other organizations that serve the farm worker population
- Posting informational flyers at laundromats, churches and stores where workers are known to congregate after work hours and where farm worker family's shop.
- Attending job fairs and recruiting events.

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In Massachusetts, the MassHire Career Center staff and the outreach staff, are trained

to recognize UI eligibly related issues and to direct MSFW customers to the Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance (MDUA) for assistance resolving unemployment insurance issues. MassHire Department of Career Service (MDCS) staff works diligently to ensure that a seamless referral process exist between both agencies.

The Outreach Worker is a vital bridge to services for the MSFW population experiencing job insecurity, health issues due to the nature of their employment, etc. To that end an effective outreach worker is someone who cares deeply about the person(s) s/he is working with but who is knowledgeable about the services and protections afforded to them. Here at MDCS, we are continuously coaching and promoting learning for those staffs that directly deal with the MSFW population and/or the agricultural industry.

To encourage learning we allow employees to self-direct their learning, use casual learning check-ins and build a library of learning resources. Professional development training includes the following elements:

1. Historical assessment of where the MSFW population live, work and congregate.
2. Historical assessment of how agriculture have change over the past 20 years.
3. Brief overview of agencies that support the needs of the MSFW population.

4. Train the Trainer sessions on:
    a. Conducting orientations and workshops related to services, benefits, eligibility, and protections available to MSFWs.
    b. Identifying business needs and job opportunities of employers; promoting the hiring of program participants through local job orders, Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) and/or the H-2A Program.
    c. Conducting on-site field visits to determine employer compliance with terms and conditions of employment specified in job orders.
    d. Conducting visits to farm labor camps to verify that pre/post-occupancy deficiencies noted by MDCS or Mass. Department of Public (MDPH inspectors have been corrected.
5. Peer to Peer workshop on communicating and conducting individual interviews in both Spanish and English to articulate program services and activities.
6. Peer to Peer session on working with other MSFW service providers, including Migrant Ed, Migrant Health, Mexican Consulate, WIOA Sec 167 Grantee, Refugees and Immigrants resettlement programs, Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR), Department of Public Health (DPH), etc.
7. Formal training sessions on:
    a. Services to MSFWs
    b. Farm Labor Camp inspections (Local. State and Federal requirements).
    c. Receiving and Processing Complaints (including State, Federal employment laws and WIOA Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions.
    d. Conducting Field Sanitation visits (State and Federal requirements)
    e. Job order taking training (incl. local, ARS and H-2A related orders)
        i. Federal Employment related laws (Agricultural Industry)
        ii. State and local employment related laws/standards (Agricultural Industry)

To better serve the farmworker community the MA SWA, signed a non-financial agreement (NFA) with the WIOA Sec. 167 Grantee (New England Farm Worker's Council NEFWC) to maximize our outreach efforts and reach those farmworkers who are not reached by conventional methods.

The purpose of the non-financial MOU is to:

- State the willingness to work cooperatively and expeditiously to assure maximum services to MSFWs,
- Combine the resources and knowledge of the MA SWA and NFJP partner for more efficient service delivery.
- Ensure that information about services and the complaint system is available for dissemination to MSFWs in their language.
- Develop cooperative efforts to avoid duplication of services and maximize each other's effectiveness in meeting MSFW's needs

- Ensure that both agencies' staff are offered and provided with the opportunity to participate in each other's workshops (e.g., job Search, Outreach, etc.)
- Ensure that outreach workers from both agencies meet at least quarterly to coordinate outreach activities.

5. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

1. **Providing the Full Range of Educational and Training Services to the Agricultural Community**

The Employment Service main charge includes assisting agricultural and non–agricultural employers in recruitment efforts and in attaining and ensuring that compliance with regulations impacting terms and conditions of employment in the workplace. MassHire Career Centers (MCCs) will focus on customer choice, universal access and continuous improvement. Developing innovative methods allow for seamless and efficient self–service and staff–assisted services to MSFWs. MCCs will continue to develop strategic partnerships that will promote employer job orders, applicant skills, employment and training opportunities, and timely resolution of complaint and, apparent violations.

Elements covered on an equitable and nondiscriminatory fashion will include, but will not be limited to, MSFW benefits and protections, career guidance, vocational counseling, testing, job development, and job referral services.

ii. How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.

Massachusetts aims to continue to provide services to agricultural employers by working on recruitment strategies that will assist employers in the hiring process of U.S. workers and recall procedures for existing migrant or seasonal workers by:

- Making employers aware of services available to them through meetings, outreach, activities and informational pamphlets.
- Assisting employers recalling prior employees.
- Actively participating in the Farmworker Health Boards, meetings, Symposiums and fairs.

The Mass Hire Unified Complaint Resolution System is promoted to farmworkers and farmworker advocacy groups such as NEFWC, Migrant Education, Migrant Health and the farmworker community in general. It is promoted verbally and in writing through orientations, training, printed material handed out at special events, such as Job Fairs, etc. and by outreach staff. In addition, outreach staff is prepare and provide packets to farmworkers containing information regarding the Employment Service Complaint System, services available to farmworkers through the MassHire Career Centers, farmworker rights, and contact information for different agencies and organizations that service the farmworker population when they

conduct outreach and field visit inspections. All Mass Hire Career Centers display the required posters informing the public of the

Unified Complaint Resolution System in English and Spanish. Partner organizations

and advocacy groups are being encouraged to attend complaint system trainings led by

the Mass Hire State Monitor Advocate.

ARS Marketing

As part of the ARS marketing effort, the SWA will provide training to local Business Relation Representatives (BSRs) to enable them to facilitate information to agricultural employers the contact the local MCC office. In addition, informational presentations, detailed explanations, and question-and answer opportunities at a variety of events, including, but not limited to job fairs, local recruitment events, NFJP meetings, etc.

6. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A. COLLABORATION

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:

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  -
    -
      - 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 non-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.

B. REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

A 30-day review and comment period were provided to the New England Farm Worker's Council to provide comments, suggestions, and/or recommendations for consideration in

the development of this AOP. No substantive input was provided, and their concerns were addressed by the State Monitor Advocate. A final copy of the approved Plan will be made available to all interested partners.

C. DATA ASSESSMENT

During the last 4 years MDCS met at least 3 of the 5 "equity" level indicators (referral to Jobs, Career Counseling received Some Assistance) throughout each of the program years. This downward trend can be attributed to the several factors: 1) the self- registration option (allows customers to code themselves), 2) the increase on the number of farm labor contractors/temp agencies) connecting workers with employers (skipping the local MCC), 3) the needs for workers (including H-2A workers) has decreased due to employers utilizing more cost efficient models. In addition, there been an influx of J-1 visa holders employed by agricultural and other seasonal employers as well as novel agricultural labor models promoted by Colleges and Universities (use of "internships") to help agricultural operators harvest their crops. Finally, a critical factor the influenced the level of services to MSFWs was the lack of a full-time outreach worker specifically during the "peak period" of the agricultural season. All these factors combined reduced MCC customer traffic and for those locations utilizing the self-registration process, affected the proper identification and recording of MSFWs data. These factors negatively impacted the overall numerical goals needed to meet all 5 indicators.

D. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

There is one (1) bilingual outreach worker stationed at the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) Central Office. The Outreach staff goal is to reach as many migrant or seasonal workers as possible through strategic visits to known areas where MSFW congregate. In addition, the outreach worker will visit farms across the state to determine the type of workforce they have and to provide outreach services to MSFWs working on those farms during the harvest season.

The State's ability to connect with the MSFW population has become quite challenging in

recent years because most farm workers do not visit the MassHire Career Centers for services. This is due primarily to the fact that most workers can now filed for their unemployment insurance claim online or by phone, thus, eliminating the need to come in contact with Career Center staff.

However, Mass Hire Career Services staff ensures that the same services that are available to the general public are also available to the MSFW population. To facilitate this, the Outreach Worker and the local SWA staff are committed to meeting with them wherever they congregate. To facilitate this process, MDCS is developing a new policy and procedures to incorporate technology that will afford outreach staff the flexibility and provide the tools to better serve the needs of the agricultural community.

What was achieved:

To date 44 different farms around the state have been visited, approximately 75 farmworkers have been outreached to, 10 MSFW serving organizations have been connected with 15 different migrant related events have been attended. As a result of these activities the MDCS's presence in areas with the largest concentration of MSFWs is becoming more visible which has led to a significant increase in the number of calls to the state office from MSFWs, community stakeholders, and employers alike. These calls range from questions regarding regulatory compliance, to questions regarding workers' right, apparent violations from workers to community-based organizations looking for technical support or guidance in serving MSFWs.

In early 2020, in person outreach activities came to a halt and with it the goals for the year. As the COVID-19 pandemic began to take the form of a major health crisis, the outreach worker shifted its focus from in-person activities to a limited virtual outreach model. Businesses and

organizations not on the list of essential services were encouraged to continue operations through remote means that do not require workers, customers, or the public to enter or appear at the brick-and-mortar premises closed by the stay-home order. Following the Governor's Order, MDCS shifted priorities and all MDCS staff members were temporarily assigned to remotely assist the unemployment unit. Planned activities for the year were limited to virtual assistance to employers facing labor shortages. Locally, the Outreach Worker had already laid critical groundwork that enabled him to quickly reach local community service providers to assist employers and farmworkers alike.

As a result of all the factors listed above outreach activities were limited to virtual contact with employers, service providers and other State agencies.

Using community networks and connections to distribute information, through virtual presentations and/or exploring new internet base alternatives to reach the targeted audience. The pandemic has made social media channels increasingly important for disseminating to local Spanish and other populations both culturally appropriate updates on employment programs and information about health services. A Facebook group for the local Spanish-speaking community may be able to distribute service information if translated into Spanish or other appropriate languages.

However, we must take into consideration that some of these tools are less used than or not as well-known as others. Implementing them may require some training so that the targeted audience feel comfortable with their use. Especially for people who are less adept with new technology, users may need some time to feel comfortable with them. Hosting trainings on their use will be important to include in future project timelines.

E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

In accordance with Federal requirements, the State Monitor Advocate has been afforded the opportunity to approve and comment on tis AOP. Such review indicates that the plan has been prepared properly, omitting none of the prescribed requirements and describing the activities planned for providing services to both agricultural employers and migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs).

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time (sec 121(e)(3));	Yes
2. If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements;	Yes
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 Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
Title I; and	
4. SWA officials: 1) Initiate the discontinuation of services; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued; 3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued; 4) Approve corrective action plans; 5) 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; 6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and 7) 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.	Yes

WAGNER PEYSER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 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	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

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:

Indicators of Program Quality (IPQ) ± aligned Policies ± aligned Open and Competitive Bid ±PQ Reviews (i.e., feedback)

= Educational Progress and Access to College and Careers as documented by Outcomes: Measurable Skills Gain (MSG)

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 Li1 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.

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 Education2 (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 aligned3 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 identities4 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 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 Support5 (i.e., SABES6)

- The AE Professional Development (PD) System, historically known as SABES, consists of five centers7 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.
- 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 ALCS 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 ESOL8 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.

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

ACLS engaged in activities with WIOA partners and other interested stakeholders:

1. 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.

2. Participated in Massachusetts WIOA stakeholder activities (e.g., WIOA Steering Committee, WIOA workgroups) to establish and maintain collaborations among core partners and advance the state plan.

3. Participated in national WIOA activities organized by the U. S. Department of Education's Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTAE).

4. 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).

- 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:

- 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 the 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 boards and local WIOA partner meetings each year.

- Additionally, ACLS funds programs to provide direct service to MassHire Career Centers in the form of outstationed 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 outstationed 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 show 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:

1. integration of college and career readiness culture in all programs;
2. development of Individual Education and Career planning for students at all levels to promote college and career awareness;
3. integration of job readiness skills (i.e., level-appropriate foundation skills) at all levels;
4. integration of digital literacy at all levels to prepare adult learners for employment and further education and/or training;
5. when applicable, for students in higher levels, curriculum contextualized to in-demand industries as identified in local plans; and
6. in collaboration with workforce partners, further development and promotion of concurrent education and training opportunities through ITAs, participation in One-Stop Career Center (OSCC) training programs, and other integrated education and training models.
7. AE providers are required to integrate workforce preparation activities into all levels of AE programming.

- 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. Targeted outreach was done to all 16 MassHire Workforce Boards and adult education providers.

See chart below for PY20-21 counts for students served.

Category	# 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.

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.

Request for Funding Proposal (RFP)

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will administer the Adult Education and Family Literacy Services grants to Community Adult Learning Centers (CALCs fund code 340/345/359) Adult Education in Correctional Institutions (fund code 285/563) and MassSTEP (IET/IELCE) (fund codes 661/667/359), consistent with Public Law 113-128, Sections 201 through 243, across 16 local workforce development areas for CALCs.

Under WIOA, ACLS Adult Education eligible providers' services may include all of the following: 1) Adult education; 2) Family literacy activities; 3) English language acquisition activities; 4) Integrated English literacy and civics education; 5) Workforce preparation activities; or 6) Integrated education and training (IET) that— • Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Eligible agencies/organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services, including agencies that have not previously been funded by DESE, are eligible to apply.

Eligible Agency: An organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities that may include:

1. a local educational agency
2. a community-based organization or faith-based organization
3. a volunteer literacy organization
4. an institution of higher education

5. a public or private nonprofit agency
6. a library
7. a public housing authority
8. a nonprofit institution not described in any of subparagraphs (1) through (7) and has the ability to provide literacy activities to eligible providers
9. a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries or authorities described in (1) through (8)
10. a partnership between an employer and an entity described in any of (1) through (9)

Note: As required by WIOA the applicant must demonstrate past effectiveness by submitting past performance data in serving eligible participants.

Consistent with WIOA Subpart C, 463.24, to be considered eligible for an award, an applicant must demonstrate past effectiveness by providing performance data reflecting student outcomes. The determination considers a program's record of improving the skills of eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in the State's application for funds. An eligible provider must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

There are two ways in which an eligible provider may meet the requirements:

1. An applicant that is a current Adult Education grantee must provide performance data from the state-administered adult education Management Information System (MIS) to demonstrate past effectiveness.
2. An applicant that is <u>not</u> a current Adult Education grantee must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals using as defined by the applicant.

In awarding grants or contracts for adult education and literacy activities to eligible providers, DESE must consider the 13 WIOA Considerations (Sec 231).

Eligible agencies awarded adult education grants must:

Design, implement, and evaluate adult education services guided by the:

-
    - 13 WIOA Considerations
    - Massachusetts Policies for Effective Adult Education in Community Adult Learning Centers and Correctional Institutions
    - Massachusetts Indicators of Program Quality
    - WIOA Massachusetts Combined State Plan

Application processes for adult education funds are uniform to ensure a standardized approach to the review of proposals and awarding of funds. RFPs are advertised on the social media, state website, procurement site and notifications sent out through department mailings. All current providers and other potential applicants that request information prior to the announcement receive information on the same day as the social media notice. All eligible applicants go through the same application and review process and have direct and equitable access to apply

and compete for title II grants and contracts, including WIOA Sections 225 (Corrections), 231 (Grants) and 243 (IEL/Civics).

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 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.

Funds must be used in accordance with FY24-FY28 Massachusetts Policies for Effective Adult Education in Community Adult Learning Centers and Correctional Institutionsto provide adult education to eligible students; eligible students are:

- are at least 16 years of age;
- are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law; and
- do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or are basic skills deficient; or are English language learners.

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

ACLS supports the operation of ABE programs in six Massachusetts' county houses of corrections (CHCs) and five prisons operated by the Department of Correction (DOC). As in prior years, these WIOA funded programs offer AE and literacy and numeracy activities with emphasis on preparation for the HSE exam. In the current funding cycle, greater emphasis is being placed on career pathway development with the goal of supporting a seamless transition for incarcerated individuals upon re-entry into society. Given the maximum sentencing duration of two years in all CHCs, the need to prioritize service to CHC students scheduled for release within five years is moot. However, DOC has provided written assurance that they prioritize student enrollment as required.

Programs will continue to be supported by federal (7%) and state (3%) funds and Massachusetts used applicable WIOA considerations specified in section 231(e) to fund eligible

providers in correctional institutions to establish/operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities under Section 225.

Request for Proposals (RFP)

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will administer Adult Education in Correctional Institutions (AECI) grants, fund codes 285/563, consistent with Public Law 113-128, Section 225 to:

1. Carry out corrections education and education for other institutionalized individuals using funds provided under section 222 of the Act for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions[1] and other institutionalized individuals, including academic programs for:
    a. Adult education, literacy activities, and English for Speakers of Other Languages;
    b. Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
    c. Secondary school credit;
    d. Integrated education and training (MassSTEP – ABE);
    e. Career pathways;
    f. Concurrent enrollment;
    g. Peer tutoring; and
    h. Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release-services with the goal of reducing recidivism and facilitate:
        i. Reentry into society;
        ii. Further education and training or employment upon release;
        iii. Economic self-sufficiency; and
        iv. Smooth transitions in their roles as family members and citizens.

- Reduce disparity in education by providing, in collaboration with WIOA partners and others, high quality AE programming that provides an inclusive and welcoming environment, rigorous curriculum and instruction, and related services responsive to and supportive of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

2. Support innovation in the development of AE services to effectively serve eligible individuals most in need of education services through in-person and remote instruction and in coordination and collaboration with WIOA partner services.
3. Improve and accelerate participant outcomes, especially educational functioning level completion, high school equivalency (HSE) credential or high school diploma (ADP) attainment, and enrollment in post-secondary education or training.

Eligible agencies/organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services, including agencies that have not previously been funded by DESE, are eligible to apply.

Eligible Agency: An organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities that may include:

1. a local educational agency
2. a community-based organization or faith-based organization

3. a volunteer literacy organization
4. an institution of higher education
5. a public or private nonprofit agency
6. a library
7. a public housing authority
8. a nonprofit institution not described in any of subparagraphs (1) through (7) and has the ability to provide literacy activities to eligible providers
9. a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries or authorities described in (1) through (8)
10. a partnership between an employer and an entity described in any of (1) through (9)

N*ote:* As required by WIOA the applicant must demonstrate past effectiveness by submitting past performance data in serving eligible participants.

Consistent with WIOA Subpart C, 463.24, to be considered eligible for an award, an applicant must demonstrate past effectiveness by providing performance data reflecting student outcomes. The determination considers a program's record of improving the skills of eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in the State's application for funds. An eligible provider must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

There are two ways in which an eligible provider may meet the requirements:

1. An applicant that is a current Adult Education grantee must provide performance data from the state-administered adult education Management Information System (MIS) to demonstrate past effectiveness.
2. An applicant that is <u>not</u> a current Adult Education grantee must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals using as defined by the applicant.

In awarding grants or contracts for adult education and literacy activities to eligible providers, DESE must consider the 13 WIOA Considerations (Sec 231) and the eligible applicants will also be reviewed for alignment with local plans by local boards.

Eligible providers awarded AECI grants must:

1. Design, implement, and evaluate adult education services guided by the priorities established in the:

- 13 WIOA Considerations
- Massachusetts Policies for Effective Adult Education in Community Adult Learning Centers and Correctional Institutions
- Massachusetts Indicators of Program Quality
- WIOA Massachusetts Combined State Plan

2. Give priority to individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. Describe how the State will establish and operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education programs under Section 243 of WIOA, for English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries

MassSTEP ABE provides adult education (AE) concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training to accelerate learning outcomes, including student attainment of a high school credential and one or more relevant industry-recognized credentials (IRCs). MassSTEP ESOL provides ESOL instruction concurrently and contextually with civics education in addition to workforce preparation activities and workforce training to accelerate learning outcomes, including student attainment of one or more relevant IRCs occupations.

MassSTEP models are intended to accelerate entry into employment, and therefore only models of 16 weeks or less will be considered.

2. Describe how the State will fund, in accordance with the requirements of title II, subtitle C, Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education services and how the funds will be used for those services.

ACLS will issue MassSTEP competitive grant request designed for partnerships among education providers, training providers, employers, and workforce partners to implement an instructional program for adult learners in high wage/high demand career pathways. Grants must be developed consistent with Public Law 113-128, Sections 201 through 243. The statewide competition will also be reviewed for alignment with local plans by local boards.

Funds must be used in accordance with the *FY 2022 – FY 2024 Guidelines for Effective MassSTEP Programs in Community Adult Learning Centers and Correctional Institutions*to provide services to eligible students; eligible students are:

- at least 16 years of age; and
- not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law, and
- do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and have not an equivalent level of education or are basic skills deficient or are English language learners.

Funding must be used to:

- Deliver, manage, and evaluate a multi-year MassSTEP ABE and/or MassSTEP ESOL program
- Develop and document contextualized curriculum
- Implement NRS-required assessments
- Collect and input student data into the statewide data management system.

Eligible agencies/organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services, including agencies that have not previously been funded by DESE, are eligible to apply.

Eligible Agency: An organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities that may include:

1. a local educational agency
2. a community-based organization or faith-based organization

3. a volunteer literacy organization
4. an institution of higher education
5. a public or private nonprofit agency
6. a library
7. a public housing authority
8. a nonprofit institution not described in any of subparagraphs (1) through (7) and has the ability to provide literacy activities to eligible providers
9. a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries or authorities described in (1) through (8)
10. a partnership between an employer and an entity described in any of (1) through (9)

Note: As required by WIOA the applicant must demonstrate past effectiveness by submitting past performance data in serving eligible participants.

Consistent with WIOA Subpart C, 463.24, to be considered eligible for an award, an applicant must demonstrate past effectiveness by providing performance data reflecting student outcomes. The determination considers a program's record of improving the skills of eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in the State's application for funds. An eligible provider must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training.

There are two ways in which an eligible provider may meet the requirements:

1. An applicant that is a current Adult Education grantee must provide performance data from the state-administered adult education Management Information System (MIS) to demonstrate past effectiveness.
2. An applicant that is <u>not</u> a current Adult Education grantee must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals using as defined by the applicant.

In awarding grants or contracts for adult education and literacy activities to eligible providers, DESE must consider the 13 WIOA Considerations (Sec 231).

The following priorities have been established for MassSTEP ABE and MassSTEP ESOL program proposals that are informed by evidence-based practices.

Priorities are to support applicants that demonstrate:

- a need for MassSTEP ABE and/or MassSTEP ESOL services
- Career pathway development in priority occupations as shown in the WIOA local plan
- A program design 16 weeks or less (requirement)
- Partnership with one or more local area employers in the occupation that includes but is not limited to assistance with job placement/employment (requirement)
- Student attainment of one or more IRCs (requirement) and a high school credential (MassSTEP ABE).

- Collaborations with local MassHire Workforce Boards, MassHire Career Centers, and/or Career/Vocational Technical Education programs.
- Commitment to delivering a program that adheres to the FY 2022 – FY 2024 Guidelines for Effective MassSTEP Programs in Community Adult Learning Centers and Correctional Institutions *and* MassSTEP Brand Standards and Implementation Guide

3. Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to 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.

Each AE agency that has IELCE funding has an ACLS PS who provides technical assistance. ACLS supports career pathways (which includes IELCE) professional development through its SABES Program Support PD Center. The center provides workshops, resources, and guidance on IELCE service delivery, promising models, and identifying on-ramps to high-demand industry sectors, among other topics.

(1) Massachusetts will continue to operate IELCE programs under Section 243 of WIOA for ELLs who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries.

ACLS will also develop IPQs for its IET/IELCE programs. The IPQs will follow the same format as the ACLS *Indicators of Program Quality for Community Adult Learning Centers and Correctional Institutions.* The intent of the IPQs is to guide the planning, delivery, and evaluation of IET/IELCE programming. The IPQs will be used to guide development of future RFPs, provide agencies with a program self-assessment tool, and guide site visits.

(2) In order to receive Massachusetts IELCE funding, agencies must describe how they will provide contextualized and concurrent ESOL instruction, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training. Providers must submit to the state a schedule and description of how the instruction will be contextualized and run concurrently. In addition, providers need to partner with an in-demand industry employer that has job openings for positions leading to self-sufficiency. Programs must also end in students earning one or more industry-recognized credentials. ACLS posted IELCE abstracts which provide specific information on each IELCE program.

4. Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

(3) All IELCE programming must be contextualized to high-demand occupations as identified by the local area's MassHire Workforce Board. Providers must establish that they have qualified AE and workforce training instructors. Providers are encouraged to collaborate with local job training, postsecondary, and/or career/vocational technical education programs on the workforce training component. These workforce training providers not only have the technical expertise but are often industry experts themselves who are well-positioned to provide career guidance in addition to instruction. Advising is also a central component of all IELCE programs. Advisors guide students through the program of study and assist with employment assistance by connecting with local employers and career centers.

(4) The state encourages programs to seek program guidance from local workforce boards. The state requires applicants to provide evidence from their workforce partners that the industry they have chosen for programming is in-demand and has positions that lead to economic self-sufficiency. Priority funding is given to programs with strong relationships with local career centers, chambers of commerce, and workforce boards.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA

ACLS reserves the right to use funds made available under section 222(a)(2) for the required State leadership activities outlined in section 223 (such as the support of State or regional networks of literacy resource centers; the development and implementation of technology applications; the development and dissemination of curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction, developing content and models for integrated education and training and career pathways). Not more than 12.5% of the grant funds made available will be used to carry out these adult education and literacy activities to develop or enhance the adult education system of the State. The following activities will be supported through State Leadership funds:

- As explained in the introduction to this document, ALCS 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, MA 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.
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    - 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).

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE

State leadership funds will be used to carry out permissible state leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA including, but not limited to:

- ACLS will promote quality instruction by developing the capacity of AE educators. ACLS will continue to develop policies that build teacher capacity and strengthen instruction, inform PD, and support the capacity of staff to implement the CCRSAE so that students gain the academic skills needed to be successful in their next steps.
- ACLS provides TA and PD (e.g., marketing AE services to local businesses, developing workplace education partnerships, and contextualizing curriculum for multi-level workplace education classes) to workplace education programs.
- ACLS has a dedicated staff position to help build programs' capacity to develop a high-quality curriculum.
- ACLS has led the implementation of the Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) initiative since 2010 in CALCs and AECI programs with classes at the pre-Adult Secondary Education (pre-ASE) level. Programs continue to receive STAR PD and training that teaches adult education instructors to use evidence-based reading instruction in the classroom.
- ACLS will support and guide the integration of literacy instruction and occupational skill training. ACLS provides guidance to support adult career pathway development in MA across 16 LWDB in strengthening their ability to prepare students for careers in regionally identified industries (e.g. healthcare, early childhood education, hospitality/customer service, and advanced manufacturing). In addition, ACLS will continue to facilitate annual working meetings or sessions for programs to solicit

feedback or guidance, share promising practices and models for integrated education and training and integrated English literacy and civics education, provide networking opportunities, and plan for an expanded partnership collaboration.

- State-level guidance, policy, and TA regarding required assessments.
- State-level guidance and TA in understanding WIOA measures and meeting the state adjusted levels of performance described in section 116(b)(3).
- ALCS will provide other activities of statewide significance as needed to assist programs and promote the purpose of the adult education and family literacy programs.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

1. 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:
2. 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)."
3. 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."

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 3rd 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.

Narrow the focus to increase the impact

Approach each visit with an inquiry-based mindset grounded in humility and mutual respect

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:

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:

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ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;	Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;	Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;	Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;	Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
available under the plan;	
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;	Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and	Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;	Yes

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The eligible agency 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 the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;	Yes
3. The eligible agency 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;	Yes
4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.	Yes
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

AUTHORIZING OR CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	**Enter information in this column**

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	Enter information in this column
Applicant's Organization	Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	**Enter information in this column**
First Name	Wyvonne
Last Name	Stevens-Carter
Title	Adult Education State Director
Email	Wyvonne.stevens-carter@mass.gov

SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

DESE plays a pivotal role in ensuring access to high-quality education for all students in the Commonwealth. To support the goal of providing greater access and opportunities for students, DESE staff members are committed to developing and strengthening the knowledge, capacity, and skills necessary to understand and address how policies and practices can support more equitable student outcomes. Further, leadership within DESE is committed to cultivating the skills to foster a climate of trust throughout the agency that is built on diversity, equity, and inclusion. These efforts are spread across all centers and teams at DESE.

DESE is an equal opportunity employer where the following language is posted on all job descriptions:

An Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer. Females, minorities, veterans, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. The Commonwealth is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, national origin, veteran status, or any other basis covered by appropriate law. Research suggests that qualified women, Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC) may self-select out of opportunities if they don't meet 100% of the job requirements. We encourage individuals who believe they have the skills necessary to thrive to apply for this role.

ACLS is responsible for providing AE services to adults with academic skill levels below grade 12, and/or adults who need English language skills to succeed in our communities. Our commitment to the educational and workforce success of adult students requires that we promote and support diversity[1], equity[2], and inclusion[3] (DEI) on multiple levels. First and foremost, we must guide and support students as they work to improve their skills in a world that does not always see them as assets and often raises barriers to the achievement of their goals and aspirations.

ACLS coordinates and partners with stakeholders to identify, design, pilot, and elevate strategies that advance educational equity for adult learners, particularly those who are traditionally or currently underserved. ACLS address GEPA at a statewide level through the following examples: 1) professional development i.e. Anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion training (20 hours), developing culturally responsive curriculum 2) Hiring practices and recruitment of diverse staff and, 3) policy and practices review through a DEI lens.

ACLS ensures that all trainings, print materials and web materials are accessible to individuals with visual and hearing disabilities. State staff, program leaders and students are periodically surveyed to identify gaps that may create barriers to participation and access to services.

[1] Diversity: The representation of people from a wide range of races, languages, abilities, identities, experiences, values, and perspectives. And we recognize the impact of intersectionality.

[2] Equity: Placing a heightened focus on groups experiencing disproportionate impact through the development of systems to remediate disparities in their experiences and outcomes, particularly racial groups.

[3] Inclusion: Pursuing deliberate actions to create welcoming environments and ensure differences are actively sought and heard, and that every individual feels a sense of belonging and a role in impacting decision-making, practices, and policies.

In order to meet the requirements of Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act, all grantees must complete and submit a GEPA statement in order to receive funding. GEPA requires that all providers funded by the U.S. Department of Education or Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education stipulate how they will ensure equitable participation in their programs. It is meant to be a description of the efforts the provider will make to ensure that barriers to participation by students, teachers, and others will be removed to allow participation.

Six statutory barriers are listed: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, programs determine whether these or other barriers may prevent students, teachers, or others from such access or participation in the adult education program. ACLS requires programs submit their GEPA statements during the annual refunding process.

New grant applicants that apply for Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funding under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are required to address GEPA section 427 during the competitive Request for Funding Proposal (RFP) application process scheduled for 2023. The entire document will continue to be embedded in the RFP application to be completed by each applicant.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	43.5%	43.5%	44.0%	44.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	44.5%	45.5%	45.0%	45.5%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,900	$6,900	$7,000	$7000
Credential Attainment Rate	28.5%	28.5%	29.0%	29.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	47.0%	47.0%	47.5%	47.5%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL)

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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 Councils 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. 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:

- Edit recommendation to read, "" **– the SRC State Plan Committee (SPC) accepted this recommendation and has made the edit.**
- 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.**
- 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.**
- 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, "." **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

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 - MRC has not requested a waiver of Statewideness.

2. 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.

3. 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

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:

- Affect system change
- Increase resources, funding and service options
- Improve communication and mutual understanding among staff
- Change public attitude toward issues of disability
- Achieve common goals on behalf of those whom the agencies serve
- 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 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. NON-EDUCATIONAL 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

1. 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:

- Job exploration counseling.
- 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.
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs.
- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living.
- 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. MRC's 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 LEA's 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, work space, 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, work space, 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

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

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.

<u>Evidence of Collaboration regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services:</u>

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

1. 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.

2. 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

1. 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:

1. vocational assessment
2. vocational counseling and guidance
3. funds for training/education, job placement
4. 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 Commissioner's 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:

1. Increase the number of transition age individuals with intellectual disabilities who obtain and maintain competitive employment.
2. 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.
3. Adherence to the DDS Home and Community Based Waiver Program requirements for the delivery of supported employment services.
4. Improved outreach, communication and coordination with local schools, individuals with developmental disabilities, families, employers and other stake holders in serving our mutual consumers.
5. Enhanced communication between DDS and MRC.

<u>Criteria for mutual MRC/DDS consumers</u>:

1. 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.

2. 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.)

3. 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:

1. 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).

2. Individuals may be eligible for the full array of services available through MRC based on MRC policy and their needs.

3. 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.

4. 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:

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

3. 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. Consumer Input. MRC and DMH acknowledge the importance of consumer input and will incorporate such input in the evaluation of their collaborative efforts.

<u>Local Liaisons/Training/Joint Service Planning</u>:

1. 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:

1. Provide their counterparts with information about and answer questions regarding their Agency's eligibility or referral process and the services they provide.
2. 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

1. SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS

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 staff, and 3 benefits specialists funded through VR.

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

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:

Assumption College: 20 undergraduate students, 25 graduate students

University of Massachusetts - Boston: 15 undergraduate students, 18 graduate students

Springfield College: 10 undergraduate students, 12 graduate students

Salve Regina University: 5 undergraduate students, 5 graduate students

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

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

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission is utilizing a state approved certified Human Resource 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, Employment Service Specialist 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

1. 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 & 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 & answer inquiries of consumers & 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 & 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 & 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.

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:

1. Rehabilitation Counseling Knowledge: Knowledge of the principles & 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 & training. Knowledge of the methods & techniques of determining individual interests, aptitudes, skills and occupational preferences.

2. End User Applications: The use of Microsoft Office computer applications and ability to adapt to MRC's client case management system.
3. Active Listening Skills: Listening to what other people are saying and asking questions as appropriate.
4. Verbal & Written Comprehension: Understanding information and ideas, reading and understanding information and ideas presented in writing.
5. Verbal & 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 & 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 others 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.
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 & techniques of determining individual interests, aptitudes, skills and occupational preferences.
13. Ability to exercise discretion in handling confidential information.

2. 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:

- Employees meet with consumers who are physically, emotionally, mentally or otherwise disabled, on a regular basis to conduct intake interviews and vocational counseling & guidance sessions, work collaboratively developing the IPE, and provide assistance with securing competitive employment.
- 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.
- Explain & answer inquiries of consumers & their families and other interested parties relating to agency rules and regulations, policies and procedures, objectives and services.
- 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.

- Represent the agency in dealing with community groups, public and private organizations, vendors, and other public agencies.
- 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.
- Employees develop & 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.
- Employees perform related duties such as scheduling, attending meetings & conferences, maintaining records, preparing reports/case notes in a professional manner to be read by consumer, family member, supervisory staff or an advocate.
- 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.
- Familiarity with and ability to create/develop resumes and cover letters.
- 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.
- Employees may lead and organize office quality improvement projects as assigned by the Area Director.
- Employees may provide supervision for QVRC I staff during the short term absence of the Unit Supervisor.
- 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)
- Employees may mentor new counselors and/or those engaged in specialized and advanced degree requirements.
- Employees may supervise and mentor college/graduate level interns
- 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.)
- Employees will be assigned complex cases or transfer cases requiring exceptional mastery.
- 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.

- 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 & 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 & training. Knowledge of the methods & techniques of determining individual interests, aptitudes, skills and occupational preferences

2. End User Applications: The use of computer applications such as Microsoft office suite,, e-mail, 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 & 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 & 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 & techniques of determining individual interests, aptitudes, skills and occupational preference.

13. Ability to exercise discretion in handling confidential information.

14. Deductive & 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 & Processes: Apply knowledge of agency policies, procedures, and practices; observe, receive & 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 & 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.).

3. 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 facilities 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:

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.

4. 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

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.

An Equal Opportunity / Affirmative Action Employer. Females, minorities, veterans, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

5. 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 & 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 insure 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:

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.

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.

6. 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. Insures 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

1. A valid motor vehicle operators' license.
2. Qualifications Required at Hire:
3. Knowledge of a wide variety of occupations common to the area labor market.
4. Knowledge of the principles, practices, & techniques of marketing & sales Knowledge of interviewing techniques.
5. Ability to market and promote MRC services and job seekers/consumers.
6. Ability to communicate effectively in oral and written expression.
7. Ability to give written and oral instructions in a precise and understandable manner.
8. Ability to establish rapport and working relationships with individuals from a wide variety of different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.
9. Ability to stimulate interest in MRC programs, services, and consumers.
10. Demonstrated knowledge of principles and techniques of human service interviewing.
11. Ability to understand, explain and implement policies and procedures, standards, guidelines, laws and regulations that govern Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission activities.
12. Demonstrated knowledge of principles and practices of conducting workshops.
13. 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.
14. Working knowledge of MS Windows and Word. Proven ability to accurately and concisely record information and maintain the integrity of the computerized data base.

7. 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:

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. Identifies employers that are readily available and interested in providing Job-Driven Training Programs for MRC Consumers.

11. Assists with coordinating and ensuring that Job-Driven Training programs provide competitive employment outcomes for MRC Consumers.

12. 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.

13. 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.
14. 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.
15. Ensure placement of MRC Consumers into sector based and On-The-Job training opportunities.
16. Assist employers in assessing need for and obtaining adaptive equipment and other resources
17. 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.
18. 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.
19. 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:

1. Knowledge of a wide variety of occupations common to the area labor market.
2. Knowledge of the principles, practices, & techniques of marketing & sales Knowledge of interviewing techniques.
3. Ability to market and promote MRC services and job seekers/consumers.
4. Ability to communicate effectively in oral and written expression.
5. Ability to give written and oral instructions in a precise and understandable manner.

6. Ability to establish rapport and working relationships with individuals from a wide variety of different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.
7. Ability to stimulate interest in MRC programs, services, and consumers.
8. Demonstrated knowledge of principles and techniques of human service interviewing.
9. Ability to understand, explain and implement policies and procedures, standards, guidelines, laws and regulations that govern Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission activities.
10. Demonstrated knowledge of principles and practices of conducting workshops.
11. 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.
12. Working knowledge of MS Windows and Word. Proven ability to accurately and concisely record information and maintain the integrity of the computerized data base.
13. Two years of job placement services experience for individuals with disabilities.

8. 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 standard 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
8. 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.
9. Ensure the MRC Job Placement Services Manual is being utilized and is consistent with best practices in the district
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. Ensure placement of MRC Consumers into sector based and On-The-Job training opportunities.
13. Assist employers in assessing need for and obtaining adaptive equipment and other resources
14. 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.
15. 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.
16. Participates in staff development and cross training opportunities that expand and support functional skills and promote professional growth.

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 of experience. Education toward such a degree will be prorated on the basis of the proportion of the requirement actually completed.

Qualifications required at hire:

1. Knowledge of a wide variety of occupations common to the area labor market.
2. Knowledge of the principles, practices, & techniques of marketing & sales Knowledge of interviewing techniques.
3. Ability to market and promote MRC services and job seekers/consumers.
4. Ability to communicate effectively in oral and written expression.
5. Ability to give written and oral instructions in a precise and understandable manner.
6. Ability to establish rapport and working relationships with individuals from a wide variety of different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.
7. Ability to stimulate interest in MRC programs, services, and consumers.
8. Demonstrated knowledge of principles and techniques of human service interviewing.
9. Ability to understand, explain and implement policies and procedures, standards, guidelines, laws and regulations that govern Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission activities.
10. Demonstrated knowledge of principles and practices of conducting workshops.
11. 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.
12. Working knowledge of MS Windows and Word. Proven ability to accurately and concisely record information and maintain the integrity of the computerized data base.

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.

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

A. 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.

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B. 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

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

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

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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%).

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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 for 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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,

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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 MA 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 one 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

1. 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 increased 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/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:

1. New individuals to be provided services to determine eligibility (new applicants): Projection: 7,000
2. New individuals to be provided services to determine order of selection priority assignment and vocational rehabilitation needs (new individuals determined eligible): Projection: 6,200
3. 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
4. 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
5. 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:

1. New individuals to be provided services to determine eligibility (new applicants): Projection: 7,600
2. New individuals to be provided services to determine order of selection priority assignment and vocational rehabilitation needs (new individuals determined eligible): Projection: 6,800
3. 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
4. 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
5. 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.

3. 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.

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.

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): 10,320consumers, 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.

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

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:

1. Support business growth and sustainability elevating workforce services and developing diverse talent pipelines for businesses.
2. Expand capacity of the workforce system to accelerate employment, especially for those with challenges to employment.
3. Improve career mobility and unsubsidized employment outcomes for youth.
4. Ensure Massachusetts has a world-class service delivery system by integrating use of modern tools and techniques.

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.

<u>Key Performance Indicators</u>:

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 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
- 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 $15/hour and a median hourly wage of $14.25/hour
- 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 $18.000 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 7:

- 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:

- 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.
- # 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 2nd and 4th 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 a 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 13:

- 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 12:

- 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 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:

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).

Issue 100 vehicles per program year utilizing the RFR process, for a total of 400 over the 4-year period.

Number of individuals who may be employed as a result of this program

90% or greater satisfaction with the program

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:

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

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[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 16:

- 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.

[1] Behavioral Health Needs are defined by RSA within Policy Directive *RSA-PD-19-03* as Disability Code 18: Psychosocial Impairments (e.g., interpersonal and behavioral impairments, difficulty coping)

3. ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

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.

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

MRC has considered WIOA Performance measures and its performance on these measures 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 2nd Quarter After Exit	48.2%	52.2%	50.9%
Employment Rate at 4th Quarter After Exit	N/A	22.9%	48.4%
Median Quarterly Earnings at 2nd Quarter After Exit	$4,332.83	$4,353.52	$4,444.22

WIOA Common Performance Measures	FY19/PY18	FY20/PY19	FY21/PY20
Credential Obtainment Rate	N/A	4.7%	16.9%
Measurable Skills Gains	8.4%	7.3%	21.0%
Effectiveness of Serving Employers –Retention from 2nd to 4thQuarter 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

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

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. 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.

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

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.

O. STATE'S STRATEGIES

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.

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

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 outreaching 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 undeserved. 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.

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)

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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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:

1. Design career pathways across partners aligned with business demand;
2. Improve foundational skills and transition to postsecondary education and training for individuals with barriers to employment;
3. Assist individuals to achieve economic self-sufficiency through support services, labor market driven credentialing, and employment; and
4. 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.

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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 Councils 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.

4. 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

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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:

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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 10th 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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 :

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. Social Media & 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.

7. 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 it's 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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).

11. 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

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.

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 a 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
- 75% 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 22.5 hours/week.
- MRC ACCS Job Seekers placed receive an average hourly wage of $12.50/hour and a median hourly wage of $12.25/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

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 #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 3rd 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 drop out 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 (Note the minimum wage has been progressively increasing in Massachusetts – this initial target was based on the minimum wage in 2019, the target has been increased for the final 2 years of the plan based on the progressive wage increases)

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 #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 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 2nd 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 2nd 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 4th 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 4th 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 4th 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 2nd 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 7l3% 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.
- # 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 2nd and 4th 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 a 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 a 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	54%	50%

Goal #12	FY20	FY21
Mentoring		

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:

- 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).
- Issue 100 vehicles per program year utilizing the RFR process, for a total of 400 over the 4-year period.
- Number of individuals who may be employed as a result of this program
- 90% or greater satisfaction with the program
- 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:

- 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 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 #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 bv 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.

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.

B. 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 2nd Quarter After Exit, the Employment Rate at 4th Quarter after Exit, Median Wage at 2nd 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

Common Performance Measures	FY19/PY18	FY20/PY19	FY21/PY20
	48.2%	52.2%	50.9%
Employment Rate at 4th Quarter After Exit	N/A	22.9%	48.4%
Median Quarterly Earnings at 2nd 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 2nd to 4thQuarter After Exit (MRC)	75.0%	65.0%	70.0%
Effectiveness of Serving Employers –Repeat Business Customers	11.6%	11.1%	10.8%

Common Performance Measures	FY19/PY18	FY20/PY19	FY21/PY20
(MRC)			

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) 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. I

In Program Year 2020, MRC assigned $1,355,221.30 to Innovation and Expansion activities, and to date in Program Year 2021, MRC has assigned $1,885,067.22 to Innovation and Expansion activities. A summary of activities undertaken over the past two program years include:

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. Work Based Learning Experiences for Students with Disabilities to assist them in preparing for future employment and educational experiences.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. MRC partners and contracts with the 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

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 completive 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:

1. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission State Ongoing Support Funding
2. IRS Section 44
3. Department of Mental Health
4. Department of Developmental Services
5. Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission Statewide Head Injury Program
6. Social Security Work Incentives/PASS Plan
7. Impairment-Related Work Expenses
8. Natural Supports from Employers

9. Medicaid Waiver Supported Employment Services
10. Other Comparable Benefits

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.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL) CERTIFICATIONS

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[14], AND ITS SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT[15];

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

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)[16] AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[17] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[18] , 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;

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

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[19] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[20] , 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;

5. THE STATE 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.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE 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;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Toni A. Wolf

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Commissioner, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

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.

FOOTNOTES

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

Signatory information	Commissioner, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
Name of Signatory	Toni A. Wolf
Title of Signatory	Commissioner
Date Signed	March 3, 2022

ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
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	

The State Plan must include	Include
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. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:	
3.a. The establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.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 (A or B must be selected):	
3.b.(A) “is an independent State commission” (Yes/No)	No
3.b.(B) “has established a State Rehabilitation Council” (Yes/No)	Yes
3.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	
3.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)	
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. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds (Yes/No)	No
3.f. 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 (Yes/No)	No

The State Plan must include	Include
3.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? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan	No
3.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	
3.i. All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.j. The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.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	
3.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	
3.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:	
4.a. Comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.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 State Plan must include	Include
the Rehabilitation Act	
4.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? (Yes/No)	Yes
4.d. Determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.e. 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	
4.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	
4.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	
4.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	
4.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	
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,	
4.j.i. Has developed and will implement,	
4.j.i.I. Strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and	
4.j.i.II. Strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for	

The State Plan must include	Include
students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and	
4.j.ii. 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:	
5.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	
5.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	
5.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:	
6.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	
6.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	

The State Plan must include	Include
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:	Yes
7.a. The Designated State Agency Assures That it Will Provide Supported Employment Services as Defined in Section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b. The designated State agency assures that:	
7.b.i. 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	
7.b.ii. 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	

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	51.0%	51.0%	52.0%	52.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	48.0%	48.7%	49.0%	49.7%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$4,500.00	$4,500.00	$4,600.00	$4,600.00
Credential Attainment Rate	20.0%	20.0%	22.0%	22.0%
Measurable Skill	35.0%	35.0%	40.0%	40.0%

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Gains				
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND)

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

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;

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:

- 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.

- Two job fairs were held remotely in October 2020 and 2021, with an emphasis on reaching out to employers.
- The RC praised MCB's internship program, held remotely in 2020 and 2021, which was innovative and successful.
- 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.
- 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.
- The RC supported MCB's annual White Cane Day, which was held remotely and enabled greater geographical participation due to the remote conferencing platform.
- In its quarterly meetings, the RC followed closely the MCB's transition.
- 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.
- The RC recommended that the new locations remain accessible and received affirmation that the offices would not move during the upcoming year.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- The RC expressed concerns about the impact of a policy that could lead to delays in service.
- 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.
- 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:

- One focus group was held, and a web-based survey was developed and conducted.
- MCB RC has continued to review the consumer satisfaction studies conducted.
- 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.
- 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.
- One focus group was held and a web-based survey was developed and conducted.
- The RC used Google Forms and found it to be accessible; it will be used for future web-based surveys.
- MCB contracted with Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG to complete a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment that was completed in September 2020.
- PCG used multiple data sources to develop the analysis and recommendations within this report including:
- Secondary data sources (American Community Survey (ACS) 1- and 5-year estimates)
- Consumer and community partners surveys
- Key informants focus groups and interviews
- Case management data
- Qualitative analysis (personal experiences and stories).
- 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 RC Chair participated in an agency workgroup that made recommendations to PCG during the course of the CSNA.
- MCB will continue to work with closely with the RC and a sub-committee on needs assessment to plan future needs assessment methodology.
- 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.
- The goal of this innovative program is to enhance its development and targeting of future programming and to contribute to its comprehensive needs assessment.
- The consultant developed a short survey to be asked during the intake process.

- The consultant developed a much larger panel of questions that could be used in the survey of existing clients.
- The RC provided feedback to MCB and to consultants on the design of the questionnaire.
- RC members noted that some questions were highly personal.
- 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, Exec. 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.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

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.

3. 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

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. 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

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 & 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, MA 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 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. NON-EDUCATIONAL 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. In recent years, 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

1. 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:

- Timely development of an Individual Plans for Employment for each student with a disability. MCB's policy on the timely development and approval of individualized plans for employment for students is that an Individual Plan for Employment that is mutually agreed-upon and fully consistent with consumer choice must be developed within 90 days after the determination of eligibility. The IPE must be developed as soon as possible, but not later than 90 days after the date of determination of eligibility unless the counselor and the consumer agree to the extension of that deadline to a specific date by which the Individual Plan for Employment must be completed. Any extension, the reasons for it, and the consumer's agreement must be recorded in the case record.

- The implementation of the agency's agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). MCB and DESE 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 the scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals. It also provides for: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 coordination and development of students' individual education programs through the Chapter 688 planning process of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. This is an inter-agency process for the planning of the transition of students with disabilities to adult services or employment after completion of special education.

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 four 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. 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 mandates 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 or her 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;

An 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, or younger as appropriate. 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 services and 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.
- Subminimum Wage Contracting: Neither the State educational agency nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in federal regulations (34 CFR §397.5(d)), for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a visual disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage. In the event that a student who is visually impaired is seeking subminimum wage employment, both MCB and ESE will coordinate to satisfy the documentation requirements set forth in federal regulations (34 CFR Part 397).
- Neither the State educational agency nor the local educational agency will enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in federal regulations (34 CFR §397.5(d)), for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a visual disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage. In the event that a student who is visually impaired is seeking subminimum wage employment, both MCB and ESE will coordinate to satisfy the documentation requirements set forth in federal regulations (34 CFR Part 397).

- 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.

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. 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 21 or up to the age of 22 years to acquaint them with the agency and its services and to offer pre-employment transition services, transition services, and other vocational rehabilitation services. Pre-employment transition services are offered to all students with disabilities between the ages of 14 and 21 or up to the age of 22 years.

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.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

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. A similar stakeholder meeting was held in 2019 and is planned for 2020. 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 mentor**s.** 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

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 has had positive experiences 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

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 employers 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

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

1. SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

A. QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS

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;

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: 1
- Rehabilitation Counselors & Employment Specialists: 1
- Other Direct Service (AT engineers, OM, RT, etc.): 0
- Direct Service Supervisors: 0
- Clerical and Support Staff: 1

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.): 7
- Direct Service Supervisors: 2
- Clerical and Support Staff: 3

B. PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

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 located in Rhode Island.

Many MCB staff have graduated from these programs over the years. The agency also regularly 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 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:

Assumption College: 20 undergraduate students, 25 graduate students

University of Massachusetts - Boston: 15 undergraduate students, 18 graduate students

Springfield College: 10 undergraduate students, 12 graduate students

Salve Regina University: 5 undergraduate students, 5 graduate students

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

- 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

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 applied 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. The agency also provides a number of short-term training opportunities for vocational rehabilitation staff. During PY 2021 MCB conducted more than twenty in-service training programs on topics such as: ethics, diversity, eye diseases, the Expanded Core Curriculum, and work incentives.

Agency staff also attended a number of training courses and programs provided by the Commonwealth and other private institutions. Due to the Covid pandemic, almost all of these trainings were held remotely.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

A. 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.

During PY 2020 MCB conducted more than twenty in-service training programs on topics such as: ethics, diversity, crisis intervention, eye diseases, the Expanded Core Curriculum, autism, and work incentives. Agency staff also attended a number of training courses and programs provided by the Commonwealth and other private institutions.

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.

The Steering Committee of the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board works with the Steering Committee members, including the 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, Workforce Development 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. 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 has 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

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 and and several who are fluent in Portuguese. 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

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 sixth year, the agency also developed and sponsored a conference called “Vision of Collaboration” on pre-employment transitions services. More than 100 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 MA 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, MCB conducted a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment described below.

Project Partner

Public Consulting Group, Inc.

Objectives

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))

Consumer and community partners surveys

Key informant focus groups and interviews

Case management data

Qualitative analysis (personal experiences and stories)

Published findings, recommendations, and a call to action that meets the requirements of the §361.29 Section 101(a)(15) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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.

B. WHO ARE MINORITIES;

- MCB VR services over-represent individuals of almost all racial and ethnic minority groups. Many of these differences are small, less than a percent. MCB's open cases are 10 percentage points more likely to be Black or African American (19.6% in MCB's population versus 9.6% of Massachusetts residents with a visual impairment). This is also true of the Hispanic or Latino population (12.6% vs. 2.1%). While a majority of MCB participants are White, there was no evidence of any racial or ethnic minority communities being underserved by MCB.
- Members of minority groups are less likely to agree that they have had positive experiences with their VR counselors. The reasons for this are not immediately clear due to the limited scope of this research, and may require a more qualitative, one-on-one focus. However, the consistency of this finding suggests there could be issues with communication and relationships between VR counselors and consumers who are minorities.

C. WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Focus groups, interviews, and open-ended comments all clearly highlighted how rural areas in Massachusetts feel less well served than those in more urban areas. Resources may or may not be mis-allocated but there exists the perception of a different service level. MCB intends to explore the reasons driving this perception to determine if they are communication barriers or related to service delivery.

Modern technology and technology-first service delivery can help addresses the needs of rural consumers, including expanding transportation options and improving access to services. By training counselors, service providers, and consumers in how best to use remote access technologies, MCB hopes to increase access to staff and services without a significant increase in per consumer cost. MCB also intends to seek ways to expand internet access and develop training and counseling methods that work remotely as a way to address rural consumers' concerns.

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.

In 2020, MCB also conducted a targeted assessment of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Needs Assessment.

Project Partner

Public Consulting Group, Inc.

Objectives

Understand the current needs and resources available to active Pre-ETS cases under the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, as well as the characteristics of the population. This assessment informed MCB staff about the current service population, services in demand, and ways to improve future services.

Key Activities

Conducted a thorough analysis of MCB's Pre-ETS Fiscal Forecasting Report and active cases data.

Created and fielded a survey to understand the views and experiences of individuals who currently receive Pre-ETS.

Conducted focus groups and interviews with MCB Pre-ETS consumers, service providers, youth who have received Pre-ETS, and teachers of students with visual impairments (TVI).

Published findings and recommendations in a series of complete reports.

The assessment indicates that geography and transportation limit access to Pre-ETS services. PCG recommended that MCB explore the delivery of virtual Pre-ETS to eligible students who may be impacted by these barriers. With continued challenges due to COVID-19, virtual Pre-ETS delivery is an opportunity for MCB to increase access for eligible students, both now and on an ongoing basis. MCB is working with their current Pre-ETS partners to deliver virtual services or identify and implement successful practices from other states.

MCB will also consider exploring additional ways for Pre-ETS consumers to access transportation resources where virtual services may not be possible or appropriate, as transportation was cited as one of the most common barriers to service delivery. While the lack of public transit resources or accessibility of public transit presents barriers for Pre-ETS consumers, a variety of local and regional mobility management resources in Massachusetts do exist and could potentially help Pre-ETS consumers to access transportation services where and when they need them to further increase their independence.

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

As part of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment completed in 2020, MCB's contractor, PCG, conducted two specific Pre-ETS focus groups to learn about Pre-ETS services, one for Pre-ETS participants and one for Pre-ETS providers. Also, a focus group for Teachers of students with Visual Impairments (TVI) provided valuable Pre-ETS insights.

Pre-ETS Participants

The Pre-ETS participants and/or family members focus group provided insight into a variety of topics. The participants expressed a unanimous preference for post-secondary training into specialized fields such as science or music to further career opportunities. They also provided insight into their experiences with Curveball software. One participant noted some issues with skipped pages and difficulty reading school documents, textbooks, or articles. Other participants expressed that Curveball worked well for their purposes and had no issues to report. All participants in this conversation were fairly new to Pre-ETS services. This newness combined with COVID-19 pandemic constraints seemed to be causing service disruptions as participants indicated that they were having a difficult time getting started into a solid program.

Pre-ETS Providers

Participants in the Pre-ETS provider focus group represented a diverse group of providers with varying program formats to make a representative sample across the state.

When discussing service barriers, the overwhelming theme was transportation as a consistent and frustrating barrier. Several providers spoke to the fact that to build a sizeable cohort of individuals for programs, they needed to cast a wide net geographically to fill spots with age and interest appropriate participants. This second point on building efficient cohorts of participants in programs also represented a barrier. Finding enough individuals with similar interest in the varying programs and in the same general age range is difficult.

Other barriers of note include the difficulties of managing program transitions and the lack of an effective recruiting mechanism. Program awareness seemed light in other research, and providers also claimed difficulty with awareness and accessing families.

Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI)

TVI participants gave significant insight into the student-teacher conduit of information. One notable finding was that individuals with multiple disabilities were less likely to enter the job market and would more than likely participate in community programming post-graduation.

Regarding the use of MCB services, focus group participants pointed to recent rule changes that had expanded eligibility to more of their students. This expanded eligibility is viewed positively but utilization of services is still not widely adopted due to a lack of information on MCB services.

When discussing significant barriers, two trends emerged. First, the lack of independent or public transportation was cited as a significant barrier to accessing services before and during transition phases. Second, some TVI focus group participants expressed that some individuals were enabled into dependence. Students lacking community and social interaction and experiences created a barrier to fostering independent living skills. Participants were also asked

how their students learned about MCB services and many expressed that they themselves were the best conduit of information to both students and their families.

K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

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 25,000, 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 PY 2022 and PY 2023. In October 2017, MCB established a new eligibility 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. 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 PY 2022 and PY 2023.

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 PY 2022 and PY 2023.

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 FFY 2023 will be approximately $10,700,000. About $7,750,000 will be from Section 110, the Basic Vocational Rehabilitation Program. In the event federal funds for Supported Employment are not available in FFY 2023, MCB will utilize federal and state vocational rehabilitation funds instead.

L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

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

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.

2. IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

Jointly Developed State Plan Goals and Priorities

Program 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 PY22-23.

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:

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 are using the performance accountability measures of section 116 of WIOA and the baseline measurements to review the VR Program. 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 and reports of the effectiveness of the VR program and the agency's performance on the Performance Indicators in their development of the goals and priorities.

M. ORDER OF SELECTION

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.

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.

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.

D. TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER; 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.

E. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

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.

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.

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 PY 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 PY 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 and allowed extended services to students and youth with the most significant disabilities. The agency plans to review all supported employment cases of youth with the most significant disabilities to ascertain whether any have an unmet need for extended services for a period not to exceed 4 years until the youth reaches age 25. The availability of these extended services will be made more widely known to both school personnel and staff of the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. Currently, most youth with the most significant disabilities are provided with needed extended services by the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Disabilities or the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health.

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 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

1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

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

Relevant strategies:

- 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 Afghanistan.

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 meetings at MCB to share information and recommendations about outreach to minority group members and others who are underserved and legally blind. Other experts are invited to provide specific training on issues pertinent to outreach to members of minority groups and other underserved groups.

During the past two years of the Covid 19 pandemic, the work undertaken by the Diversity Committee has in fact increased. A number of community meetings and trainings have been held remotely including:

- A workshop on Black Culture, Identities, Health, and Wellness
- A training program during Black History Month to tie the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion to historical context and to prompt honest dialogue about Pan-African diasporic cultures, identities, health, and wellness.
- A celebration of Black History Month that included four sessions on topics such as: Black leaders connected to Massachusetts and their accomplishments as writers and politicians and in the fields of sports, culture, science, education, and the arts.
- A celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month with Raquel Quezada, founder and president of the foundation "Changing the World for People with Disabilities" who discussed the challenges and opportunities facing Latinx communities, particularly during the pandemic, and how her work supports these communities and specifically people with disabilities.
- A celebration of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month consisting of four sessions that included presentations by community leaders to discuss "Uncovering the Asian American Experience" and services targeted to meet the needs of Asian American and Pacific Islander consumers.
- An event in recognition of Juneteenth Independence Day with William Watkins, Director of Workforce Development at the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts. The presentation included the history and significance of Juneteenth as well as the services provided by the Urban League to help individuals overcome barriers to employment and other opportunities.

The MCB Diversity Committee has compiled and centralized a directory of multicultural statewide resources, recognizing that there are countless regional and subject matter-specific topics. The committee will continue to add to the multicultural resource directory with the assistance of staff across the state.

The agency's Staff Development Unit continues to work 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, during PY2020 and PY2021, MCB offered several training seminars (remotely for the most part) for staff on topics relevant to provision of services to minority and other underserved populations, including:

- Movement and Community Conversation Workshop centering on the theme of Black cultures, identities, & health and wellness, with Melissa Alexis of Cultural Fabric.
- A mandatory training on "Unconscious Bias" to assist staff to assess their understanding of unconscious bias and to learn strategies to interrupt and counteract unconscious bias.
- An educational session for MCB staff on LGBTQ+ Inclusion that explained and discussed: a grounding view of social justice, state institutions, equity, and

intersectionality; key terms and concepts utilized by LGBTQ communities; and diversity and disparities in LGBTQ communities within Massachusetts.

- Several discussion sessions for staff on "Healing From Racial Trauma & Practicing Thoughtful Allyship".
- A training program on "Fostering Civility & Respect- Preventing Discrimination in the Workplace." This training also included information on fair employment practices.

Regional staff have for many years identified agencies and associations serving minority communities throughout the state and attended 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 and underserved communities.

During the Covid 19 pandemic, staff have attended virtual community events when available but have not been able to fully engage in person with many agencies and organizations. A major goal for PY 2022 and PY 2023 is to re-establish those relationships and to attend as many events as possible within minority and underserved 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. 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 increased partnership under WIOA with Adult Education and Literacy programs has facilitated cooperation to address this long-standing problem.

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 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.

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 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 Centers. This MOU is regularly reviewed and is revised as necessary. Local areas will determine how MCB programs and services are accessed through the MassHire 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 Centers in one or more of the following ways:

- MassHire staff will be appropriately trained to provide information to legally blind and visually impaired consumers about programs, services, and activities available through MCB.
- MassHire 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.
- Based on need, MCB staff will be physically present at the MassHire Center to provide services.
- MCB will support an integrated service delivery strategy in which MassHire Centers staff will provide Career Center services to legally blind and visually impaired customers by:
- Assisting the Local Boards with training MassHire Centers staff to use assistive technology with visually-impaired or legally blind consumers who seek career center services.
- Providing training to MassHire Centers 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 Centers 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

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind will continue to use a portion of the funds allotted to the Commission under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, 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. Consistent with the findings of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and goals and priorities identified jointly with the 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. Specific priorities identified include:

- Increase job retention
- 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.
- 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.

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. MCB also has one staff member is fluent in Polish and and several who are fluent in Portuguese. MCB VR counselors who work with deaf-blind individuals are proficient in American Sign Language.

The agency has access to telephone interpreter services in all of its offices to assist counselors in working with consumers who speak all languages, especially uncommon ones. These services offer 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 Khymer, Chinese, French, Russian, Polish, Croatian, Vietnamese, and Spanish.

MCB has 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 distributes 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. MCB has also developed a Request for Response (RFR) for a project to develop a VR Welcome kit that will provide more consistent branding and consumer information. MCB has also been holding frequent virtual town hall meetings for consumers during the pandemic addressing issues such as transportation and specific services such as rehabilitation teaching, orientation and mobility, and self-employment.

P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

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 in 2020. As explained in Section l., the RC and MCB have modified the goals for PY 2022 and 2023. The narrative interwoven with the goals below provides a report of progress over the past two years in achieving the VR program goals developed in 2020. 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. The current baseline for evaluation is a survey of MCB RC members' evaluation of progress towards the goals. The RC intends to develop new, more extensive methods of evaluation for the modified goals and priorities. All progress over the past two years 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 it 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 include, but are not limited to:

- Monitor the agency 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 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

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: In PY2021, members rated the agency's progress as Very Good (4.2 out of 5).

Goal II: To develop more employment options in PY 2020 and PY 2021 for VR consumers, including supported employment, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

Priorities include, but are not limited to:

- 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 who are "out of school" youth with the result that the number of students and youth participating 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).
- Devote re-allotment funds to the continuance of the "Employment Now Initiative" program that has demonstrated a high success rate for employment outcomes for its participants.'
- Coordinate with the other components of the statewide workforce development system to better enable them to provide appropriate assistance to individuals who are legally blind by: recommending and helping to fund appropriate assistive technologies for MassHire Career Centers; offering to provide all MassHire Career Centers with guidance regarding 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.

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 the 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 assists 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: During PY2021, members rated the agency's progress as Good/Very Good (3.6 out of 5).

Goal III: To increase outreach to enroll additional eligible VR consumers statewide in PY 2020 and PY 2021, based on estimates that a significant number of qualifying consumers are not presently enrolled, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

Priorities:

- Establish additional mediums for creating increased MCB exposure
- Back fill the MCB Research Analyst position to help guide MCB to identify and reach out to unenrolled qualifying MA consumers.
- Fill current opening for MCB Marketing and Communications position.
- Explore the use of RSA Innovation and Expansion funding to increase outreach.
- Reevaluate the effectiveness of the present methodologies for conducting MCB consumer satisfaction surveys, and adjust, as appropriate.
- Explore the outcomes derived from the present Peer Mentoring program to determine the potential value for expanding the program.
- Recruit and train successful MCB VR alumni as ambassadors to conduct outreach to unenrolled consumers.

Report of Progress:

MCB's progress towards this goal has been severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Fortunately, the agency has only experienced a small decrease in the number of VR consumers during this challenging time. The number of consumers rehabilitated has actually increased. The Director of Communications position has been filled very effectively. MCB was able to develop and deploy a very extensive outreach campaign during PY 2020 and PY 2021 that involved television, radio, and print media. A graphic novel about vocational rehabilitation and employment was produced for outreach to pre-employment transition consumers and their families. MCB is currently in the process of hiring a Management/Research Analyst.

MCB RC Evaluation: During PY2021, members rated the agency's progress as Very Good (4 out of 5).

Goal IV: To help legally blind persons, 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 annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal

Priorities:

- Advocate and educate consumers and public officials on pedestrian safety issues which impact travel by pedestrians who use a white cane or service dog to seek and maintain employment.
- Advocate for better access to and improvement of public transportation and paratransit systems in order to increase the employment outcomes of persons who are legally blind.
- Increase access to computers and basic keyboarding skills in order to enable more MCB registered consumers to acquire elementary job readiness skills.
- 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.

- Increase pre-employment transition, transition, and college students' access to educational materials, resources and websites.
- Increase and adjust Assistive Technology training for working age MCB consumers to support those currently working to maintain or advance their employment opportunities.
- Improve job readiness technology skills for those MCB consumers hoping to enter or reenter the competitive workforce.
- Advocate for improved accessibility of federal and state government and private internet sites and documents.

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.
- 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 been added to increase consumer's options.

MCB RC Evaluation: During PY 2021, members rated the agency's progress as Good/Very Good (3.6 out of 5).

Goal V: Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of vocational rehabilitation services delivery in PY2020 and PY2021, as measured by the Rehabilitation Council's annual evaluation of the agency's progress toward the goal.

Priorities:

- Annually review the agency performance on RSA standards and indicators and on other statistical measures of effectiveness and recommend actions to improve performance when appropriate.
- Improve communication and collaboration between VR counselors in MCB's regional offices and VR counselors in MCB's Deaf-Blind Extended Support Unit to enhance services to consumers.
- 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 and programs offered by service providers 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

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.

MCB RC Evaluation: During PY 2021, members rated the agency's progress as Good/Fair (2.8 out of 5).

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.

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

The agency has had more than sufficient resources to provide vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services to all eligible individuals during PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Massachusetts Legislature has continued to fund the agency's VR program sufficient to match federal funds.

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 (PY2015). 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 (PY2016) which is regularly reviewed and adjusted as needed.. 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 conducted a study to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a for-profit business enterprise that employs individuals who are blind and visually impaired in a competitive integrated supported employment environment. The agency is currently recruiting consumers to train for self-employment opportunities.

B. DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

The Covid 19 pandemic has disrupted the provision of services to some degree during PY 2020 and PY 2021. Some programs have been temporarily closed and some consumers have opted to postpone participation in supported employment services. During the next two years, MCB has a major goal to promote counselor and consumer awareness of supported employment opportunities in the post-pandemic environment. The current labor shortage in Massachusetts provides an excellent opportunity to increase and improve the quality of supported employment placements in competitive employment.

Long-standing problems and factors that continue to 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 or MCB's Deaf-Blind Extended Services Program.

3. THE VR PROGRAM'S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA

The RC will use the WIOA common performance accountability measures under Section 116 of WIOA in its evaluation of the effectiveness of the VR program. MCB will analyze the data provided by RSA and will work with the RC to create a tailored report, more understandable to the layman, for the RC on the common measures.

Between PY2017 and PY2019, MCB reported baseline data to RSA for the WIOA common performance measures as specified in the state plan requirements. Beginning in PY20 MCB is reporting data under a negotiated performance goal for Measurable Skills Gains (MSG). The MSG

goal for PY20 was 20% and is 30% for PY21. In PY20219, MCB attained a 34.4% Measurable Skills Gain rate. MCB and its sister agency, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, have negotiated performance goals for the Employment Rate at 2nd Quarter After Exit, the Employment Rate at 4th Quarter after Exit, Median Wage at 2nd Quarter After Exit, and Credential Attainment for PY22 and PY23 with RSA.

MCB has been and will continue working with all its workforce partners to complete the Statewide Performance Report for the Common Measures. MCB will continue to analyze the data as it becomes available and intends to create reports for management and staff and the Rehabilitation Council on the Common Measures.

MCB will work with its case management system contractor, Alliance Enterprises, to develop a data dashboard of this information that will provide more timely data to provide to management staff, VR counselors, and Rehabilitation Council members. This will better allow the agency to work on strategies to increase performance on the Common Measures.

MCB has used the data tools developed by the RehabData Workgroup which show MCB performance for PY 2019 as:

Measurable Skills Gains Rate: 34.4%

Pre-employment Transition Services Provided under an IPE: 68 (a 79% increase from PY2018)

Employment Rate (Exit/Post Exit): 48.4%

MCB finds these data tools to be extremely helpful and intends to take full advantage of them as more become available.

The agency's performance for PY 2019 and PY2020 on some other measures is below:

Measure	**PY2019**	**PY2020**
Repeat Business Customers	.426 (46)	0
Funds Expended on Career Services	$252,176	$275,438
Consumers Provided Career Services	897	809
Cost per Consumer-Career Services	$281	$340
Funds Expended on Training Services	$2,208,351	$3,884,658
Consumers Provided Training Services	858	728
Cost per Consumer Training Services	$2,574	$5,336
Consumers Enrolled in More than One Core Partner Program	9	19
Number of Employers Hired Consumers During PY	115	141
# Employers Hired More than One Consumer During PY	5	14
Consumers Exited into Competitive Employment	126	158

It is notable that while the Covid 19 pandemic resulted in a decrease in consumers served in PY2020, the number of consumers who exited into competitive employment increased by 25%.

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED

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, the agency decided that this program is an important innovation and expansion activity that needs to continue in order to provide services designed to meet the needs of consumers and pre-employment transition students who are in danger of becoming chronically unemployed. Drawing on the successful experience with Project SEARCH, the agency developed the Employment Now initiative which is similar to Project SEARCH but is locally managed by the agency.

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 set aside and expended $200,000 of Innovation and Expansion activity funds on the Employment Now Program during each of past two years (PY 2021 and PY 2022). The results of the program for individual consumers have continued to be excellent.

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

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 Commission for the Blind has established a process to provide quality Supported Employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities using both Title VI B funds and, if needed, Title I funds to provide Supported Employment services. MCB provides a range of supported employment services to assist consumers in their efforts to choose, obtain and maintain completive employment opportunities based on their abilities, skills, interests and needs as outlined in their Individualized Plan for Employment. MCB provides supported employment services to youths and adults with disabilities based on their needs and services outlined in their individualized plan for employment.

MCB utilizes a network of Qualified Community Rehabilitation Providers through the Massachusetts 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 blindness. Peer support and flexible supports have been integrated into the CIES procurement which should benefit consumers receiving supported employment services through MCB and its partners.

Services are provided within federal guidelines until the employment is secure and appropriate extended (non-VR) services are in place.

In addition, MCB 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, extended services, and comparable benefits to

assist individuals receiving supported employment services in obtaining and maintaining employment.

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.

The Covid 19 pandemic has disrupted the provision of services to some degree during PY 2020 and PY 2021. Some programs have been temporarily closed and some consumers have opted to postpone participation in supported employment services. MCB policies on supported employment have not been changed. During the next two years, MCB has a major goal to promote counselor and consumer awareness of supported employment opportunities in the post-pandemic environment.

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.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND) CERTIFICATIONS

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[14], AND ITS SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT[15];

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

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)[16] AGREES TO OPERATE AND ADMINISTER THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[17] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[18] , 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;

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

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[19] , THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[20] , 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;

5. THE STATE 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.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE 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;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

David D'Arcangelo

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Commissioner

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.

FOOTNOTES

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Name of Signatory	David D'Arcangelo
Title of Signatory	Commissioner
Date Signed	March 7, 2022

ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for	

The State Plan must include	Include
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. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan:	
3.a. The establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.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 (A or B must be selected):	
3.b.(A) “is an independent State commission” (Yes/No)	No
3.b.(B) “has established a State Rehabilitation Council” (Yes/No)	Yes
3.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	
3.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)	
3.e. The local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in	No

The State Plan must include	Include
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 (Yes/No)	
3.f. 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 (Yes/No)	No
3.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? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan	No
3.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	
3.i. All required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.j. The requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act	
3.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	
3.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	
3.m. The submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act	

The State Plan must include	Include
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:	
4.a. Comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.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	
4.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? (Yes/No)	Yes
4.d. Determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act	
4.e. 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	
4.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	
4.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	
4.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	
4.i. Meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State	

The State Plan must include	Include
elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs	
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,	
4.j.i. Has developed and will implement,	
4.j.i.I. Strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and	
4.j.i.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	
4.j.ii. 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:	
5.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	
5.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	
5.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:	
6.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	

The State Plan must include	Include
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	
6.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:	Yes
7.a. The Designated State Agency Assures That it Will Provide Supported Employment Services as Defined in Section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act	
7.b. The designated State agency assures that:	
7.b.i. 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	
7.b.ii. 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	

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter	51.0%	51.0%	52.0%	52.0%

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
After Exit)				
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	48.0%	48.7%	49.0%	49.7%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$4,500	$4,500	$4,600	$4,600
Credential Attainment Rate	20.0%	20.0%	22.0%	22.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	35.0%	35.0%	40.0%	40.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

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)

TANF State Plan Effective Date, January 1, 2022

Outline of the TAFDC Program's General Provisions

Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (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. Whenever an application is made for a dependent child, the parents of that child who are living in the same household and the siblings of that child living in the same household must also be included in the application. When someone who is not the parent of the dependent child is applying, they can chose to be included in the application or not. When an application is made for a pregnant woman, only the pregnant woman is included in the application. Anyone receiving SSI is never included in the application. Rules about who is included in an application can be found at 106 CMR 704.305. 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.

If a family demonstrates an inability to obtain needed child care assistance will not be reduced or terminated. Lack of available and appropriate state-standard child care is verified by a written, dated and signed statement from an appropriate official of the Department of Early Education and Care, stating that such services are unavailable during the hours of the applicant's or client's employment or training. If there is a breakdown of care not provided through a designated agency, a statement from the child care provider, or, if not available, a written, dated and signed statement from the applicant or client must be submitted.

Appropriate child care is defined as each child-care provider, licensed by EEC, is generally considered an appropriate resource for recipients who need child care. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) agency staff will assist TANF recipients in making informed decisions regarding the child-care search by assessing each family's needs and reviewing available child-care options, which include the entire mixed delivery system (center-based, family child care, and license exempt options that are willing to enter into a voucher agreement at the state maximum rate for services). The CCRR makes referrals only to appropriate, licensed child-care providers and discusses licensed-exempt options, such as in-home and relative care. If the recipient refuses all referrals made by the CCRR, the recipient shall be deemed to have been offered appropriate and available child care, unless the recipient can provide a reasonable explanation to EEC why the child care should be considered unavailable to or inappropriate for the particular family.

Reasonable distance is defined as each child-care provider, licensed by EEC, is generally considered an appropriate resource for recipients who need child care. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) agency staff will assist TANF recipients in making informed decisions regarding the child-care search by assessing each family's needs and reviewing available child-care options, which include the entire mixed delivery system (center-based, family child care, and license exempt options that are willing to enter into a voucher agreement at the state maximum rate for services). The CCRR makes referrals only to appropriate, licensed child-care providers and discusses licensed-exempt options, such as in-home and relative care. If the recipient refuses all referrals made by the CCRR, the recipient shall be deemed to have been offered appropriate and available child care, unless the recipient can provide a reasonable explanation to EEC why the child care should be considered unavailable to or inappropriate for the particular family.

Unsuitability of informal child care is defined as each child-care provider, licensed by EEC, is generally considered an appropriate resource for recipients who need child care. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) agency staff will assist TANF recipients in making informed decisions regarding the child care search by assessing each family's needs and reviewing available child care options, which include the entire mixed delivery system (center-based, family child care, and license exempt options that are willing to enter into a voucher agreement at the state maximum rate for services). The CCRR makes referrals only to appropriate, licensed child-care providers and discusses licensed-exempt options, such as in-home and relative care. If the recipient refuses all referrals made by the CCRR, the recipient shall be deemed to have been offered appropriate and available child care, unless the recipient can provide a reasonable explanation to EEC why the child care should be considered unavailable to or inappropriate for the particular family.

Affordable child care arrangements are defined as each child-care provider, licensed by EEC, is generally considered an appropriate resource for recipients who need child care. The Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) agency staff will assist TANF recipients in making informed decisions regarding the child-care search by assessing each family's needs and reviewing available child-care options, which include the entire mixed delivery system (center-based, family child care, and license exempt options that are willing to enter into a voucher agreement at the state maximum rate for services). The CCRR makes referrals only to appropriate, licensed child-care providers and discusses licensed-exempt options, such as in-home and relative care. If the recipient refuses all referrals made by the CCRR, the recipient shall be deemed to have been offered appropriate and available child care, unless the recipient can provide a reasonable explanation to EEC why the child care should be considered unavailable to or inappropriate for the particular family.

<u>Employment Incentives</u>

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.

<u>Exemptions</u>

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
- 33rd 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). CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIRED STRATEGIC ELEMENTS DISCUSSED IN SECTION II (A)(2) HEREIN, PROVIDE A SPECIFIC ANALYSIS OF HOW THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ARE ADDRESSING EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES FOR PARENTS OR CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

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 ensure 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, refuges, 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.

L. INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS TO TRAIN FOR, SEEK, AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)—

1. PROVIDING DIRECT CARE IN A LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY (AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED UNDER SECTION 1397J OF THIS TITLE); OR

2. IN OTHER OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO ELDER CARE, HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS, OR OCCUPATIONS EXPECTED TO EXPERIENCE LABOR SHORTAGES AS, 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 will continue to operate the program under current policy and rules, as indicated in this state plan renewal. If a parent or caretaker is not exempt from the work program requirement as defined by the State, and has received assistance for sixty days, and is not working or substituting work hours with education or training, they are required to participate in community service for the maximum number of hours allowed under the Fair Labor Standards Act, for the hours per week that ensures compliance with 106 CMR 703.150.

- **1. Providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined under section 1397j of this title); or**
- **2. In other occupations related to elder care, high-demand occupations, or occupations expected to experience labor shortages as, 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) & §263.2(C) PREAMBLE PAGES 17826-7)

The breakdown of funding sources (either TANF or MOE) for these programs appears on the following reports: (1) the ACF196 for quarterly claims and the ACF204 for the annual supplemental report on MOE. Unless otherwise noted, all programs are funded by comingled funding.

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.

<u>MOE Funded Programs</u>

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.

TANF CERTIFICATIONS

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
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);	Yes
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 privatesector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social SecurityAct)—	
3. (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	Yes
3. (B) have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services;	Yes
4. Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
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);	
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);	Yes
6. (optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).—	
6.i. screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;	Yes
6.ii. refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and	Yes
6.iii. 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.	Yes

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)))

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS [27]

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. IF A STATE AGENCY PLANS TO OFFER SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (E)(2)(I) OF THIS SECTION, THE STATE AGENCY MUST ALSO INCLUDE IN THE E&T PLAN A SUMMARY OF THE STATE GUIDELINES IMPLEMENTING SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH. THIS SUMMARY OF THE STATE GUIDELINES, AT A MINIMUM, MUST

DESCRIBE: THE CRITERIA USED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO APPROVE LOCATIONS FOR SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH, AN EXPLANATION OF WHY THOSE CRITERIA WERE CHOSEN, AND HOW THE SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH COMPONENT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS TO DIRECTLY SUPERVISE THE ACTIVITIES OF PARTICIPANTS AND TRACK THE TIMING AND ACTIVITIES OF PARTICIPANTS;

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. 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 participantshave 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 the State Workforce Development Activities section 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 2022component 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 & 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) & 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) &

Pre-Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship – Subsidized by E&T (WBLPA-SUB)

SNAP Path to Work apprenticeshipscombine 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 2022component 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 2022component 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. A DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES AND MODELS, HOW PARTICIPANTS WILL BE REFERRED TO CASE MANAGEMENT, HOW THE PARTICIPANT'S CASE WILL BE MANAGED, WHO WILL PROVIDE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES, AND HOW THE SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL COORDINATE WITH E&T PROVIDERS, THE STATE AGENCY, AND OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES, AS APPROPRIATE. THE STATE PLAN SHOULD ALSO DISCUSS HOW THE STATE AGENCY WILL ENSURE E&T PARTICIPANTS ARE PROVIDED WITH TARGETED CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES THROUGH AN EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS;

Case management services are required in conjunction with SNAP E&T program activities. All E&T programs must consist of both case management and at least one E&T component.

At a minimum, case management services include such things as comprehensive intake assessments, individualized service plans, progress monitoring, reporting possible good cause to DTA, and coordination with service providers when applicable. Providers with the capacity to do so may provide participants who need it with more robust case management, which may include meeting with a case manager more frequently than is required, certain assessments, referrals to help address homelessness (or lack of stable housing); domestic violence; substance abuse; mental and physical health issues; dependent care challenges; financial insecurity; individual or family CORI or court involvement; lack of confidence, and/or other participant specific barriers to employment. While case management may also include referrals to activities and supports outside of the SNAP E&T program, only case management services and activity that directly supports an individual's participation in the E&T program qualify for SNAP E&T reimbursement.

SNAP Path to Work provider staff responsible for the delivery of case management will communicate with DTA SNAP E&T staff via the PATH system, email, phone and in-person or virtual meetings as needed. Provider organizations are assigned a designated DTA SNAP E&T Specialist as their primary point of contact. Questions and troubleshooting related to SNAP eligibility, work requirements, and provider determinations are to be addressed by the SNAP case manager supporting the SNAP E&T unit. DTA can also connect SNAP Path to Work Providers with local SNAP Outreach organizations or ones that serve a similar population.

Time spent engaged in case management activity will vary based on participant needs and programmatic differences. Case management activity may be delivered in person, virtually or via a hybrid model.

Case management activity is tracked via the PATH system in the form of assessment data, the creation of an activity plan, documentation of participation hours, reports of possible good cause and outcomes and case notes. As many providers have their own software/systems for documenting program participation and progress, DTA does not require providers to duplicate efforts by double entering routine case notes but has asked for at least major milestones and anomalous activity to be recorded on PATH. Documentation of case management activity and case notes stored outside of the PATH system will be reviewed during the annual site visit and other program reviews.

3. 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 February 9, 2022, Massachusetts' FFY 2022 SNAP E&T plan is federally funded as follows:

Figure 87: Massachusetts' FFY 2022 SNAP E&T Plan

E&T Percent Grant	$1,936,959.99
ABAWD Pledge Funds	$0.00
Additional E&T Administrative Expenditures (federally reimbursed 50% of incurred costs)	
Federal Share	$6,293,727.00
Non-Federal Share	$6,293,727.00
Participant Supports for Transportation & Other (federally reimbursed 50% of incurred costs)	
Federal Share	348,331.00
Non-Federal Share	348,331.00
Participant Supports for Dependent Care (federally reimbursed 50% of incurred costs)	
Federal Share	$116,120.00
Non-Federal Share	$116,120.00
Total Planned FFY 2022 Costs	**$15,453,315.22**

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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 1st of each year. The work registrant count is extracted from DTA's BEACON eligibility system data base based on individual SNAP recipient coding.

9. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO REPORT WORK REGISTRANT INFORMATION ON THE QUARTERLY FORM FNS–583;

7 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

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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; THE STATE AGENCY MUST DOCUMENT HOW IT CONSULTED WITH THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD. IF THE STATE AGENCY CONSULTED WITH PRIVATE EMPLOYERS OR EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS IN LIEU OF THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, IT MUST DOCUMENT THIS CONSULTATION AND EXPLAIN THE DETERMINATION THAT DOING SO WAS MORE EFFECTIVE OR EFFICIENT. THE STATE AGENCY MUST INCLUDE IN ITS E&T STATE PLAN A DESCRIPTION OF ANY OUTCOMES FROM THE CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD OR PRIVATE EMPLOYERS OR EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS. THE STATE AGENCY MUST ALSO ADDRESS IN THE E&T STATE PLAN THE EXTENT TO WHICH E&T ACTIVITIES WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN COORDINATION WITH THE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I OF WIOA;

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, 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.

13. 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 & 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.

14. 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

15. THE PAYMENT RATES FOR CHILD CARE 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

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. FOR EACH COMPONENT THAT IS EXPECTED TO INCLUDE 100 OR MORE PARTICIPANTS, REPORTING MEASURES THAT THE STATE WILL COLLECT AND INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL REPORT IN PARAGRAPH (C)(17) OF THIS SECTION. SUCH MEASURES MAY INCLUDE:

A. THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WHO RECEIVED E&T SERVICES AND ARE IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT SUBSEQUENT TO THE RECEIPT OF THOSE SERVICES;

As part of the annual SNAP E&T Outcomes report, DTA will report:

- the number and percentage of supervised job search, job search training, and work-based learning participants who are known to have obtained new employment or promotion after early termination or completion of the component (per provider report); and
- the number and percentage of supervised job search, job search training, work-based learning, and job retention participants who are known to have been employed during the second or fourth quarter after completion of participation in E&T (based on DUA wage match).

B. THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO OBTAIN A RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL, A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP, OR A REGULAR SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA (OR ITS RECOGNIZED EQUIVALENT), WHILE PARTICIPATING IN, OR WITHIN 1 YEAR AFTER RECEIVING E&T SERVICES;

As part of the annual SNAP E&T Outcomes report, DTA will report the number and percentage of education participants who are known to have attained a level, degree, license or certification after early termination or completion of the component (based on provider report).

C. THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE IN AN EDUCATION OR TRAINING PROGRAM THAT IS INTENDED TO LEAD TO A RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL, A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP AN ON-THE-JOB TRAINING PROGRAM, A REGULAR SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA (OR ITS RECOGNIZED EQUIVALENT), OR UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT;

N/A

D. MEASURES DEVELOPED TO ASSESS THE SKILLS ACQUISITION OF E&T PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS THAT REFLECT THE GOALS OF THE SPECIFIC COMPONENTS INCLUDING THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE MEETING PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS OR ARE GAINING SKILLS LIKELY TO LEAD TO EMPLOYMENT; AND

N/A

E. OTHER INDICATORS APPROVED BY FNS IN THE E&T STATE PLAN.

N/A

B. ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD) [28]

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

5. INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIZE AND SPECIAL NEEDS OF ITS ABAWD POPULATION; AND

N/A

6. INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORKFARE COMPONENTS IT WILL OFFER TO MEET THE ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENT

N/A

WORK PROGRAMS UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 6(O) OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(O))

A. OPTIONAL WORKFARE [29]

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

7 CFR § 273.7(m)

7 CFR § 273.7(m)(8)

N/A. Massachusetts operates a comparable workfare program.

B. VOLUNTARY WORKFARE [30]

N/A. Massachusetts operates a comparable workfare program.

C. COMPARABLE WORKFARE [31]

31 7 CFR § 273.7(m)(9)

32 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, 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.

D. PROCESS [32]

E. PLAN MODIFICATIONS [33]

FUNDING DISCLAIMER

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA)

Has the state incorporated TAA into the sections indicated above?

Yes

JOBS FOR VETERANS' STATE GRANTS

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, (served in the U.S. Armed Forces). If the customer identifies as a Veteran, Veterans and covered persons are immediately informed of their Priority of Service status in accordance with VPL 07-09. Covered persons includes any of the following; any veteran who died of a service-connected disability, any member of the armed forces serving on active duty who is at time of application for priority of service is missing in action, captured in the line of duty by a hostile force, or forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power. 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 Veterans 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. (MassHire does not utilize any consolidated positions.) The full array of Career Center Services offered could include any of the WIOA or partner program services such as, Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Youth Programs. DVOP staff also partner with many additional organizations and partners that assist local area veterans.

If the Veteran customer prefers not to attend a Career Center Seminar, (CCS) they are provided with information on the full array of services available and scheduled for the next appropriate service. If they ask to speak with a Veteran representative (DVOP), they are referred to that Veterans representative. Beginning with the first formal meeting, DVOP staff begin conducting a comprehensive assessment and begin the career planning process, to better understand the overall situation facing the veteran, and its impact on employability. Since we are primarily working with SBE veterans one of the goals of career planning is to identify barriers to employment so we can alleviate their impact on the individual employment plan, (IEP).

DVOP staff work with each Veteran individually to help alleviate existing barriers to employment. DVOP staff work with a wide variety of WIOA and JVSG Partners as resources for local area Veterans. For example we have seven regional Veteran Collaborative Organizations in Massachusetts. Regional Veteran Coalitions help establish strong working partnerships with veteran organizations and the community at large to improve services to veterans. These organizations consist of Federal, State, and local area members who provide services to, or are interested in helping our veterans. These local Veteran partners meet on a regular basis to keep everyone abreast of the programs and services they provide to veterans. Our DVOPS also conduct regular outreach which includes Veterans Affairs, (VA) facilities such as VA Hospitals for walk-in clinics. Walk-in clinics often include DVOP, VA, and Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program, (HVRP) staff, making them a one stop shop so SBE veterans can receive prompt assistance. If housing is an emergent situation, we will immediately refer the Veteran to HVRP staff or a Community Based Organization, (CBO) Homeless shelter. DVOP staff also refer

homeless and other low-income veterans to Massachusetts City and Town Veteran Service Officers, (VSO) for Massachusetts General Law, (MGL) CH115 benefits program which provides financial aid for food, shelter/housing, clothing, and medical care to veterans and their dependents with limited income and reside in Massachusetts. The same CH115 referral process is followed with other Low-Income Veterans. We also utilize additional Massachusetts services such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, (SNAP) to help food purchases and free meals for children, etc. DVOP staff work with the Massachusetts Veterans Courts, and HVRP Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program, (IVTP) and Volunteers of America, (VOA) to assist formerly incarcerated veterans into employment. DVOP trainings include criminal record information, (CORI) trainings so records can be sealed if possible or explained. DVOP staff coordinate with their Business Services, (BSR) Teams and the LVER to identify new local employment openings and assist veterans with job matching and placement.

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, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) 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, and 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.

Consistent with National Veterans Training Institute, (NVTI) Training, all eligible Veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) seeking employment receive Individualized Career Services from DVOP or Career Center staff, through the framework of Career Planning. DVOP staff follow the MassWorkforce Career Planning Issuance 100 DCS 08.112.2. Career Planning is the framework for DVOP services, providing the veteran with an individual employment plan, (IEP). The career planning framework welcomes partner staff collaborations, addresses barrier mitigation, and provides a structure leading to employment. The responsibility of serving these "most in need" Veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) falls primarily on grant funded DVOP staff. Massachusetts will continue to "case manage" Veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) seeking employment from all of 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).

Outreach and linkage to those Veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) 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. In order to establish strong working partnerships with veterans organizations and the community at large, MassHire DVOP staff outreach to Veteran partners such as HVRP, VA, and belong to Regional Veterans Collaboratives. These seven Massachusetts regional Veteran partner networks all work together to assist local area veterans and their families. DVOP staff liaison with and conduct outreach activities with their Massachusetts Veteran Collaborative Organizations, Department of Veteran Services, (DVS), VA facilities, VA VET Centers, VR&E offices, Veteran Courts, HVRP grantees, including IVTP, and

Homeless Female Veteran and Veterans with Families Program, (HFVVWF), Homeless shelters, Stand Downs, Military, and demobilizing Guard and Reserve. Additionally, DVOP staff develop quarterly outreach plans with their local managers to promote contact with all of the organizations that touch veterans within their service delivery areas. The primary goal of the outreach plan is to locate and provide employment assistance to SBE Veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles).

According to the Massachusetts One Stop Career Center Activity Report, (OSCCAR) for PY21, approximately 46% of the Veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) receiving an approved service at the MassHire Career Centers had a service-connected disability or were economically or educationally disadvantaged; or had another 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. SBE Veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) receive a "Gold Star SBE icon" marker in Moses for ease of identification. As part of our overall SBE Outreach Plans DVOPS are also provided with weekly/monthly SBE reports for their individual career centers so they can outreach to those SBE Veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) and personally offer DVOP employment assistance and individual career services. MassHire and Career Center websites contain a veteran's triage form so veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) can request staff assistance. SBE veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) are referred directly to DVOP staff, while non-SBE veterans are referred to Career Center managers for assignment.

Our LVER staff advocates for employment and training opportunities with business, industry and community-based organizations in order to secure gainful employment for SBE and Veteran, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) customers. The LVER organizes regional job fairs and job search workgroups that include veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) promotes credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) and job driven apprenticeship opportunities for veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles). The LVER is improving access into the appropriate employment and training service for all veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) within our employment service delivery system. During the Covid pandemic MassHire implemented a licensing agreement with the Premier virtual job fair platform. The LVER continues to work with regional Business Services Teams to hold regional veteran, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) job fairs and to incorporate the new Premier virtual system into statewide use. We are also working with HVRP and other veteran partners to hold tailored regional job fairs. The LVER is holding regular trainings with DVOPS and veterans to help staff and veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) navigate our virtual online job fairs more successfully. Using this virtual platform has amplified awareness of job fairs for both veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) and employers. One statewide, "weeklong" job fair reached 1,700 employers, 17,000 job seekers, with 600 identified veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles). We are working with the Premier staff to flag all self-identified veteran job seekers and veteran friendly employers.

The Commonwealth's LVER works closely with the Governor's Workforce Skills Cabinet, MassBizWorks and Core Partners to advocate for employment and training opportunities with business, industry and community-based organizations, and conducts job development activities in order to secure gainful employment for Veteran, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) customers. The Workforce Skills Cabinet aligns employment and employer resources shared by the Executive Offices of Labor, Workforce Development, Education, and Housing Development. MassBizWorks, (also known as Rapid Response) provides services to businesses throughout the business cycle; and provides Massachusetts businesses with a single point of contact to leverage available state and federal resources. This association can also assist with marketing and support of the Department of Labor VETS Hire Vets Medallion Program, (HVMP)

throughout Massachusetts. By compiling a listing of employers participating in virtual job fairs we were able to promote HVMP to an additional 1,700 employers. The LVER'S outreach to federal contractors and liaison with the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, (OFCCP), promotes veterans preference. Our LVER is also a member of the Recruiting Solutions Initiative, (RSI). This initiative focuses on providing job candidates for large scale hiring efforts. The LVER is able to collaborate with RSI employers and hiring teams and inform them about veteran attributes, and advocate for strong veteran, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) candidates.

C. THE MANNER IN WHICH DVOP SPECIALISTS AND LVER STAFF ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM OR AMERICAN JOB CENTER;

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, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) are primarily provided by staff other than DVOPs. In person triage and Initial Assessments are provided by Wagner-Peyser and partner staff. Through this process customers are asked to self-identify if they are a veteran, (served in the US Armed Forces or eligible spouses or other eligibles). Those customers who have self-identified and are SBE Veterans, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) are referred immediately to the DVOP for services. If a DVOP is not available, (position vacancy) and individualized career services are appropriate, a case plan is developed and the Veteran, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) will be assisted directly by Career Center staff or referred to supportive services as appropriate. If the Veteran, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) has not self-identified as an SBE veteran services are provided on a priority basis by Career Center staff.

As an example of integration, a Veteran, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles) 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 rather than the DVOP. However, the DVOP will be either the primary or alternate case manager for any SBE veteran enrolled in a training program. In an effort to ensure teamwork and efficient coordination of services DVOPS also co case manage with additional Career Center and partner staff. Incorporating partners in case conferences provides consistent messaging and reinforcement to the veteran. This integration applies to other Career Center partners as well, including all WIOA partners such as the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Department of Transitional Assistance, state colleges and universities, Adult Education, Senior Community Service, and Training programs. JVSG staff are all co-located at MassHire Career Centers so they have direct access to all partners. JVSG staff attend a myriad of MassHire workforce trainings, present JVSG trainings, and update staff during weekly/monthly career center all staff meetings. Local HVRP grantees often have office space within the career center and work with both veterans and career center staff. Several DVOP staff serve on the MassHire Workforce Development Boards, (WDB). They provide JVSG Program updates and trainings, attend quarterly partnership meetings, and participate in the development process of local Memorandum of Understandings, (MOU). Career Center Managers also attend quarterly JVSG staff trainings provided by the JVSG Program Manager. At the state level, and working throughout the system, key partnerships exist with the VA, DVS, HVRP, and other veteran partners who are represented at local Career Center and Veteran events, (job fairs, and information sessions). The Commonwealth has designated a DVOP as the Individualized Services Coordinator, (ISC) for the Veteran Readiness and Employment Program (VR&E). This individual is co-located on a part time basis with VA's state level VR&E Employment Coordinator, (EC). Our ISC oversees the Individual Employment Plan, (IEP) for all

VR&E participants to monitor progress and meets regularly with the VA EC to coordinate services and resolve issues. The VR&E/ISC team conducts regional training sessions with DVOP staff, while also attending regional VA trainings with VA staff and counselors.

Another key partnership exists with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services (DVS). Through this agency, each Commonwealth town and municipality has an assigned Veterans' Services Officer, (VSO) 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. The MassHire DVS partnership extends to every area in Massachusetts. DVS staff are essential partners and active members in all seven Massachusetts Regional Veterans Collaborates. Eligible veterans are able to receive financial assistance, so they can pursue employment and receive individual employment services from DVOP staff. Chapter 115 benefits can be used to help relieve some employment barriers by paying for housing and daily living expenses. In addition to working together to assist individual veterans, MassHire JVSG and DVS staff routinely participate in veteran roundtable events, employment workshops, and job fairs. JVSG staff also utilize the DVS Statewide Advocacy for Veterans Empowerment, (SAVE) team to advocate for veterans trying to access benefits and supportive services. DVS regularly participates in local, regional and statewide Veterans' programs events and training sessions.

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, (WOTC) 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, (or eligible spouses or other eligibles). Programs in demand careers such as "bio-medical" and advanced manufacturing are being designed and run specifically for Veterans. Edge4Vets is an employment workshop series for veterans, Guard and Reservists. These employment workshops help veterans translate their military skills and strengths. Veterans learn about individual company culture and the hiring process. Company mentors help veterans match their skills and interests to jobs leading to a career at one of the participating companies. A dozen Massachusetts employers are currently participating in Edge4VETS.

The Life Sciences Veterans Action Network, (LSVAN) is a coalition of leading life science companies. Their employee resource group collaborates as a network dedicated to improving health and employment outcomes for veterans and their families. LSVAN offers Massachusetts veterans networking opportunities and career fairs for jobs in the life sciences industry.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts provides regional employment workshops to recruit and assist Veterans into employment with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. These workshops are co-facilitated by the Commonwealth's Diversity Officer and regional DVOP teams.

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 4th 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 SBE outreach partnerships and strategies 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: $4,000

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; consistent with the improvement of employment and training services to veterans.

Funding permitting, a portion from our JVSG Base Allocation Amount will be used to purchase plaques for individual and office recognition.

E. THE POPULATIONS OF ELIGIBLE 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 ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM PARTNERS (E.G., NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS; VETERANS IN REMOTE RURAL COUNTIES OR PARISHES);

Under this plan, (IAW VPL 03-14, Chg1, Chg2, and VPL 03-19) service priority for JVSG staff will be targeted to:

- Veterans with service-connected disabilities as defined in 38 U.S.C. 4211 (1) and (3) special disabled and disabled veterans including those: (who are entitled to compensation, or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) or under laws administered by the Secretary of Veteran affairs; or were discharged or released from active duty because of a service connected disability;
- Veterans Between the Ages of 18-24;
- Recently-separated Service Member, as defined in 38 U.S.C. &4211(1) and (3) who have been unemployed for 27 weeks or more in the previous 12 months;
- 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 WIOA Section 3 (38), who is currently incarcerated or has been released from incarceration;
- Lacking a high school diploma or equivalent certificate;
- Low-income (as defined by WIOA at Sec. 3 (36);
- Eligible Transitioning Service Members, Spouses and Caregivers; as defined in 38 U.S.C. 1720G (d):

a. Transitioning service members of the Armed Forces who have been identified as in need of individual career services.

b. Members of the Armed Forces who are wounded, ill, or injured and receiving treatment in military treatment facilities, (MTF) or warrior transition units, (WTU);

c. The spouse or other family care givers of such wounded, ill, or injured members.

- Vietnam and Vietnam Era Veterans

-

F. HOW THE STATE IMPLEMENTS AND MONITORS THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO COVERED PERSONS;

The description of how the state implements and monitors priority of service to covered persons is included in the Common Elements of the WIOA State Plan.

G. HOW THE STATE PROVIDES OR INTENDS TO PROVIDE AND MEASURE, THROUGH BOTH THE DVOP AND AMERICAN JOB CENTER STAFF:

1. JOB AND JOB TRAINING INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES,

Per VPL 01-22, a response to this section is not required.

2. EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT SERVICES, AND

Per VPL 01-22, a response to this section is not required.

3. JOB-DRIVEN TRAINING AND SUBSEQUENT PLACEMENT SERVICE PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS;

Per VPL 01-22, 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 VPL 01-22, a response to his section is not required.

I. SUCH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS THE SECRETARY MAY REQUIRE.

JVSG Performance Targets have been determined using he JVSG Performance tool for MA. Current JVSG Performance Targets are:

Employment Rate Q2 After Exit 56%

Employment Rate Q4 After Exit 56%

Median Earnings Q2 After Exit $8,000

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI)

A. CONTENTS OF A COMPLETE UI SQSP PACKAGE

1. TRANSMITTAL LETTER

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

CHARLES D. BAKER
GOVERNOR

KARYN E. POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

ROSALIN ACOSTA
SECRETARY

RICHARD A. JEFFERS
DIRECTOR

October 13, 2021

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 2022. Massachusetts will continue to manage to the two year plan that was submitted and approved in 2020. As we are currently in an Alternate Year, this package transmits the following items:

- Modified State Plan Narrative, including Assurances
- Alternate Year SQSP FY22 Workbook
- Updates to existing Corrective Action Plans
- FY 2022 Integrity Action Plan
- SF 424 – Application for Federal Assistance
- SF 424B - Assurances
- Organizational Charts

All items have been prepared in accordance with the instructions in Employment and Training Handbook No. 336, 18th Edition, Change 4, and the UI Program Letter No 24-21 issued on August 20, 2021, initiating the FY 2022 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

2. BUDGET WORKSHEETS/FORMS

OMB Number: 4040-0004
Expiration Date: 12/31/2022

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

* 1. Type of Submission:	* 2. Type of Application:	* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):
☐ Preapplication	☒ New	
☒ Application	☐ Continuation	* Other (Specify):
☐ Changed/Corrected Application	☐ Revision	

* 3. Date Received:	4. Applicant Identifier:
10/07/2021	

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:	5b. Federal Award Identifier:

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State:	7. State Application Identifier:

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

* a. Legal Name: Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):	* c. UEI:
0406002284	947581567000

d. Address:

* Street1:	19 Staniford Street
Street2:	
* City:	Boston
County/Parish:	
* State:	MA: Massachusetts
Province:	
* Country:	USA: UNITED STATES
* Zip / Postal Code:	02114-2502

e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name:	Division Name:
Department of Unemployment	

f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix:		* First Name:	Sheila
Middle Name:			
* Last Name:	Tunney		
Suffix:			

Title:

Organizational Affiliation:

* Telephone Number:	6176266836	Fax Number:	6176266197

* Email: sheila.l.tunney2@mass.gov

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

*** 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:**

A: State Government

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

* Other (specify):

*** 10. Name of Federal Agency:**

US Department of Labor

11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:

17.225

CFDA Title:

State Workforce Agency Unemployment Insurance Administration Grant

*** 12. Funding Opportunity Number:**

UIPL 24-21

* Title:

Unemployment

13. Competition Identification Number:

Title:

14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

Add Attachment | Delete Attachment | View Attachment

*** 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:**

Commonwealth of Massachusetts SQSP State Plan Narrative/State Administrative grant.

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Add Attachments | Delete Attachments | View Attachments

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

16. Congressional Districts Of:

* a. Applicant: 07-00
* b. Program/Project: 00

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

Add Attachment | Delete Attachment | View Attachment

17. Proposed Project:

* a. Start Date: 10/01/2021
* b. End Date: 09/30/2022

18. Estimated Funding ($):

* a. Federal	65,869,036.00
* b. Applicant	
* c. State	
* d. Local	
* e. Other	87,488,682.02
* f. Program Income	
* g. TOTAL	153,357,718.02

*** 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

- [ ] a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on .
- [x] b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.
- [ ] c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

*** 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**

- [ ] Yes
- [x] No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

Add Attachment | Delete Attachment | View Attachment

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)**

- [x] ** I AGREE

** 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.

Authorized Representative:

Prefix:
* First Name: Sheila
Middle Name:
* Last Name: Tunney
Suffix:

* Title: Chief Financial Officer
* Telephone Number: 617-626-6836
Fax Number:
* Email: sheila.l.tunney2@Mass.gov
* Signature of Authorized Representative:
* Date Signed: 10/7/2021

OMB Number: 4040-0007
Expiration Date: 02/28/2022

ASSURANCES - NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0348-0040), Washington, DC 20503.

PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORM TO THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET. SEND IT TO THE ADDRESS PROVIDED BY THE SPONSORING AGENCY.

NOTE: Certain of these assurances may not be applicable to your project or program. If you have questions, please contact the awarding agency. Further, certain Federal awarding agencies may require applicants to certify to additional assurances. If such is the case, you will be notified.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant:

1. Has the legal authority to apply for Federal assistance and the institutional, managerial and financial capability (including funds sufficient to pay the non-Federal share of project cost) to ensure proper planning, management and completion of the project described in this application.

2. Will give the awarding agency, the Comptroller General of the United States and, if appropriate, the State, through any authorized representative, access to and the right to examine all records, books, papers, or documents related to the award; and will establish a proper accounting system in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards or agency directives.

3. Will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or presents the appearance of personal or organizational conflict of interest, or personal gain.

4. Will initiate and complete the work within the applicable time frame after receipt of approval of the awarding agency.

5. Will comply with the Intergovernmental Personnel Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. §§4728-4763) relating to prescribed standards for merit systems for programs funded under one of the 19 statutes or regulations specified in Appendix A of OPM's Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration (5 C.F.R. 900, Subpart F).

6. Will comply with all Federal statutes relating to nondiscrimination. These include but are not limited to: (a) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin; (b) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended (20 U.S.C.§§1681-1683, and 1685-1686), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; (c) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. §794), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicaps; (d) the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§6101-6107), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; (e) the Drug Abuse Office and Treatment Act of 1972 (P.L. 92-255), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of drug abuse; (f) the Comprehensive Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-616), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of alcohol abuse or alcoholism; (g) §§523 and 527 of the Public Health Service Act of 1912 (42 U.S.C. §§290 dd-3 and 290 ee- 3), as amended, relating to confidentiality of alcohol and drug abuse patient records; (h) Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. §§3601 et seq.), as amended, relating to nondiscrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing; (i) any other nondiscrimination provisions in the specific statute(s) under which application for Federal assistance is being made; and, (j) the requirements of any other nondiscrimination statute(s) which may apply to the application.

7. Will comply, or has already complied, with the requirements of Titles II and III of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (P.L. 91-646) which provide for fair and equitable treatment of persons displaced or whose property is acquired as a result of Federal or federally-assisted programs. These requirements apply to all interests in real property acquired for project purposes regardless of Federal participation in purchases.

8. Will comply, as applicable, with provisions of the Hatch Act (5 U.S.C. §§1501-1508 and 7324-7328) which limit the political activities of employees whose principal employment activities are funded in whole or in part with Federal funds.

9. Will comply, as applicable, with the provisions of the Davis-Bacon Act (40 U.S.C. §§276a to 276a-7), the Copeland Act (40 U.S.C. §276c and 18 U.S.C. §874), and the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act (40 U.S.C. §§327-333), regarding labor standards for federally-assisted construction subagreements.

10. Will comply, if applicable, with flood insurance purchase requirements of Section 102(a) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-234) which requires recipients in a special flood hazard area to participate in the program and to purchase flood insurance if the total cost of insurable construction and acquisition is $10,000 or more.

11. Will comply with environmental standards which may be prescribed pursuant to the following: (a) institution of environmental quality control measures under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) and Executive Order (EO) 11514; (b) notification of violating facilities pursuant to EO 11738; (c) protection of wetlands pursuant to EO 11990; (d) evaluation of flood hazards in floodplains in accordance with EO 11988; (e) assurance of project consistency with the approved State management program developed under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. §§1451 et seq.); (f) conformity of Federal actions to State (Clean Air) Implementation Plans under Section 176(c) of the Clean Air Act of 1955, as amended (42 U.S.C. §§7401 et seq.); (g) protection of underground sources of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, as amended (P.L. 93-523); and, (h) protection of endangered species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (P.L. 93-205).

12. Will comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. §§1271 et seq.) related to protecting components or potential components of the national wild and scenic rivers system.

13. Will assist the awarding agency in assuring compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (16 U.S.C. §470), EO 11593 (identification and protection of historic properties), and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. §§469a-1 et seq.).

14. Will comply with P.L. 93-348 regarding the protection of human subjects involved in research, development, and related activities supported by this award of assistance.

15. Will comply with the Laboratory Animal Welfare Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-544, as amended, 7 U.S.C. §§2131 et seq.) pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of warm blooded animals held for research, teaching, or other activities supported by this award of assistance.

16. Will comply with the Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention Act (42 U.S.C. §§4801 et seq.) which prohibits the use of lead-based paint in construction or rehabilitation of residence structures.

17. Will cause to be performed the required financial and compliance audits in accordance with the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and OMB Circular No. A-133, "Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations."

18. Will comply with all applicable requirements of all other Federal laws, executive orders, regulations, and policies governing this program.

19. Will comply with the requirements of Section 106(g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, as amended (22 U.S.C. 7104) which prohibits grant award recipients or a sub-recipient from (1) Engaging in severe forms of trafficking in persons during the period of time that the award is in effect (2) Procuring a commercial sex act during the period of time that the award is in effect or (3) Using forced labor in the performance of the award or subawards under the award.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED CERTIFYING OFFICIAL	TITLE
	Chief Financial Officer
APPLICANT ORGANIZATION	DATE SUBMITTED
Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development	10/7/2021

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3. THE STATE PLAN NARRATIVE

STATE PLAN NARRATIVE

Massachusetts – October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2022

1. 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. Since that time, we have been working to improve and enhance the UI Online system in order to better serve our constituency. While the system is better today than at the time of its launch, we have determined that the time has come to replace the UI Online platform. We conducted an extension internal review of the application, and earlier this year, we were pleased that the Massachusetts legislature approved an IT bond bill, which included language to replace the UI technology platform as well as provide a funding source. We have accelerated our timeline for replacing our system and anticipate having a Request for Response out for public procurement by the end of this calendar year or very early next calendar year. We are excited about this opportunity, which thoughtfully and intentionally includes a deeper integration with the MassHire Department of Career Services. While that work progresses, we will be executing to our strategic plan.

This Plan focuses on:

- Improving the Measurement and Management of our CAPS;
- Focusing on the core UI program fundamentals;
- Maintaining the progress we have made; and
- Targeted, prioritized plans to get better

Our 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 all UI programs nationally we are facing unprecedented claim volumes and intense pressure to serve so many in need while at the same time combating unemployment insurance fraud at a level of sophistication and persistence the likes of which we have never seen. In the midst of a global pandemic, with things moving so fast, and our team work around the clock seven days per week, it is exceedingly challenging to stop and put together a two-year strategic plan for performance improvement. So far in 2020, we have implemented all of the CARES Act programs and changes, the EB Program, the Lost Wages Assistance program, improved integrity measures, and near countless trainings, onboardings, business process changes, statutory changes, regulatory changes, and many, many other initiatives. The list goes on and on. At this point, and throughout, our strategic plan is simply to live up to our mission statement each day,

and we are. As we look ahead, while necessarily dealing with what is right in front of us, and doing our best to prepare for an uncertain future, we are pleased to provide updates on the four primary initiatives from our FY 2020 update that were underway prior to the pandemic.

First, 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 with the UI Online system. The purpose of the RFI was 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. Subsequently, and based in part on information gathered through the RFI process, a Request for Proposal was published to bring in the team or teams to assist with the needed work. DUA had just begun to review those responses when the pandemic hit us all, and that work needed to pause in order to focus on the monumental task ahead. Today, we have made the strategic decision to simply move ahead, accelerate our timeline, and put an RFP out to the public to replace the UI system, with the intention of deeply integrating with our ES partners. DUA has organized a team of subject matter experts and the drafting of a framework for an RFP is underway. We expect to have a vendor under contract next year and the work to replace the UI Online system in progress.

Second, DUA completed a major technology project in the existing UI Online system that significantly improves our Revenue Collections and Enforcement effort. These improvements included the implementation of both the Federal and State Tax Intercept programs, and a number of other functionality upgrades in order to aggressively pursue tax debts at a much higher volume. While this work was completed, and our tools are much improved, it may take some time now before we see the results we expect. At the outset of the pandemic, many of our resources across the organization, including in our Revenue Collections and Enforcement group, were reallocated to support claims intake and related functions. Our Revenue team swung back to normal functions mid-summer, and many of their important activities are ramping up. Their work will be even more of an area of focus as we seek to support our depleted trust fund.

Third, DUA completed 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 was 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. This functionality was implemented right as the pandemic hit, and we are using it everyday to assign work in the best possible way and track our trends and volumes. This logic has been proven particularly effective and useful as we have hired and trained dozens of new adjudication staff. We can assign their work with a narrowed focus until they become more experience and can adequately handle a full suite of adjudication issue types.

Fourth, DUA engaged with the NASWA Integrity Center and, through a combined effort, dramatically reduced our UI Improper Payment Rate. Members of the Integrity Center made multiple on-site visits with the DUA team and delivered an extensive set of recommendations for our consideration. These recommendations ranged from policy changes to training initiatives to technology improvements. These recommendations were formulated into an action plan, which we executed. By executing to this plan, we lowered our UI Improper

Payment rate to well below the acceptable level of performance, and were recently informed that we no longer have the High-Rate/High-Impact designation.

Going forward, by working together, we are confident that we can continue to improve our program performance to a level that the people of Massachusetts both deserve and expect. We have demonstrated that we can accomplish the goals that we set for our ourselves. Our team is exceptionally strong and has performed remarkably through the pandemic. We have no intention of continuing on as a high priority state. We have the experience, commitment, and desire to become a high performing state. While delivering for our constituency during this pandemic must be our focus right now, as so many are depending on us, we are excited about the course we were on before this crisis. Changes were made, and more are coming. Business process redesigns to make timely first payments and timely non-monetary determinations have been implemented. Significant projects in the Revenue Enforcement and Program Integrity areas were completed just as planned. A brand new building to house call center and hearings operations is being designed for our Brockton location, with construction ongoing and occupancy planned for 2022. A redevelopment plan for our Boston location was also kicked off, and we are working with our USDOL partners on next steps. 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 2022 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 one of the major initiatives underway at DUA.

Last year, we shared that we had made the strategic decision to simply move ahead, accelerate our timeline, and put a Request For Proposal out to the public to replace our UI system, with the intention of deeply integrating with our ES partners. We are pleased to share that we published our RFP on Friday October 1st. Vendor responses are due by December 1st, and we expect to have a vendor under contract next year.

Named the Employment Modernization & Transformation (EMT) Project, the purpose is to not just focus on unemployment, but to also focus on the post-pandemic and long term re-employment goals in order to provide the workforce and employers of Massachusetts with a seamless and efficient job-loss-to-job-gain experience. More specifically, the mission is to achieve the following:

- Provide outstanding service to the workforce and businesses of MA. Provide an improved customer experience, that is accessible to all, is compliant with the law, and available online, by phone, and in person. Deliver timely and accurate benefits and use the taxpayer's money efficiently.
- Be a national leader. Be among top performing states on federal performance measures focusing on timely and high-quality services and ensuring accessibility and equity in providing services to the workforce.

- Operate efficiently and ensure program integrity. Ensure that benefits are being disbursed to valid and legitimate unemployment claims and eliminate ineffective or unnecessary business processes to better provide streamlined service to customers.
- Provide accurate, timely and responsive reporting. Ensure that data is accurate and is provided timely and can flexibly respond to stakeholder needs and inquiries.

The primary focus of the EMT program remains the Commonwealth's unemployment benefits delivery system and operations. However, we are aggressively pursuing a modernization and transformation strategy to fully serve the workforce and businesses of the Commonwealth. We are implementing a four-phase plan in lockstep with our ES partners at the MassHire Department of Career Services. In chronological order, our plan calls for the modernization and transformation of:

1. The Department of Unemployment Assistance's (DUA) operations and the underlying technology systems for claims processing, certification, disqualification, appeals, revenue, tax management and reporting, benefits administration, collections, etc.
2. The MassHire Department of Career Services' (MDCS) re-employment operations and the underlying technology systems for career counseling, job search, training, re-employment grants and programs, virtual career pathways, employer support, etc.
3. The contact center operations and technology for both DUA and MDCS
4. The overall financial operations of DUA and MDCS

On the current timeline, we will begin implementing the first round of UI functionality next year, with the aggressive goal of completing all of the UI modules by July of 2023.

While we are excited about our future, and the promise of delivering an improved customer experience to those we serve, today we are still dealing with the unprecedented claim workload brought on by the COVID-19 public health emergency. Our day to day focus remains firmly centered on the need to process claims and address any adjudication and appeals backlogs in both the Regular UI and PUA programs.

In order to try to meet workload demands, we are continuing to hire staff, train existing staff to resolve more and different types of issues, offer overtime six days per week, meet daily to strategize new ways to gain efficiency, participate in regional and national calls to share best practices, implement technology solutions to improve timeliness, repurpose resources to critical work units, and deploy many, many other performance improvement initiatives. Our issue counts and appeals are decreasing, but this work will continue to be the major area of focus for our organization for the upcoming fiscal year.

We believe two recent and significant improvements will contribute to our success in the adjudication and appeals areas in the upcoming fiscal year. One, on October 1st, we updated our weekly certification questions in both the UI Online platform as well as on the IVR. This project, meant to simplify the questions and make them easier for our customers to understand, had been in our project queue prior to the pandemic, but had to be delayed due to the many demands of implementing the CARES Act programs. By simplifying the questions, customers

will create fewer inadvertent issues that unnecessarily delay payment, and will allow our team to work down the adjudication issues we currently have. Early returns have been very positive, as the data shows that fewer issues are being created on a going forward basis. Stakeholder feedback has also been very positive, as customers have a much better sense of what we are asking them.

Second, also on October 1st, we implemented Virtual Hearings technology for our Appeals team working on Regular UI administrative hearings. Earlier last year, we implemented Virtual Hearings in connection with our PUA technology platform, and that has helped our PUA team dispose of PUA hearings volume. Our Regular UI appeals team received training to use the new Virtual Hearings technology, and virtual hearing are held in the Regular UI program. By offering hearings virtually, we anticipate fewer defaults and reinstatements, and therefore the opportunity to process more appeals faster.

1. 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 reports directly to the UI Director. The UI Performs Department is responsible for leading our BAM, BTQ, TPS, and Data Validation effort. The Director of UI Performs and the UI Director meet bi-weekly to review and discuss agency performance metrics. In addition, our Director of Benefit Performance was hired from the USDOL Regional Office several years ago to further deepen the knowledge and integration of federal metrics into our business lines. These two departments 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. It was through this work that we were able to finally submit our ETA 227 reports after several years of delay and reduce our UI Improper Payment rate to an acceptable level.

In addition, DUA quickly and enthusiastically embraced the UI State Self-Assessment Tool. We have dedicated an experienced and knowledgeable full-time supervisor to do this work and we embedded this person within our UI Performs Department. We completed all fifteen functions by the April 2019 deadline set by USDOL. The Self-Assessment work was made a priority by senior leadership with full cooperation an expectation. Operational improvements were identified, particularly in the initial claims functions. We invested in this tool, and it was being utilized prior to the pandemic. We are hopeful that we can use this tool going forward.

In September of 2018 we began working with a consultant to examine how we could do more with less in a challenging funding environment. We emphasized the importance of making payment when due, and our business process redesign initiative was conducted with that goal

at the forefront. One of the recommendations that came out of that initiative was to use our Seasonal Adjudication staff, not as telephone support, but rather to perform adjudication functions. We worked in collaboration with our USDOL partners to ensure that we were in compliance with the merit staffing requirements and have been utilizing Seasonal adjudication staff to resolve certain non-monetary issue types. This has been a useful way to attack spikes in claims volume.

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 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. 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 where we have had to change and adapt. At the outset of the pandemic, we had to figure out how to train hundreds of new staff members in a telework environment. Prior to the pandemic, DUA offered very few telework opportunities. In March, because of COVID-19 and the need to social distance, DUA transformed to a near total telework operation in a matter of days. We quickly worked with NASWA to utilize their online training platform to deliver much needed trainings. NASWA acquired additional licenses so we could train more people at a time in one sitting. Today, we onboard and train nearly entirely virtually, as our staff remains at home. We contracted with three remote call center companies, one for PUA, and two for Regular UI, and the ability to train their workers remotely has been a necessity. We also cross-trained our own staff in order to assist in critical areas, as well as trained staff from other state agencies to assist with UI. By training remotely, and utilizing NASWA's platform and some of their training modules, we have been able to scale rapidly.

Improving Prevention, Detection, and Recovery of UI Improper and Fraudulent Payments

Massachusetts remains 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 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, Integrity Data Hub, and other tools. This year, we implemented their new Identity Verification tool in order to prevent ID fraud, one of the first states to do so. We are very much at the table for all UI Integrity Center conversations as the UI Director sits on the NASWA Integrity Center Steering Committee and we enjoy regular contact and communication with our regional liaison. Massachusetts has taken advantage of the full suite of tools and resources offered by the Integrity Center and, as stated previously, have been removed from the High-Rate/High-Impact list. We do not have a high Improper Payment rate in Massachusetts. Looking ahead, we will be making a change of leadership in our Program Integrity department, as our Director of Program Integrity will be moving on to another job opportunity. We have engaged with the NASWA Integrity Center to request their assistance with our upcoming search for our next Director. We will also be making some organizational structural changes within in business unit, and will seek input from NASWA as we realign.

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. This project was underway when the pandemic hit, and had to be delayed, as this is a large, outward-facing change for our customers, and the risk of making this kind of change during a period of extraordinary volume was too high. We are in discussions about when this work should resume, and at this time are targeting early 2021, likely after our normal cold weather peak claim filing season.

Outreach efforts with organizations like the Association of Unemployment Tax Organizations, ADP, Equifax, and others had opened lines of communication and provided opportunities to reintroduce important topics like adequacy and failure to timely respond. While everyone's priorities have shifted because of the pandemic, we had some success with Equifax in particular with respect to timely response. Conference calls with members of AUTO to spread a broader message, provide opportunities for feedback and the exchange of ideas have been highly beneficial to all involved, especially this year in the areas of fraud and benefit charges. We have developed a strong partnership with the employer community and continue to work together to address high priority items. At present, we are working together to provide additional instruction and guidance to employers on what to do if a fraudulent claim is filed in an employees' name. We developed an online Fraud Reporting Form, which has been very helpful to those who have had claims filed in their name. Massachusetts is not currently participating in the State Information Data Exchange System but plans on incorporating SIDES into our new platform.

Revenue Enforcement has been prioritized as a major area of focus for our organization for the last several years. 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 invested significant agency resources to this area, and implemented a ten part project plan to improve enforcement overall. These included 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 previously 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. Now that this work is completed, we anticipate receiving a return on this investment in the upcoming year and are excited to see the payoff.

RESEA and Reemployment of UI Claimants

Massachusetts has a strong RESEA program and we are constantly working with our ES partners to tweak and improve our program. We work very closely with the MassHire Department of Career Services, our sibling ES agency. The UI Director and the Director of MDCS meet regularly to discuss all areas of intersection between UI and ES. During the first six months of the pandemic, as things were unfolding quickly and CARES Act programs were being implemented, the UI Director and MDCS Director met one on one several times per week to make sure everyone was on the same page and working together. In addition, DUA employs a small team of people whose full time job is to work on the programs where UI and ES integrate. We are very proud of our partnership. All of our future state work relative to technology platform changes will be done with a "job loss to job gain" mission statement. We believe that UI and ES must be integrated much more deeply and meaningfully to better serve the full range

of customer needs. For this reason, Massachusetts will not only be procuring a new UI technology platform, but also a new ES case management platform, with the requirement that the two systems must easily integrate to present a single customer job loss to job gain experience for our joint customers.

One opportunity that arose out of the recent pandemic was working even more closely with our ES partners on UI intake and navigation. At the beginning of the pandemic, we borrowed hundreds of staff from state organizations, including MDCS. The staff we borrowed from MDCS were trained on UI claims intake and other related areas. Today, we have an MDCS staff that has a much broader range of knowledge of UI to take back with them to their local MassHire Career Centers, and, in turn, our RESEA customers. In coordination with our MDCS partners, we have decided to increase our UI training offerings to MDCS staff, as they appreciate being able to be more resourceful to our combined customers. This Fall, we will be working together to offer "Level 2" UI training to a select group of MDCS and Career Center staff to be navigation experts in their local areas. Level 2 staff will be provided with an enhanced level of UI system access to better serve specific UI customers in the Career Centers, and will be better able to identify UI compliance issues with RESEA customers.

Strategic Goal – Make Timely Benefit Payments

Target: 87.0 percent of intrastate first payments for full weeks of UC will be made within 14/21 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, and the need to make timely payments has been particularly acute during the pandemic. While more specifics of our Plan can be found in the Corrective Action Plan, we can share some updates here.

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. 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. We have also implemented a team specific structure that is consistent across the call center landscape that focuses on specific issue type resolution. We have scaled tremendously, and the need to narrow our trainings to specific issue types for newly hired adjudication staff has been required. We do not have advantage of time to fully train all of our new adjudication staff on the broad range of non-mon issue types. Instead, we have elevate many people to supervisory roles and have then train their team on specific areas so we can manage the claim load. This has been effective with resolving certain workflow queues that are much more populated than others and allows us to be nimble and flexible. Once certain workflow queues are managed to the point where there is no delay, the team is then repurposed and trained in a new area where help is needed.

While we focus on timeliness, we remain committed to preserving our improvements in quality. Any sustainable process to ensure timeliness must also ensure quality standards are met. Ideally, there must be a balance. While the pandemic has made finding time for quality review challenging, it is part of our process, particularly for the newly hired. We are pleased to share

that we completed our overhaul of our adjudication handbook, a project that was many years in the making. We updated the 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.

While continuing to work toward replacing our system, DUA kept its commitment to continue to invest in our existing online system in the near term in order to effect performance improvement. We previously 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 prioritized the oldest unassigned issues first. This design made it challenging to achieve the 87.0 strategic goal. Prior to the Spring of this year, our team had to manually reassign work to our adjudication staff, fighting the original design of the system, in order to meet Timely First Payment and Time Lapse dates. While led to some gains, it came with switching costs and inefficiencies. The Automated Issue Assignment project has been completed. We updated the UI Online system to enhance the business logic to classify an adjudication issue in defined categories. This project changed the logic to 'drop' ready-to-work issues into an adjudicator's inbox based on date-driven categories. This now allows DUA to automatically align work assignments with State and Federal goals and help ensure that issues are assigned to the most qualified adjudicators. Thankfully, we completed this project right before the pandemic took hold, and we are using this new functionality every day to make timely benefit payments.

Massachusetts has made Timely First Payments the priority during this pandemic and we are making as many payments to our claimants as possible, including all of the payment types made available via the CARES Act.

FY 2022 Update:

Our major initiatives in this area were discussed in the Overview section above. As mentioned there, we are excited about our recent work simplifying the weekly certification questions, which we believe will help us in a number of key areas, including Timely First Payments. Our performance in this area was directly impacted by the effect of the pandemic, and the magnitude of the volume of claim filings. In 2020, Massachusetts disbursed $22 billion in unemployment benefits to approximately 1 million claimants. Disbursing $22 billion in benefits in a single year is a significant accomplishment, as we worked around the clock to deliver benefits to as many eligible Massachusetts residents as we could during a very trying time. This work was done while also standing up numerous new programs, working remotely for the first time as an organization, hiring and training hundreds of new staff members, combating fraud at never before seen levels, integrating external call center vendor support, and so many other things.

Today, and in the upcoming year, we are focusing on optimizing and rightsizing our organization as the CARES Act programs have recently expired. Our focus can now return to largely operating the traditional UI program, and a return to fundamentals. Many of the flexibilities that were offered during the pandemic were very helpful, specifically related to the merit staffing requirements, and, while it is early, we are concerned about the impact the

removal of the merit staffing requirements will have. For now, we continue to contract with two external vendors for call center support. Those call center vendors have been highly valuable, as it has allowed our internal subject matter experts to contribute in many other areas of need, including supervision and training. The call center support has also allowed us to keep our adjudication team largely away from telephone support and instead focused on issuing eligibility determinations. Federal funding of the UI program remains a major area of concern for Massachusetts, as, with reduced funding, or little funding flexibility, difficult choices will have to be made relative to our vendors.

Conducting business process analysis in key areas, reviewing and improving staff trainings, and working with NASWA have become a daily practice for us, which we will continue to do in the upcoming year as we continue to prioritize the timely and accurate payment of benefits to eligible claimants.

Strategic Goal – Detect Benefit Overpayments

Target: Overpayments established will be at least 57.5 percent of the estimated detectable, recoverable overpayments.

Like most states, detectable overpayment failures are most frequently work search 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. As mentioned previously, we plan on updating our weekly certification questions, as we believe changes to the phrasing of our questions will reduce overpayments. We have completed our review of our weekly certification questions, have drafted new language, and were ready to begin programming the needed changes into the UI Online system at the beginning of this calendar year. Unfortunately, this project had to be placed on hold in order to program other things, including the CARES Act programs. We are hopeful to resume this project in the new year, which will require programming in both the UI Online and IVR systems.

As part of our Improper Payment Reduction Plan, the NASWA Integrity Center delivered over twenty recommendations to improve our UI program, including reducing overpayments. As part of this engagement, we worked 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. These are updates we would like to make, and hope to do so in the new year if our workload allows.

FY 2022 Update:

This is an area where we met the performance goal for last year. In the last four years, we have twice invited in the NASAW Integrity Center to offer their assistance and subject matter expertise. First, as part of their traditional State Services offering, and later, as part of the State Intensive Services work to reduce the improper payment rate. The NASWA Integrity Center has been a long-standing and valuable partner to us, and Massachusetts has been an early adopter of all of their products and solutions.

The NASWA Integrity Center had delivered to us over twenty recommendations, nearly all of which we have implemented. To name a few, we updated our weekly certification questions with their review and input, implemented a benefits determination calculator on our website, did a weekly work search email campaign to all of our customers each week for several months this year, created and implemented a works search page on our website, and updated our messaging on our telephone system.

In addition, this summer, we reopened our Boston Walk-In center, but with a completely different concept and service delivery model. Rebranded the "Re-Employment Center", this location, for the first time, has both DUA and MassHire Department of Career Services staff working together and in coordination, applying our "job loss to job gain" philosophy. Today, all visitors to the Re-Employment Center receive not just UI services, but ES referral services as well. Jobseekers are provided with an introduction to the MassHire system, can be registered to visit their local MassHire Career Center, learn about the services and supports that are available to them, and are educated on the requirement to conduct an active work search. The feedback we have received on our newly redesigned Re-Employment Center has been tremendous and exceptionally well received. We will continue to iterate on the processes and tools that have been effective for us in the upcoming year, and will be expanding the concept of the Re-Employment Center to all of the MassHire Career Centers throughout the Commonwealth.

Strategic Goal – Establish Tax Accounts Promptly

Target: 90.0 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 90% 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.

While establishing tax accounts promptly is an important goal, and our performance numbers are a notch below where we want them to be, we made the strategic decision to focus our tax efforts on making long overdue improvements to our revenue enforcement and collections area. DUA completed a ten point plan to improve our accounts receivable, which included a significant financial and resource investment into repairing revenue enforcement functionality in the UI Online system. We implemented 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. The condition of our Trust Fund remains a huge concern, and we are making every effort to collect past due contributions from delinquent employers.

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 is 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:

1. Introduce a monthly review of non-liable accounts that have submitted wages and issue determinations to those accounts that have met the liability threshold.
2. Continue working toward an online automatic system validation of Employer Liability Determinations post registration.

Ultimately, and realistically, the long-term technology changes needed to achieve the acceptable performance level may come during the design phase of the next technology platform, as the UI Online system is at end of life, and our Revenue Department just completed a lengthy, expensive, and exhausting overhaul of the Collections and Enforcement module and their focus must be on delivering near term results.

FY 2022 Update:

As we shared last year, employers register their accounts in the existing 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 is 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.

In order to correct the registration process, a rework of the front end of the UI Online system would need to happen. Given where we are with our modernization effort, it does not make sense to overhaul our existing application in a system that we will be moving away from. Instead, our team contributed to the writing of the Request for Proposal, and will make sure that all of the business requirements that are needed in the new solution to make us successful in this area are included.

In the interim, we will continue to work our manual processes, and will add staff to this work wherever and whenever possible. Like most states, we have had to reallocate resources all over the organization, mostly to areas involving claims intake and processing. As we begin to emerge from the pandemic, we will continue to seek opportunities to improve in this area.

2. PROGRAM REVIEW DEFICIENCIES

N/A

3. PROGRAM DEFICIENCIES

N/A

4. REPORTING DEFICIENCIES

FY 2022 Update:

During FY 2021, a number of reports were submitted past their due dates for a variety of reasons. These include the sheer volume of reports due, new programs, needed programming changes, new personnel taking ownership of certain reporting responsibilities, and training gaps. We recognize the importance of timely and accurate reporting, and, as such, have performed a review to ensure that all reports have either been submitted or are imminent. A recent training delivered by the USDOL Regional Office was highly impactful and has directly contributed to our improvement in this area.

5. OTHER

N/A

6. CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEYS

N/A

7. 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.

1. Assurance of Equal Opportunity (EO).
2. Assurance of Administrative Requirements and Allowable Cost Standards.
3. Assurance of Management Systems, Reporting, and Recordkeeping.
4. Assurance of Program Quality.
5. Assurance on Use of Unobligated Funds.
6. Assurance of Prohibition of Lobbying Costs (29 CFR Part 93).
7. Drug-Free Workplace (29 CFR Part 98).
8. Assurance of Contingency Planning.

Provide the most recent dates for the following:

- Information Technology (IT)Contingency Plan Implemented: March 14, 2020
- IT Contingency Plan Reviewed/Updated[1]: December 16, 2020
- IT Contingency Plan Tested[2]: March 14, 2020

9. Assurance of Conformity and Compliance.

10. Assurance of Automated Information Systems Security.

Provide the most recent dates for the following:

- Risk Assessment Conducted: December 16, 2020
- System Security Plan Reviewed/Updated[3]: May 2021

11. Assurance of Confidentiality

12. Assurance of Disaster Unemployment Assistance

Conducted Annual DUA Training for DUA Staff

- Provide the date of the training:

The State UI Director has completed the NASWA training on 11/2/21 and remaining team members will be trained by 11/30/21.

- Developed and/or Maintained a Standard Operating

Procedures for use during a major disaster declaration:

Massachusetts has requested the template referenced in TEN 13-21. ETA has informed Massachusetts that the template is currently in final approval and not yet available. Once received, Massachusetts will develop the required Standard Operating Procedures, likely in Q1 of calendar year 2022.

*Massachusetts will be scheduling and developing Disaster Unemployment Assistance training in FY22 using the training modules in the NASWA platform.

4. CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS (CAPS)

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 quaterly 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.

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.

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Guidelines for Recording Performance Levels in SQSP

The purpose of the "Target Performance Levels" (PPLs) 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 IPIA 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 12/31/2020), the APL should be the cumulative performance achieved from January 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020. For the second quarter report (quarter ending 3/31/2020), the APL should be the cumulative performance achieved from April 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020. 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

MEASURES/PROGRAMS TO BE ADDRESSED FOR ALTERNATE SQSP 2022

	Measures/Programs to be Addressed (Each Measure Below is Hyper Linked to the CAP Worksheet)	Acceptable Level of Performance (ALP)	Corrective Action Plan: N	Corrective Action Plan: E	Narrative Required	Performance Level
BENEFITS	First Payment Promptness	≥ 87%		X		64.25%
	First Payment Promptness (IntraState 14/21 Days)	≥ 87%		X		65.56%
	First Payment Promptness (InterState 14/21 Days)	≥ 70%				58.35%
	First Payment Promptness (IntraState 35 Days)	≥ 93%		X		82.01%
	First Payment Promptness (InterState 35 Days)	≥ 78%				71.40%
	Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness	≥ 80%		X		37.31%
	Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Separations	≥ 75%		X		51.19%
	Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Nonsepa	≥ 75%				44.81%
APPEALS	Lower Authority Appeals (30 Days)	≥ 60%				12.02%
	Lower Authority Appeals (45 Days)	≥ 80%				19.49%
	Average Age of Pending Lower Authority Appeals	≥ 30 days				124.0
	Average Age of Pending Higher Authority Appeals	≥ 40 days				22.0
	Lower Authority Appeals Quality	≥ 60%				100.00%
TAX	New Employer Status Determinations Timeliness	≥ 70%				66.34%
	Tax Quality (Part A)	No more than 3 tax functions failing TPSs in a year		X		Fail
	Tax Quality (Part B)	The same tax function cannot fail for 3 consecutive years		X		Fail
	TPS Sample Reviews	Pass				Pass
	Effective Audit Measure	Pass 4 factors out of 5 or a T				Fail
INTEGRITY	Improper Payments Measure	< 10%				7.63%
	Detection of Overpayments - 3 Year Measure	≥ 50% & ≤ 95%		X		114.25%
	Overpayment Recovery Measure	≥ 68%				61.44%
	Data Validation - Benefits (All Submitted & Passing)	All Benefit Pops Submitted & Passing		X		Fail Benefits 1-5, 8-15; Not Submit BTQ 1-3
	Data Validation - Tax (All Submitted & Passing)	All Tax Pops Submitted & Passing		X		Fail Tax 1
BAM	NDNH BAM Compliance	Pass				Pass
	BAM Operations Compliant	Pass All MIP		X		Failed: DCA Comparison Report (Monetary, Separation, Nonseparation); PCA & DCA case completion Timeliness (Monetary, Separation, Nonseparation); PCA Sample Selection
	Incorrect Recording of Issue Detection Date	90%				Pass
	Incorrect Recording of Determination Date	90%				Pass
	UI Reporting Requirements	Pass			X	Fail
OPERA	Percent of Intrastate Payments Made Timely	87%				65.60%
	Detection of Recoverable Overpayments	54.5%				103.00%
	% of Employer Tax Liability Determinations Made Timely	89%				66.30%

Integrity Action Plan (IAP) Top Three Root Causes

Separation Issues
Benefit Year Earnings
Other Eligibility

Monitoring Findings/Audit Resolution					

First Payment Promptness

State: Massachusetts | Federal Fiscal Year: 2021-2022 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report

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Performance Measures	AU*	CAP Based on SQSP 2021 Performance	CAP Based on SQSP 2022 Performance	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2020 Quarter 1	3/31/2021 Quarter 2	6/30/2021 Quarter 3	9/30/2021 Quarter 4	12/31/2021 Quarter 5	3/31/2022 Quarter 6	6/30/2022 Quarter 7	9/30/202 Quarter
First Payment Promptness, % of all 1st payments within 14/21 days after the compensable week.	≥ 87%	83.98%	84.25%	Target	80.0%	75.0%	80.0%	55.0%	58.0%	58.0%	61.0%	65.0%
				Actual	56.3%	64.5%	54.4%	55.7%				
First Payment Promptness, 14/21 days Intrastate UI full weeks	≥ 87%	83.92%	85.98%	Target	77.0%	80.0%	83.0%	85.0%	88.0%	88.0%	71.0%	75.0%
				Actual	89.3%	85.8%	83.1%	83.9%				
First Payment Promptness, 35 days Intrastate UI full weeks	≥ 93%	91.77%	92.01%	Target	84.0%	85.0%	83.0%	88.0%	86.0%	86.0%	86.0%	87.0%
				Actual	89.4%	92.0%	n/a	n/a				

Regional Office Comments in cell below:

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

The Summary must provide.

Due to the pandemic, targets have been adjusted starting the quarter ending 9/30/2021

Alternate Year Plan Updates

A. The Reason for the deficiency.

The reason for failing to meet the First Payment Promptness metric continues to be the number of issues that are getting created up front, adjudication backlog of issues over twenty-one days, and total issues per claimant vs staff ratio. The top four category of issues pending are still employee, capability, quit and earnings. We continue to work through the enormous effect the pandemic has had on our capacity to address adjudication workflow volume as well as experiencing a reduction in staff due to funding decreases. Our ability to resolve non-monetary determinations given the total issues per claim vs staff ratio has been greatly impacted.

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.

Our plan to resolve the identified issues is to apply a series of initiatives and enhancements that have been approved. F.Y. 2020-2021 we hired and trained limited duration adjudication staff. To date, we have 3[illegible] staff that have been trained in adjudication and are currently working on backlog issues. In addition to adding more staff, the agency has put into practice new processes and procedures to streamline adjudication. Some of these include pre-adjudication from front line staff, weekly group meetings to brainstorm new ideas for streamlining, and the opening of our Reemployment Center. There are also plans to begin a live adjudication escalation process, as well as introduce a Chat feature on our website where our constituents will receive immediate real-time answers to commonly asked questions. Moreover, the following enhancement have been implemented in production to improve the timely resolution and reduction of adjudication issues. As recently as October 1,2021 we enhanced the certification questions in UIO [illegible] better meet the needs and understanding of our constituents, we continue to utilize our data tools (Power BI) for both adjudication and claims to analyze the work being completed vs the work coming in, then adjusting the way we do business. All efforts have reduced call volume and allowed for efficiency and increased productivity. Our plan to resolve the identified issues is to apply a series of initiatives and enhancements that have been approved. F.Y. 2020-2021 we hired and trained limited duration adjudication staff. To date, we have 33[illegible] staff that have been trained in adjudication and are currently working on backlog issues. In addition to adding more staff, the agency has put into practice new processes and procedures to streamline adjudication. Some of these include pre-adjudication from front line staff, weekly group meetings to brainstorm new ideas for streamlining, and the opening of our Reemployment Center. There are also plans to begin a live adjudication escalation process, as well as introduce a Chat feature on our website where our constituents will receive immediate real-time answers to commonly asked questions. Moreover, the following enhancement have been implemented in production to improve the timely resolution and reduction of adjudication issues. As recently as October 1,2021 we enhanced the certification questions in UIO to better meet the needs and understanding of our constituents, we continue to [illegible]

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 mo[illegible] successful.

The plan that was in place for the previous year is still ongoing with some additions. Working remotely still poses it challenges, but we are making progress. The fact-finding law continues to provide direct access to the queue, without having to pass through the screening process. This tool is still in place. The enhancement to the weekly certification process has been completed and implemented. We will continue to monitor the impact this enhancement has on reducing the number of issues created through the continued claims process. We will also monitor and access how the newly created pre-adjudication ideas have reduced the number of calls coming in and the amount of issue being created up front. Although these changes have helped greatly, we will continue to access our processes and make changes where we believe will make a difference in service and turnaround time. Our goal is to continue to improve and hit our performance goals consistently.

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.

DUA will continue to utilize the adjudication dashboards to better manage staff, and monitor issue creation vs issue reduction over time. In addition, a claims dashboard has been created and will be used similar[illegible] This will help us better track incoming calls and key performance indicators. We will continue sending the DUA First Payment Promptness Executive Dashboard numbers to the Regional Office on a weekly bas[illegible] In addition, we will continue to track our performance progress through the increased utilization of existing and newly developed internal management reports.

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. **X**

Continuing to implement the milestones below and given it will be 3 years following the COVID-19 pandemic, which is sufficient time to improve on the metrics, we hope to meet the performance goal by the [illegible]

Milestones	Completion Date
1. Continue to monitor call center work flow enhancements and make adjustments to business procedures to improve the customer experience.	Multi-year

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):

We continue to rely on the newly created adjudication dashboard to better manage staff and the adjudication workload. Having realtime access to adjudication data has allowed us to quickly train temporary staff on the issue types with the highest backlog. Given the influx of required system changes as a result of federal guidance and legislative changes, we have been unable to implement the system enhancement to update the weekly certification questions. We will prioritize this enhancement as it will reduce the number of erroneous issues created by staff and help reduce the backlog of issues.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):

A significant hindrance in meeting first pay promptness was the high volume of pending identity verification issues. To address this, all agency staff with adjudication experience were trained and reassigned to adjudicate identity verification issues for several weeks. Additionally, we implemented IQ.me which has allowed claimants to verify their identity through a third party. This has freed up adjudication staff to work on other non-monetary issues holding payment.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):

We are currently testing a new chat feature that claimants can access from our UI Online system. Claimants will have the ability to type in their question and receive a canned response. We expect to go live with this feature in the coming weeks. On 5/02/21 we will open our new Re-employment center (REC) in Boston, MA. Claimants will be able to schedule an appointment to visit the REC to obtain UI assistance. Claimants will receive expansion assistance or may connect virtually with a remote staff person.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

We are currently testing a new chat feature that claimants can access from our UI Online system. Claimants will have the ability to type in their question and receive a canned response. We expect to go live [illegible]

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We are currently testing a new chat feature that claimants can access from our UI Online system. Claimants will have the ability to type in their question and receive a canned response. We expect to go live with this feature in the coming weeks. On 9/13/21 we will open our new Reemployment center (REC) in Boston, MA. Claimants will be able to schedule an appointment to visit the REC to obtain UI assistance. Claimants will receive in-person assistance or may connect virtually with a remote staff person.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

2. Use seasonal staff to augment personnel resources.	Completion Date Multiyear

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
We continue to use temporary staff to assist claimants with the completion of Fact-finding and the adjudication of specific issue types. We are currently in the process of bringing on an additional 200 temporary staff to assist with the adjudication backlog.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
We continue to use temporary staff to assist claimants with the completion of Fact-finding and the adjudication of specific issue types. Currently, we have 125 temporary staff deployed and another 140 in training.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
We continue to onboard and train new temporary staff to assist with the adjudication backlog. Currently, we have 247 temporary staff assigned to the adjudication department.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
The 247 temporary staff currently assigned is a fluctuating number due to staff turnover.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

3. Monitor and enhance technology tools and business processes to improve outcomes.	Completion Date Multiyear

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
DUA has been working closely with the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTSS) to improve technology. We recently engaged a vendor to build out a Call Center dashboard and are in the process of building the requirements. This will give management access to real time data related to call volume, wait times, handle time, etc. This data has not been readily available since moving to a remote work environment in March 2020 and will allow management to effectively manage staff productivity and ensure appropriate staffing levels.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
We have implemented a new process to address prelaba requests up front when the claimant files a claim and requests a prelaba. This has allowed claims to be processed quickly with the appropriate effective date improving the customer experience.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
A team of supervisors and frontline staff are meeting regularly to review current processes and recommend both process and system changes to improve and streamline adjudication.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
A team of supervisors and frontline staff are meeting regularly to review current processes and recommend both process and system changes to improve and streamline adjudication. We are also looking to pilot a process where a claimant is directly connected to an adjudor from the call center phone queue.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
We continue to work on adjusting our processes and procedures to streamline adjudication. The process to connect a claimant directly to an adjudor is moving along and many of the processes and procedures

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

4. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

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Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

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Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
We have implemented a new process to address predate requests up front when the claimant files a claim and requests a predate. This has allowed claims to be processed quickly with the appropriate effective date improving the customer experience.

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Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

4. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date

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Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

5. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

6. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness

State: Massachusetts — Federal Fiscal Year: 2021-2022 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report

Back to Biennial Overview 2021 — Back to Alternate Overview 2021 — Instructions

Performance Measure	ALP	CAP Baseline on SQSP 2021 Performance Level	CAP Baseline on SQSP 2022 Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	10/01/2020 Quarter 1	3/31/2021 Quarter 2	6/30/2021 Quarter 3	9/30/2021 Quarter 4	12/31/2021 Quarter 5	3/31/2022 Quarter 6	6/30/2022 Quarter 7	9/30/2022 Quarter 8
Nonmonetary Determination Timeliness	≥ 80%	53.08%	37.27%	Target	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%
				Actual	23.7%	18.4%	17.8%	27.1%				

Regional Office Comments in cell below:

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

The Summary must provide:

Alternate Year Plan Updates

A. The Reason for the deficiency:

The reason for failing to meet the First Payment Promptness metric continues to be the number of issues that are getting created up front, adjudication backlog of issues over twenty-one days, and total issues per claimant vs staff ratio. We continue to work through the enormous effect the pandemic has had on our capacity to address adjudication workflow volume. Our ability to resolve nonmonetary determinations given the total issues per claim vs staff ratio has been impacted.

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 you "Plan-Do-Check-Act" corrective action plan.

There have been a series of initiative and enhancements that have been approved and now been implemented. FY 2020-2021 we hired and trained limited duration adjudication staff. To date we have 33 staff that have been trained in adjudication and are currently working on backlog issues. The agency has also put into practice new processes and procedures to streamline adjudication. We started a pre-adjudication process with front line staff. This will streamline the adjudication process and reduce the number of erroneous issues being created. In addition we started weekly group meetings to brainstorm ideas for streamlining, and we opened our Reemployment Center. Moreover, there are plans to begin a live adjudication escalation process, as well as introduce a Chat feature on our website where our constituents will receive immediate real-time answers to commonly asked questions. Additionally, the following enhancement have been implemented in production to improve the timely resolution and reduction of adjudication issues. As recently as October 1,2021 we enhanced the certification questions in UIO to better meet the needs and understanding of our constituents, we continue to utilize our data tools (Power BI) for both adjudication and claims to analyze the work being completed vs the work coming in, then adjusting the way we do business. All efforts have reduced call volume and allowed for efficiency and increased productivity.

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.

The plan that was in place for the previous year is still ongoing with some additions. Working remotely still poses it challenges, but we are making progress. The Fact-Finding line continues to provide direct access to the queue, without having to pass through the screening process. This tool is still in place. The enhancement to the weekly certification process has been completed and implemented. We will continue to monitor the impact this enhancement has on reducing the number of issues created through the continued claims process. We will also monitor and assess how the newly created pre-adjudication steps have reduced the number of calls coming in and the amount of issue being created up front. Although these changes have helped greatly, we will continue to assess our processes and making changes where we believe will make a difference in service and turnaround time. Our goal is to continue to improve and hit our performance goals consistently.

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.

DUA will continue to utilize the adjudication dashboards to better manage staff, issue reduction and issue creation over time. In addition, a claims dashboard has been created and will be used similarly. This will help us better track incoming calls and key performance indicators. We will continue 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 and newly developed internal management reports.

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. **X**

Continuing to implement the milestones below and given it will be 3 years following the COVID-19 pandemic, which is sufficient time to improve on the metrics, we hope to meet the performance goal by the

Milestones

1. Monitor and enhance recent adjudicator business process to improve staff outcomes

Completion
Multiye

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
We continue to rely on the newly created adjudication dashboard to better manage staff and the adjudication workload. Having realtime access to adjudication data has allowed us to quickly train temp
staff on the issue types with the highest backlog. Given the influx of required system changes as a result of federal guidance and legislative changes, we have been unable to implement the system
enhancement to update the weekly certification questions. We will prioritize this enhancement as it will reduce the number of erroneous issues created by staff and help reduce the backlog of issues.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
We have restructured our seasonal adjudication teams to focus on specific issue types. This has resulted in an increase in productivity and has allowed us to resolve more adjudication level issues.
Additionally, we have implemented a new process to address predate requests up front when the claimant files a claim and requests a predate. This has allowed claims to be processed quickly with th
appropriate effective date.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
A team of supervisors and frontline staff are meeting regularly to review current processes and recommend changes to improve and streamline adjudication. We continue to train temporary adjudica
adjudicate additional issue types in order to expand our teams.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
A team of supervisors and front line staff are meeting regularly to review current processes and recommend changes to improve and streamline adjudication. We continue to train temporary adjudica
adjudicate additional issue types in order to expand our teams.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

2. Use seasonal staff to augment permanent resources

Completion
Multiye

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
We continue to use temporary staff to assist claimants with the completion of fact-finding and the adjudication of specific issue types. We are currently in the process of bringing on an additional 200
temporary staff to assist with the adjudication backlog.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
We continue to onboard and train temporary staff to assist with the adjudication backlog. Currently we have 135 temporary adjudicators deployed and 145 are in training and will be deployed over the
weeks.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
We continue to onboard and train new temporary staff to assist with the adjudication backlog. Currently, we have 347 temporary staff assigned to adjudication.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
We continue to explore and expand the use of temporary staff depending on funding.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
We continue train up existing temporary staff.

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

3. Monitor and enhance system changes that will play an impact in customer experience.

Completion
Multiye

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
We continue to focus on eliminating the unnecessary creation of issues and system workarounds in an effort to reduce the backlog of pending adjudication level issues. We also worked with a vendor
a call back feature that allows claimants to receive a call back rather than wait on hold. We recently went live with the call back feature and continue to see an increase in the number of claimants sel
the call back option.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
The call back feature was implemented last quarter to improve the customer experience. This feature gives the claimant the option to select a call back and holds the claimants place in line. We are
working on a chat feature that claimants can access from our UI Online system. Claimants will have the ability to type in their question and receive a canned response. Additionally, we implemented
which has allowed claimants to verify their identity through a third party. This has freed up adjudication staff to work on other non-monetary issues holding payment.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
The new chat feature is currently being tested and is expected to go live in the coming weeks. On 8/02/21 we will open our new Re-employment center (REC) in Boston, MA. Claimants will be able t
schedule an appointment to visit the REC to obtain UI assistance. Claimants will receive in-person assistance or may connect virtually with a remote staff person.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
The new chat feature is currently being tested and is expected to go live in the coming weeks. Our new re-employment center in Boston, MA has been opened since 8/02/21 and we continue to monit
effectiveness of the UI claimant in a walk-in environment.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

4. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

5. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

6. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

Nonmonetary Determination Quality

State: Massachusetts					Federal Fiscal Year: 2021-2022 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report								
Back to Summary Summary Table		Back to Automatic Summary Table			Instructions								
Performance Measures	ALF	CAP Based on SQSP 2021 Performance	CAP Based on SQSP 2022 Performance	State's Targets or Performance	1/2/21-3/31/21 Quarter 1	3/31/2021 Quarter 2	6/30/2021 Quarter 3	9/30/2021 Quarter 4	1/2/21-3/31/21 Quarter 5	3/31/2022 Quarter 6	6/30/2022 Quarter 7	9/30/2022 Quarter 8	
Nonmonetary Determination Quality - Separations	≥ 75%	62.43%	51.16%	Target	90.0%	92.0%	90.0%	87.0%	85.0%	71.0%	73.0%	75.0%	
				Actual	N/A	50.0%	66.7%	46.7%	70.0%				

Regional Office Comments in cell below:

Corrective Action Plan Summary:
The Summary must provide:

Alternate Year Plan Updates
A. The Reason for the deficiency:
DUA has not met the acceptable level of performance for Nonmonetary Determination Quality- Separations due to several reasons. The most prevalent is attributed to adjudication staff not seeking individuals for further information, when warranted, from both claimant and employer. In March 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 emergency, we shifted our focus to the extraordinary increase in initial claims. It was "all hands on deck" to assist with customer service and claims filing. DUA went from 30 to 2,000 staff in a short period of time, and training was focused on claims and customer service. There was no Federal QTC review conducted for Q1 2020 and Q2 2020. Cases were not able to be regularly reviewed by management during this time.
Alternate Year Plan Updates: DUA continues to not meet the acceptable level of performance for Nonmonetary Determination Quality- Separations due to various reasons. Adjudication staff still have difficulties with seeking individuals or further information, when warranted. Refresher training for addressing these deficiencies has been a challenge, given that all of our training resources have been allocated towards new limited duration adjudication staff hired in the past 18 months. In addition to this, the fact that we have so many new staff presents challenges in ensuring that their cases work is of high quality and meets QTC standards.

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 has recently restructured the way that adjudicators resolve issues. There are groups of adjudicators focusing on resolving one issue, with the goal that they become productive and efficient in targeting that specific issue. The groups will switch to different issues, based on the needed areas to target. These groups all have a Team Lead, who is their subject matter expert, and provides support with regular trainings and one on one sessions. DUA has brought on over 200 temporary JDTs since April 2020 to assist with resolution of issues, who are also part of the same adjudication structure. These new employees have gone through various trainings with UI Policy and Performance and will continue to do so in order to enhance the quality of their cases. They also receive supplemental training from their Supervisors and one on one meetings. In addition, their cases are reviewed by the Team Lead prior to submission, until their quality is such that the Team Lead is confident for them to work on cases independently. UI Policy and Performance will continue to engage with UI Performance in order to review what deficiencies there might be with nonmonetary separation issues. In addition to this, DUA will continually engage with staff in order to identify potential areas of weaknesses. Alternate Year Plan Updates
DUA continues to utilize the one issue model, where groups of adjudicators focus on resolving one issue, so they are proficient and gain experience in that issue, then will eventually switch to another issue, with the goal of being proficient in all issue types. This type of model will continue, along with continued training, will help the agency in achieving acceptable measures of performance. UI Policy and Performance has reformatted and improved training materials, and plans on holding refresher trainings in 2022, in order to help staff improve with the quality of work. In addition, guide cards/flow charts have been created to assist staff with adjudicating issues effectively. Adjudication supervisory staff meet on a regular basis to discuss what areas staff might need additional training or resources in order to improve in the quality of determinations made. UI Policy and Performance will also continue to consult with UI Performance in order to review other deficiencies there might be with nonmonetary separation issues.
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.
As a result of COVID-19, some of the milestones developed were not able to be met. Managers were not able to perform case reviews because all of the resources were geared towards claims filing and customer service. In addition, the Adjudication Committee that was developed put a halt on proceeding forward as intended. Now that the call volume has decreased, DUA can shift efforts towards improving the quality of separation issues. The focus, going forward, will be working with the smaller adjudication groups to ensure they are receiving the training necessary to improve quality, with the goal of meeting the Achieved Level of Performance.
Alternate Year Plan Updates: Although DUA did not meet the acceptable level of performance threshold of 75%, our QTC scores for nonmonetary quality improved from 50% in Q2 2021 to 66.7% in Q3 2021. Conducting additional training and providing additional resources for staff to refer to has helped to improve in the quality of adjudication. The call volume decreased in the last year, however the backlog issues increased and over 300 new staff were hired to the call center, resulting in limited resources for training sessions. In April 2021, UI**'s training department was provided staff to help to support the ever-increasing need for additional training in many areas. The improvements to training and the training model are ongoing, with the goal of being able to provide additional training and resources where needed to improve the quality of nonmonetary issues. Now that hiring has slowed down, DUA can focus on the new staff hired and be able to provide the tools and training necessary to improve in their
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.
DUA will continue to engage with UI Performance and analyze QTC quarterly reviews to ensure quality standards are being met. UI Policy and Performance will continue to assist with training needs.
Alternate Year Plan Updates: DUA will continue to engage with UI Performance and analyze QTC quarterly reviews to ensure quality standards are being met and if not, what areas need improvement. UI** will continue to provide refresher trainings to keep staff's knowledge and skills at a high performance level.

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.)

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

	Completion Date
1. Develop resources for Adjudication supervisory staff to enhance staff coaching and training.	Multi-year

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
There is a small group that meets weekly to discuss adjudication and what trainings and information can be developed to enhance coaching and training. In these meetings areas are identified where staff need assistance and additional training and those trainings are scheduled to the extent of resources available.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
UI Policy and Performance has developed updated training materials and procedure guides for adjudication supervisory staff to use. The group continues to meet to discuss what the training needs are.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
UI Policy and Performance is still in the process of developing updated training materials and procedure guides for adjudication supervisory staff to use. In continuing to meet regularly with Adjudication supervisory staff, UI?? is able to receive feedback as to what tools would enhance training. Additional flow charts are being created in order to assist the staff in adjudication.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

UI?? continues to develop updated training materials and guides for adjudication supervisory staff to use. The effort to reformat training materials on every issue type is close to completion. This should assist the staff with additional training.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
UI?? continues to develop updated training materials and guides for adjudication supervisory staff to use. There are two more issue types that are in the process of being reformatted, this should assist the staff with additional training.

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

	Completion Date
2. Provide regular feedback to Adjudication supervisory staff with trends regarding errors in adjudication.	Multi-year

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
In these meetings, feedback is provided to the Directors of the call center regarding any trends. UI Policy and Performance will also provide direct feedback to supervisors when a case is sent that warrants re-determination.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
Adjudication meetings are held 3 times a week, in these meetings, UI?? shares feedback with Call Center Management regarding training completed with staff, any issues that may arise related to the adjudication of non-monetary issues. In addition, UI?? has a weekly Training meeting with management to discuss training needs/schedules, etc.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
Adjudication meetings continue to be held 3 times a week, in these meetings, UI?? shares feedback with Call Center Management regarding training completed with staff, any issues that may arise related to the adjudication of non-monetary issues. In addition, UI?? has a weekly Training meeting with management to discuss training needs/schedules, etc.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
Adjudication meetings continue to be held 3 times a week, in these meetings, UI?? shares feedback with Call Center Management regarding training completed with staff, any issues that may arise related to the adjudication of non-monetary issues. In addition, UI?? continues the weekly Training meetings with management to discuss training needs/schedules, etc.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
Adjudication meetings are held twice a week, and UI?? continues to share feedback regarding training. Weekly training meetings are still ongoing with management to discuss areas that are in need of training.

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

	Completion Date
3. Analyze deficiencies from quarterly BTQ evaluations and share and discuss with Adjudication Managers and Supervisors.	Multi-year

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
There are no BTQ evaluations for this quarter to analyze and share with Adjudication Managers and Supervisors.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
The BTQ evaluations were was shared with the Adjudication Managers and Supervisors. They are responsible for sharing the results with staff and reviewing why cases failed. In addition, UI?? reviewed the deficiencies in order to formulate specific training needs that the Adjudications could benefit from in order to improve on the BTQ scores. As we are increasing our workforce in order to reduce backlog, this refresher training has not been conducted yet, but will be within the next 60 days.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
The BTQ evaluations were shared with the Adjudication Managers and Supervisors. They are responsible for sharing the results with staff and reviewing why cases failed. In addition, UI?? reviewed the deficiencies in order to formulate specific training needs that the Adjudications could benefit from in order to improve on the BTQ scores. As we are increasing our workforce in order to reduce backlog, this refresher training has not been conducted yet, but will be by the end of October 2021.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
BTQ scores were recently reported, however the evaluations and details on the cases has not been published yet by UI Performs. Once in receipt of this information, it will be analyzed and shared with adjudication managers and supervisors. Due to an influx of training requests for new staff and limited resources, refresher training has been delayed until 2022.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
BTQ evaluations from Q 12/31/21 were recently shared with management and are currently being analyzed. One trend was already noted and Policy is in the process of implementing an updated procedure with the feedback given in the BTQ evaluations.

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

4. Conduct monthly meetings with Adjudication supervisory staff to identify areas of concerns with resolving non monetary issues (focusing on separations issues particularly.)	Completion Date: Multi-year

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
With staff focusing the majority their time towards COVID-19 efforts, we have not had the ability to meet monthly with Adjudication Supervisory staff. Howeeve, the smaller group who meets weekly does report areas of concern with resolving non monetary issues on a regular basis, either at the meeting or via email communications.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
Adjudication meetings are held 3 times a week with Call Center Management to discuss a variety of topics, one being the areas of concern with resolving non monetary issues. It is discussed what the training needs are for the Adjudicators and what topics they would benefit from getting refresher training. A refresher training on 24b issues and Work Search was held last week for seasoned Adjudicators and Claims Agents with the implementation of work search requirements being reinstated.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
Adjudication meetings are held 3 times a week with Call Center Management to discuss a variety of topics, one being the areas of concern with resolving non monetary issues. It is discussed what the training needs are for the Adjudicators and what topics they would benefit from getting refresher training. UI77* conducts Q&A sessions for supervisors to identify areas of concern and provide helpful information.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
Adjudication meetings continue to be held 3 days a week and areas of concern are shared. There is a constant need for additional training brought up at these meetings, particularly with separations, but QUA is limited in the training that can be delivered due to lack of resources.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
Adjudication meetings are held twice a week to identify what additional training is needed in adjudication. The plan is to complete refresher training with seasoned staff with non monetary issues that have been identified as needing additional support.

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

5. Complete Refresher Training with seasoned Adjudication staff to improve the Quality of Adjudication.	Completion Date: 9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
new milestone
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
new milestone
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
new milestone
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
new milestone
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
Due to an influx of training requests for new staff and limited resources, refresher training has been delayed until 2022.
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

6. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date:

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date:

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date:

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

Tax Quality

State: Massachusetts | **Federal Fiscal Year: 2021-2022 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report**

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Performance Measures	ALP	CAP Based on SQSP 2021 Performance Level	CAP Based on SQSP 2022 Performance Level	State Target/Actual Performance	1/01/2020 Quarter 1	3/01/2021 Quarter 2	6/30/2021 Quarter 3	9/30/2021 Quarter 4	12/01/2021 Quarter 5	3/01/2022 Quarter 6	6/30/2022 Quarter 7	9/30/2022 Quarter 8
Tax Quality (Part A)	No more than 3 tax functions failing TPS in a year	Status Inact/Term Failed	Status Inact/Term Failed	Target	X	Submitted	X	X	X	PASS	X	X
				Actual	X	Fail	X	X	X			
		Report Delinquency Failed	Report Delinquency Failed	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	X	PASS	X	X
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	X			
		Report Processing Failed	Report Processing Failed	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	X	PASS	X	X
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	X			
		Credit/Refunds Failed	Credit/Refunds Failed	Target	X	Submitted	X	X	X	PASS	X	X
				Actual	X	Fail	X	X	X			
		Debit Charging Failed	Debit Charging Failed	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	X			
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	X			
Tax Quality (Part B)	The same tax function cannot fail for 3 consecutive years	Credit/Refunds Failed	Credit/Refunds Failed	Target	X	Submitted	X	X	X	PASS	X	X
				Actual	X	Fail	X	X	X			

Regional Office Comments in cell below:

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

The Summary must provide.

Alternate Year Plan Updates

A. The Reason for the deficiency.

The deficiencies found in the MDUA tax program are related to both human and system error. Status determination failed because the current system does not automatically modify an employee status when the employee shifts from a Suspended to Active status nor does it trigger a work item to be addressed by staff. With no system or manual process in place to identify these employers they remained in the incorrect status. Collections fail when staff erroneously place a hold on employers accounts with the result being that mailing of bills is suspended for the employer. Debit/billing failed due to a breakdown in the established procedure for processing of checks. Credits and refunds continues to fail due to lack of correspondence to employers notifying them that there is a credit on their account. While steps have been taken to notify the problem it has not been resolved. The failure was identified in the 2016 Massachusetts TPS review. At that time MA was instructed that electronic correspondence was inadequate due to the Handbook stating that the correspondence must be provided through general mail. MDUA chose not to pursue developing the correspondence as it had moved to electronic correspondence with employers and would not regress to paper mail. In 2018 MDUA was instructed that electronic correspondence for notification of credits would be acceptable. At that time Tax began to develop a solution to provide the correspondence.

ALTERNATE PLAN YEAR UPDATE: Many deficiencies are pandemic related. During the pandemic MDUA granted extensions to employers for tax reporting and submission. Additionally, billing of employers was delayed while the SWA worked through CARES Act regulations and additional emergency regulation implemented by the Commonwealth of MA. These delays negatively impacted the 2021 TPS causing failure in areas where it was expected that the SWA would pass. Resources that were expected to be devoted to Tax Quality improvement were diverted to implement changes that occurred due to pandemic and ensuring services to the employment community. At this time, most resources continue to be dedicated to implementing Tax Programs and pandemic related activities. Due to this, it is no longer a reasonable expectation that Tax Quality will pass in the 2021 program year. It is MDUA target to submission for the 2021 program year and PASS in the 2022 program year. MDUA did make progress in the past year. Holds for Collection on employers accounts was addressed and the correction continues to work successfully. The development of correspondence for notification of a credit on an employer accounts was deprioritized while the agency completed work to build and implement pandemic programs and UI/PEI pandemic programs. A new date for development has not been set at this time.

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.

For Status, MDUA will continue a reach out campaign to reimbursable employers that continue to erroneously fail to report UI wages on their quarterly filing, correcting the discrepancy of having $0 wages for eight quarters but remaining in Active status. This has prove effective as the strategy has reduced the number of Active reimbursable employers reporting $0 from 8% to 2.88%. For Collections, Tax staff will receive training on when it would be appropriate to place on hold on an employers account that results in billing being held. Also, the MDUA will explore the removal of staff access in order to limit the number of staff authorized to complete the type of account hold transaction. For Debit/billing, a new operating procedure has been put in place to ensure that checks will be processed timely and will not be delayed due to availability of staff to process. For Credits/Refunds, steps have been taken that add the credit information on different types of employer correspondence that MDUA was able to implement immediately. An enhancement for development of a document specific to notification of account credit has been submitted but has not yet been prioritized by the Change Control Board.

ALTERNATE PLAN YEAR UPDATE: Much of the failure in this program year was specific to extensions and delays in running of Tax reports. It is expected that reinstitution of the standard report schedule will positively affect outcomes. For Credits and Refunds, development of correspondence notifying employers of an account credit needs to be reprioritized. A notification would bring Credits and Refunds into compliance. In Status Determinations, the SWA continues to struggle with manual processes. To assure accuracy of non-liable registrations, staff manually review these accounts and make determination if they should be liable. Due to resource alteration, the SWA was unable to ensure sufficient diligence to negative review. It is expected that as staff return to regular duties this sufficient diligence will resume. Report delinquency, a new CAP, is directly related to the SWA providing a filing extension to employers in MA during the pandemic. Regularly scheduled reporting dates have resumed and report delinquency is expected to correct itself.

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.

The failure for Credits/Refunds was identified in the 2018 Massachusetts TITS review. At that time MA was instructed that electronic correspondence was inadequate due to the Handbook stating that the correspondence must be provided through general mail. MDUA chose not to pursue developing the correspondence as it had moved to electronic correspondence with employers and would not respond to paper mail. In 2019 MDUA was instructed that electronic correspondence for notification of credits would be acceptable. At that time Tax began to develop a solution to provide the correspondence. An enhancement has been submitted of development of a notification of credits to employers, however with all changes required to keep the UiOnline system functioning, this notification has not been a priority for the agency. With the imminent replacement of the UiOnline system the agency has decided only to invest in system changes that are required to keep the system functioning. It is expected that the request for notification development will not occur until a new system is purchased. While Status/Active employer did not pass TITS this, the agency has made significant progress in reducing the number of Active reimbursable employers reporting $0 wages, from 8% to 2.8%. It is important to remember that MDUA is monitoring these employers and Active status is the appropriate designation. With continued work it is expected that this will be resolved in the coming year. MDUA successfully took action to remove the manual holds on employer accounts and therefore billing was sent as required. However, it has been discovered through TITS that some staff continue with this practice. Through training and removal of the ability to place a hold on an account, it is expected that this will be resolved this year. An organizational procedure was put in place to ensure that all checks/payments from employers were processed timely. Investigation after TITS failure of Debit/Billings showed a weakness in the procedure that allowed Tax payments to not be posted timely. A modification to procedure to ensure staffing is available to post payments immediately is expected to resolve the problem and allow Debit/Billing to pass in the upcoming year.

ALTERNATE PLAN YEAR UPDATE: It was expected that Tax Quality Program year 2020 would not pass and that efforts toward improvement would lead to passing in Program Year 2021, however the SWA had made improvements. Many of the new deficiencies are pandemic related. During the pandemic MDUA granted extensions to employers for tax reporting and submission. Additionally, billing of employers was delayed while the SWA worked through CARES Act regulations and additional and emergency regulations implemented by the Commonwealth of MA. These delays negatively impacted the 2021 TITS causing failure in areas where it was expected that the SWA would pass. However, the pandemic brought new challenges to the Tax Unit. Resources that should have been devoted to Tax Quality Improvement were diverted to implement changes that occurred due to pandemic and executing services to the employment community. At this time, most resources continue to be dedicated to implementing Tax Programs and pandemic related activities. Benefit charging failed when 75 accounts did not have all the COVID claims credits received on their statement. This was directly related to modification of deadlines and running of reports to accommodate development and implementation of Credit facilitation. It is expected to return to normal, having passed the previous 6 years.

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.

Milestones

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.)

Wrongfiling

1. Status Reactivate	Completion Date
Tax staff will continue to receive a report that listed Active Reimbursable Employers that are reporting $0.00 taxable wages as well as previously separated employers that have received wage reporting/employment. Tax staff will mail an instruction letter on required wage reporting to each of these employers. Staff will manually modify the employer status dependent upon wages received.	9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
Correspondence was delivered via email to the 67 reimbursable employers filing with $0.00 taxable wages, providing instruction on required reporting of UI.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
Letters with instruction on accurate employment and wage detail reporting was developed and sent to applicable reimbursable employers on March 15 2021. 2021 TITS implementation was completed, but due to timing of the mailing, the effect cannot be assessed at this time. MDUA will continue to monitor change in employer employment and wage detail reporting to determine if additional action must be taken to bring reimbursable employers into compliance. Current statistics show that previous efforts have allowed Massachusetts to maintain a variance of less than 3%.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
In the first quarter of 2021 there were 71 reimbursable employers listed as active that should have filed wages but instead filed $0. In the second quarter there were reimbursable employers listed as active that should have filed wages but instead filed $0. In the first quarter of 2021, through the remediation methods listed in the SQSP, 7% OR 5 accounts were rectified and employers began reporting correctly. However, there was an increase of 12%, nine new employers, who met the threshold of 8 quarters with no wages reported. While the methodologies are somewhat effective, new reimbursable employers meeting the eight quarters keep the % of failing reimbursable employers outside of allowable variance. TPS will continue to send the list of new employers who fall into this category to Tax Dept. on a quarterly basis for intervention with these employers. Additional discussions will occur to identify other measures that might be taken to bring this population to a passing level.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
MDUA continues to implement strategies to reduce improper reporting by reimbursable employers. While these activities are successful, this is an ongoing task as new employers reach the threshold of eight quarters of $0 each quarter. MDUA has difficulty in the current system identifying these reimbursable employers until they reach the threshold. Activities that continue to be performed are email blasts, letters, and phone calls to these reimbursable employers in order to educate them on proper filing of wages.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
MDUA continues to implement strategies to reduce improper reporting by reimbursable employers. While these activities are successful, this is an ongoing task as new employers reach the threshold of eight quarters of $0 each quarter. MDUA has difficulty in the current system identifying these reimbursable employers until they reach the threshold. Activities that continue to be performed are email blasts, letters, and phone calls to these reimbursable employers in order to educate them on proper filing of wages.

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

2.	Completion Date
Tax staff will continue to receive a report that listed Active Reimbursable Employers that are reporting $0.00 taxable wages as well as previously separated employers that have received wage reporting/employment. If said employers fail to report correctly after instructional notice, Tax staff will contact the employer via telephone to discuss quarterly reporting requirements.	9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
While previously effective, this task was suspended due to priority being given to COVID-19 activities. To ensure that this task continues, the Tax Enforcement group is adding the task of contacting non-reporting reimbursable employers to their employer outreach/collections unit. This shift will occur no later than March 1st 2021.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
MDUA staff contacted reimbursable employers failing to correctly submit employment and wage detail information via telephone to notify employers how to accurately report employment and wage detail filing. Potential change in reporting by these employers will not be measurable until next quarter.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
In the first quarter of 2021 there were 71 reimbursable employers listed as active that should have filed wages but instead filed $0. In the second quarter there were reimbursable employers listed as active that should have filed wages but instead filed $0. In the first quarter of 2021, through the remediation methods listed in the SQSP, 7% OR 5 accounts were rectified and employers began reporting correctly. However, there was an increase of 12%, nine new employers, who met the threshold of 8 quarters with no wages reported. While the methodologies are somewhat effective, new reimbursable employers meeting the eight quarters keep the % of failing reimbursable employers outside of allowable variance. TPS will continue to send the list of new employers who fall into this category to Tax Dept. on a quarterly basis for intervention with these employers. Additional discussions will occur to identify other measures that might be taken to bring this population to a passing level.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
In the first quarter of 2021 there were 71 reimbursable employers listed as active that should have filed wages but instead filed $0. In the second quarter there were reimbursable employers listed as active that should have filed wages but instead filed $0. In the first quarter of 2021, through the remediation methods listed in the SQSP, 7% OR 5 accounts were rectified and employers began reporting correctly. However, there was an increase of 12%, nine new employers, who met the threshold of 8 quarters with no wages reported. While the methodologies are somewhat effective, new reimbursable employers meeting the eight quarters keep the % of failing reimbursable employers outside of allowable variance. TPS will continue to send the list of new employers who fall into this category to Tax Dept. on a quarterly basis for intervention with these employers. Additional discussions will occur to identify other measures that might be taken to bring this population to a passing level.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
MDUA continues to implement strategies to reduce improper reporting by reimbursable employers. While these activities are successful, this is an ongoing task as new employers reach the threshold of eight quarters of $0 each quarter. MDUA has difficulty in the current system identifying these reimbursable employers until they reach the threshold. Activities that continue to be performed are email blasts, letters, and phone calls to these reimbursable employers in order to educate them on proper filing of wages.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
MDUA continues to implement strategies to reduce improper reporting by reimbursable employers. While these activities are successful, this is an ongoing task as new employers reach the threshold of eight quarters of $0 each quarter. MDUA has difficulty in the current system identifying these reimbursable employers until they reach the threshold. Activities that continue to be performed are email blasts, letters, and phone calls to these reimbursable employers in order to educate them on proper filing of wages.

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

3. Credit Refunds (3 years) - Develop deliver an electronic notification to employers when their account has a credit.	Completion Date
	9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
An enhancement to the UiOnline computer system was created for development of this correspondence. The change has been approved, however, due to bandwidth, this enhancement is not a priority for IT. Due to needs resulting from the pandemic, this enhancement has shifted to a lower status. A date for development is not set as additional Covid programs requiring additional programming continue to shift IT priorities.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
This correspondence continues to be in pending development status while resources are devoted to COVID operations.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
This correspondence continues to be in pending development status while resources are devoted to COVID operations.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
This correspondence continues to be in pending development status while resources are devoted to COVID operations.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
This correspondence continues to be in pending development status while resources are devoted to COVID operations.

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

4. Monitor Report Delinquency to ensure that it returns to pre-pandemic passing standards.	Completion Date
	9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
New 2nd year CAP

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
New 2nd year CAP

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
New 2nd year CAP

4. Monitor Report Delinquency to ensure that it returns to pre-pandemic passing standards.	Completion Date 9/30/2022
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021): MDUA experienced delay in reporting during this quarter. With modification to employer rates after issuance and delay in statements and billing to employers, MDUA continued to have delays. It is expected to return	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

5. Monitor Benefit Charging to ensure that it returns to pre-pandemic passing standards.	Completion Date 9/30/2022
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021): MDUA experienced delay in due to Covid related action in the Tax unit. Benefit Charged is expected to return to normal by 09/30/2022 due to ending of CARES Act programs.	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

6. Monitor Report Processing to ensure that it returns to pre-pandemic passing standards.	Completion Date 9/30/2022
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021): MDUA experienced delay in Report Processing due to Covid related action in the Tax unit. Benefit Charged is expected to return to normal by 09/30/2022 due to ending of CARES Act programs.	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

6. Monitor Report Processing to ensure that it returns to pre-pandemic passing standards.	Completion Date 9/30/2022
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021): New 2nd year CAP	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021): MDUA experienced delay in Report Processing due to Covid related action in the Tax unit. Benefit Charged is expected to return to normal by 09/30/2022 due to ending of CARES Act programs.	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

Detection of Overpayments

State: Massachusetts

Federal Fiscal Year: 2021-2022 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report

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Performance Measure	ALP	CAP Baseline SQSP 2021 Performance Level	CAP Baseline SQSP 2022 Performance Level	Data/ Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2020 Quarter 1	3/31/2021 Quarter 2	6/30/2021 Quarter 3	9/30/2021 Quarter 4	12/31/2021 Quarter 5	3/31/2022 Quarter 6	6/30/2022 Quarter 7	9/30/2022 Quarter 8
Detection of Overpayments - Core Measure - ≥50% & ≤95% of Detectable/Recoverable Ops are Established for	≥ 50% & ≤ 95%	26.79%	114.25%	Target	31.00%	34.00%	37.00%	40.00%	43.00%	46.00%	49.00%	50.00%
				Actual	122.67%	114.25%	89.26%					

Regional Office Comments in cell below:

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

The Summary must provide:

Alternate Year Plan Updates

A. The Reason for the deficiency.

MADUA rate for detection of overpayments is well below the ALP. The Benefit Payment Control group had narrowed their focus and used extensive resources towards crossmatch of wages. The BPC group has been missing opportunities for detecting overpayments through other methodologies. While the AVARE system is a strong tool, additional technology toward detection was not explored and there are technologies that should be explored to expand the agencies ability to crossmatch. BAM data was not adequatly explored to develop detection strategies to the identified causes of overpayment. Additionally, while the BPC unit expanded, training for BPC staff in investigation as well as training for all agency staff in identification of detection of overpayments was not prioritized high enough.

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.

MDUA implemented an improved NDNH crossmatch in August of 2016. The improved crossmatch has deliver higher quality hits, resulting in an increase in the detection of overpayments. DUA will continue to monitor the quality of the hits produced by this crossmatch and modify the crossmatch algorithm to improve efficiency. The NDNH crosmatch relies heavily on employers providing accurate information when reporting hires and rehires. Although we have observed gains, DUA will continue to explore new ways in which we can detect overpayments earlier. This will include shifting the focus of BPC to include training other units within the agency that have the ability to detect overpayments. To achieve this DUA will be conducting comprehensive data analysis to identify industry trends that will inform how the agency can improve, detection, target messaging, and staff training. The Program Integrity staff will participate in recurring meetings with the UI Performs unit to more closely monitor error detection causes that will help inform the rate of success of newly implemented strategies. DUA has increased the number staff dedicated to program integrity function. 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 review of the BPC department will be directed by the Benefit Self-Assessment Lead who will then make recommendations on steps for improvement, assisting in development of materials and training as necessary. The DUA Program Integrity team will also continue communicating with our UI Performs team to review data and identify opportunities for improvement.

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.

We continue working on fine tuning parameters used to detect overpayments earlier. In doing so the DUA exploring new tools and resources that can be used to assess the efficacy of the parameters currently in place and make modification in identified areas.

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.

The Benefit Payment Control unit will be involved in recurring meetings and 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 MDUA departments to ensure that agency staff is following best practices for detecting overpayments.

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

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 the cell*.)

Milestones

1. Identify new parameters for use the in technology software used by the agency through performing data analysis of historical information regarding payment and benefit year reporting. — **Completion Date** 9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
This effort has been delayed as MDUA has focused its efforts on detection of overpayents to the issue of identity fraud. A software named FIVS was implemented and all claimants are processed through this software. FIVS scores data points from claimants for likelihood of fraud, allowing claimants to pass through unencumbered by an identity verification issues. Because of the focus on adjudication of identity verification issues; other non-monetary issues have become backlogged. MDUA releases payments to claimants with issues created from continued claims after 21 days. Because the issue on BAM PCA claims were not addressed through the usual adjudication process and remain pending, BAM investigates those issues and identifies the overpayments when had the agency been performing adjudication under normal circumstances, those issues would have been disqualified prior to release of payment. MDUA is working with an established vendor that would allow claimants to be authenticated and through their system and allow adjudicators to move back to adjudication of other non-monetary issues in the SVA's backlog.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
The new director of BPC, Stetson Marshall, will be reviewing the SQSP and CAP's prior to requesting modification of milestone completion dates. This effort has been delayed as MDUA has focused its efforts on detection of overpayents to the issue of identity fraud. MDUA has contracted for use of the ID.me solution. This platform allows the agency to direct all claimants to the ID.me website where claimants can provide information to substantiate their identity in real time. This allows claimants to pass identity verication without waiting for the agency to resolve an adjudication issue when identity is in question. This change allows MDUA to focus agency resources to areas of need while also speeding processing time for claimants.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
The new director of BPC, Stetson Marshall, will be reviewing the SQSP and CAP's prior to requesting modification of milestone completion dates. This effort has been delayed as MDUA has focused its efforts on detection of overpayents to the issue of identity fraud. MDUA has contracted for use of the ID.me solution. This platform allows the agency to direct all claimants to the ID.me website where claimants can provide information to substantiate their identity in real time. This allows claimants to pass identity verication without waiting for the agency to resolve an adjudication issue when identity is in question. This change allows MDUA to focus agency resources to areas of need while also speeding processing time for claimants.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

2. Implement new parameters identified through data analysis to detect overpayments earlier. — **Completion Date** 9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
This effort has been delayed as MDUA has focused its efforts on detection of overpayents to the issue of identity fraud. A software named FIVS was implemented and all claimants are processed through this software. FIVS scores data points from claimants for likelihood of fraud, allowing claimants to pass through unencumbered by an identity verification issues. Because of the focus on adjudication of identity verification issues; other non-monetary issues have become backlogged. MDUA releases payments to claimants with issues created from continued claims after 21 days. Because the issue on BAM PCA claims were not addressed through the usual adjudication process and remain pending, BAM investigates those issues and identifies the overpayments when had the agency been performing adjudication under normal circumstances, those issues would have been disqualified prior to release of payment. MDUA is working with an established vendor that would allow claimants to be authenticated and through their system and allow adjudicators to move back to adjudication of other non-monetary issues in the SVA's backlog.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
This effort has been delayed as MDUA has focused its efforts on detection of overpayents to the issue of identity fraud. MDUA continues the use of FIVS to screen claimant identity, but has also contracted for use of the ID.me solution. This platform allows the agency to direct all claimants to the ID.me website where claimants can provide information to substantiate their identity in real time. This allows claimants to pass identity verication without waiting for the agency to resolve an adjudication issue when identity is in question. This change allows MDUA to focus agency resources to areas of need while also speeding processing time for claimants.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
MDUA continues to utilize FTVS and ID.me solutions in efforts to maintain efficiencies within the identity verification process. The agency also continues to focus resources to areas of need while decreasing processing times for claimants.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

3. Develop, train, and distribute material to staff based on their role within the agency to assist in earlier detection of overpayments. This material will include guidecards and scripts for responses to persons that have the potential to "flag" overpayments.	**Completion Date** 9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
MDUA has refocused it's training efforts to adjudication. To assist in completion of non-monetary issues, MDUA has hired approximately 250 seasonal and new adjudicators. Training efforts have increased to provide adjudication training to new staff as well as refresher training for previously hired seasonal and existing adjudication staff. Improper payment training has been melded into the existing adjudication training as MDUA understands the import of this knowledge. MDUA continues to have the 09/30/2022 completion date in site and will work towards meeting this milestone deadline.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
With continued efforts to provide and enhance training, staff are now recieving training that includes information on detection of overpayments. Overpayment information will be monitored to track the effectiveness of the this training methodology.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
With continued efforts to provide and enhance training, staff are now recieving training that includes information on detection of overpayments. Overpayment information will be monitored to track the effectiveness of the this training methodology.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

4. Explore use of Business Intelligence Software to expand crossmatching.	**Completion Date** 9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
Not begun.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
Not begun.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
Not begun.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

5. BPC staff training to accowing ITSC/HASWA Integrity training that is available to all.	**Completion** 9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
Not begun due to resources issue.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
Not begun due to resources issue.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
Not begun due to resources issue.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

6. (Enter next milestone here)	**Completion**

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

7. (Enter next milestone here)	**Completion**

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

Benefits Data Validation

State: Massachusetts | **Federal Fiscal Year: 2021-2022 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report**

Back to Biennial Overview 2021 | Back to Alternate Overview 2022 | Instructions

Performance Measure	ALP	CAP Baseline SQSP 2021 Performance Level	CAP Baseline SQSP 2022 Performance Level	Status/ Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2020 Quarter 1	3/31/2021 Quarter 2	6/30/2021 Quarter 3	9/30/2021 Quarter 4	12/31/2021 Quarter 5	3/31/2022 Quarter 6	6/30/2022 Quarter 7	9/30/2022 Quarter 8
Data Validation Benefits - All Submitted and Passing	Submitted & Passing	Population 1 Failed	Population 1 Failed	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Population 3 Failed	Population 3 Failed	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Population 3a Failed	Population 3a Failed	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Population 4 Not Submitted	Population 4 Failed	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Population 5 Not Submitted	Population 5 Failed	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Population 9 Failed	Population 9 Failed	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Population 10 Failed	Population 10 Failed	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Population 11 Failed	Population 11 Failed	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Population 12 Failed	Population 12 Failed	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Population 13 Failed	Population 13 Failed	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Population 14 Failed	Population 14 Failed	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Population 15 Failed	Population 15 Failed	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Mod 4 Seps Failed	Mod 4 Seps Not Submitted	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Mod 4 Nonseps Failed	Mod 4 Nonseps Not Submitted	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			
		Mod 4 Appeals Failed	Mod 4 Appeals Not Submitted	Target	X	X	Submitted	X	X	X	Pass	X
				Actual	**X**	**X**	**Fail**	**X**	**X**			

Regional Office Comments in cell below:

Alternate Year indicates Failed: Pop 8Failed . Biennial does not identify Pop 8 as Failed or Not Submitted. Per UIPL 24-21 Attm 1 No New CAPs. Pop 8 not [illegible]

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

The Summary must provide:

A. The Reason for the deficiency.

The Massachusetts Benefit Data Validation program has experienced on-going failure post-modernization. BDV failed from the time of implementation of the UIOnline system and the Data Warehouse that accompanied it for data storage. MDUA endeavored to remedy this problem through extensive analysis of data and specifications that outline how population universes and sampling should be compiled. Countless hours and dollars have been devoted to fixing both the Data Warehouse and UIOnline after analysis of BDV data revealed the defects or enhancements needed in both systems. While Massachusetts has worked and corrected Data Warehouse problems, the UIOnline system would take significant framework change to bring BDV into a passing status. The cost for framework changes is UIOnline are considered prohibitive at this time.

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.

The plan to bring MDUA into compliance is a second modernization. MDUA has received funding and is in pursuit of a new COTS system to be implemented in 2021. In preparation for this, MDUA is ensuring the accuracy

The plan to bring MDUA into compliance is a second modernization. MDUA has received funding and is in pursuit of a new COTS system to be implemented in 2021. In preparation for this, MDUA is ensuring the accuracy
of all documentation that supports the technical development of BDV universe and sample data. Selection of a COTS system will include validation that said system is in compliance with information/definitions from USDOL ETA HandBooks that prescribe requirements. The goal for implementation of a new COTS system is in late 2021.

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

Massachusetts met several milestones in the past SQSP years. These successes involved intensive analysis of population specifications to ensure accuracy of documents, changes implemented in the Data Warehouse to accurately pull universes and samples, and some modification to the UIOnline system. As the work to bring BDV into a passing status evolved, it became evident that maintaining the existing UIOnline system was untenable and that additional dollars spent for improvements would not likely meet BDV needs, nor that of the larger Benefit and Tax programs. The agency made the decision to suspend program/coding changes to UIOnline except for emergency needs as it moved forward procurement of a new system. Therefore, no additional progress was able to be made in remedying the defects in UIOnline. All BDV resources are now centered on ensuring accuracy of documentation and while the agency works on the imminent purchase of a replacement system.

Alternate Plan Year Update: The UIOnline system would need significant framework redevelopment in order to pass Benefit Data Validation. While MDUA has identified fixes that would allow BDV to pass, the monetary investment into rebuilding system framework is not tenable. The expectation was that MDUA's UI system was to be replaced in 2021. With the onset of the pandemic, the replacement project was delayed. As a result, expected BDV goals were not met. To date, the system replacement project is underway with an expected implementation in 2022.

D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

The goal for achieving and maintaining success will be achieved through monitoring the specifications used to build BDV universe and samples; ensuring changes are implemented and tested when there is any to the corresponding UIPIP or change in regulation or law. BDV will be used as a testing methodology at the time of implementation of a new UI program.

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 blue cell.)

Milestones

	Completion Date
1. Complete interdepartmental review, identification of discrepancies or inaccuracies, and correction of all BDV specification documents for populations	9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
Review of benefit data validation specifications has not occurred. Staff have and continue to be dedicated to assisting with the Covid effort.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
Review of benefit data validation specifications has not occurred. Staff have and continue to be dedicated to assisting with the Covid effort.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
Review of benefit data validation specifications has not occurred. Staff have and continue to be dedicated to assisting with the Covid effort.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
Review of benefit data validation specifications has not occurred. Staff have and continue to be dedicated to assisting with the Covid effort.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
Review of benefit data validation specifications has not occurred. IT staff responsible for populations have and continue to be dedicated to assisting with the Covid effort.

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

2. Implement Benefit Data Validation program as testing of MDUA's new UI system.	Completion Date 9/30/2022
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020): Pending Milestone 1.	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021): Pending Milestone 1.	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021): Pending Milestone 1.	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021): The development of a new UI system was postponed from 2021 to 2022 due to the pandemic. Implementation of BDV as testing for acceptance of the new system will be completed once new system is obtained. The expectation for implementation is spring/summer of 2022.	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021): The development of a new UI system was postponed from 2021 to 2022 due to the pandemic. Implementation of BDV as testing for acceptance of the new system will be completed once new system is obtained. The expectation for implementation is spring/summer of 2022. The Agency is in the vendor selection process.	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

3. Identify and report defects/enhancements to facilitate system changes necessary for improved data accuracy for the new UI system.	Completion Date 9/30/2022
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020): Pending Milestone 1.	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021): Pending Milestone 1.	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021): Pending Milestone 1.	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021): The development of a new UI system was postponed from 2021 to 2022 due to the pandemic. Implementation of BDV as testing for acceptance of the new system will be completed once new system is obtained. The expectation for implementation is spring/summer of 2022.	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021): The development of a new UI system was postponed from 2021 to 2022 due to the pandemic. Implementation of BDV as testing for acceptance of the new system will be completed once new system is obtained. The expectation for implementation is spring/summer of 2022. The Agency is in the vendor selection process.	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

4. Passing of Benefit Data Validation during testing of MDUA replacement UI system and passing post implementation.	Completion Date 9/30/2022
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020): New Milestone in SQSP 2nd Year	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021): New Milestone in SQSP 2nd Year	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021): New Milestone in SQSP 2nd Year	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021): New Milestone in SQSP 2nd Year	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021): MDUA is in the process of reviewing bids submitted for replacement system.	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

5. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	

6. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	

7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	

Tax Data Validation

State: Massachusetts

Federal Fiscal Year: 2021-2022 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report

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Performance Measure	ALP	CAP Baseline SQSP 2021 Performance Level	CAP Baseline SQSP 2022 Performance Level	Status/ Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2020 Quarter 1	3/31/2021 Quarter 2	6/30/2021 Quarter 3	9/30/2021 Quarter 4	12/31/2021 Quarter 5	3/31/2022 Quarter 6	6/30/2022 Quarter 7	9/30/2022 Quarter 8
Data Validation Tax - All Submitted and Passing	Submitted & Passing	Population 1 Failed	Population 1 Failed	Target	X	X	PASS	X	X	X	PASS	X
				Actual	X	Fail	**Fail**	**X**	**X**	**X**		**X**

Regional Office Comments in cell below:

Alternate Year indicates only Tax 1 Failed; existing CAP. 03.12.2021NE RO QC AR

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

The Summary must provide:

Alternate Year Plan Updates

1. The Reason for the deficiency.

The UIOnline system has a weakness in that it allows reimbursable employers to submit $0 for UI wages when they are active employers and paying wages. However, the employers are not moved to inactive status because the system recognizes through other means that the employer is active. The agency has begun an educational campaign with reimbursable employers to ensure that they are accurately reporting UI wages. The agency has reduced these errors by approximately 70% and is less than 1% from meeting the goal.

The UIOnline system has a weakness in that it allows reimbursable employers to submit $0 for UI wages when they are active employers and paying wages. However, the employers are not moved to inactive status because the system recognizes through other means that the employer is active. The agency has begun an educational campaign with reimbursable employers to ensure that they are accurately reporting UI wages. The agency has reduced these errors by approximately 70% and is less than 1% from meeting the goal.

MDUA's UIOnline system is built to identify a Field Audit as either a large or small employer. The coding to identify the size is incorrect within the agencies UIOnline system. The Field Audit manager manually tracks all field audit data to ensure accurate reporting on ETA 581. Because TDV uses the original report, there are discrepancies that cause Population 5 to fail.

Alternate Year Plan Updates: The existing UI system framework does not ensure Reimbursable Employers report accurate wages and instead, allows them to report $0 taxable wages. As a result, the TDV Population one universe has Active employer with eight quarters of zero wages reported. While the manual efforts to ensure correct reporting are effective, each quarter a new group of active reimbursable employers reporting incorrectly falls in the 8th quarter of zero wages while still being an active employer. The net result is that Population 1 continues to fail.

MDUA's UIOnline system is built to identify a Field Audit as either a large or small employer. The coding to identify the size is incorrect within the agencies UIOnline system. The Field Audit manager manually tracks all field audit data to ensure accurate reporting on ETA 581. Because TDV uses the original report, there are discrepancies that cause Population 5 to fail.

Alternate Year Plan Updates

2. 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.

The agency will continue with the reach out campaign to active reimbursable employers who continue to report $0 UI wages instead of actual dollars paid. Currently there are 72 reimbursable employers who continue to report inaccurately. This campaign will involve both standardized letters and phone calls to employers who fail to comply with reporting requirements.

For population 5, we will resume testing activities of the revised ETA 581 Field Audit section to ensure compliance with established standards. Assuming testing results in accurate reporting, code changes will be moved into production. If testing were to fail, additional data analysis and remediation activities would occur to establish cause of failure and remediation to coding. A work around has been developed where the method UIOnline size designation will be ignored and instead, information stored in the Data Warehouse will be used to designate audit size per correct definition and the report will be built from that information. This process was in testing at the time the pandemic hit and it is expected that this change will be implemented in early 2021.

Alternate Year Plan Updates: Because the existing system is not coded to ensure accurate wage reporting by reimbursable employers, the agency has been working manual processes to educate Reimbursable employers and ensure accurate reporting. The agency was able to reduce and maintain the reduction in erroneous reporting so that the percent of variance dropped by approximately 6%. MDUA is maintaining a variance that is less than 1% out of limits, but continues to be out of limits. Because the system framework cannot be changed, this error will not be fixed until a new system is implemented, expected in mid 2022. MDUA will continue its outreach campaign to reimbursable employers to ensure accuracy of reporting and to bring the variance to less than 2%.

Alternate Year Plan Updates

3. 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.

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 Tax Department was successful in reducing the Population 1 discrepancy to 2.8%, an 70% reduction in variance this past year. The agency must continue it's campaign to educate reimbursable employers on reporting requirements in order to have representation of active versus inactive reimbursable employers. MDUA was in the process of testing fixes that were expected to bring TDV Pop 5 into compliance when the pandemic changed the agencies priorities. It is expected that the agency will be able to resume testing to implement these fixes.

Alternate Year Plan Updates: Because the existing systemis not coded to ensure accurate wage reporting by reimbursable employers, the agency has been working manual processes to educate Reimbursable employers and ensure accurate reporting. Because the system framework cannot be changed, this error will not be fixed until a new system is implemented, expected in 2022. MDUA will continue its outreach campaign to reimbursable employers in an attempt to falls below the 2% variance. It is expected that Population 1 Active Reimbursable Employers will cause Population 1 to fail as a whole.

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.

Implementation of the Tax Data Validation effective monitors for variations outside prescribed limits. For failing populations, the TDV universe is monitored quarterly for data changes and necessary analysis. TDV will be run in full as testing of replacement UI system expected in mid 2022.

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

	Completion Date
1. Direct communication to every Reimbursable Employer who continues to report Withholding Wages for DOR but fail to report UI wages for unemployment. Communication will include email blasts, reporting instructions in every employer correspondence, and an educational reach out to include instruction via paper mail.	9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):

Correspondence was delivered via email to the 67 reimbursable employers filing with $0 UI taxable wages, providing instruction on required reporting of UI taxable wages regardless of status as a reimbursable employer. Approximately 20% of employers addressed began reporting wages; however, the Tax Data Validation population 1 showed little change in percent of reimbursable employers failing to report correctly. This was a result of newly registered employers that incorrectly reported $0 UI taxable wages. MDUA will increase the frequency of correspondence to reimbursable employers that fail to report correctly to a quarterly correspondence. The expectation is that MDUA will continue with employer outreach and discuss possible action against employers that fail to comply.

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):

In the first quarter of 2021 there were 71 reimbursable employers listed as active that should have filed wages but instead filed $0. In the second quarter there were reimbursable employers listed as active that should have filed wages but instead filed $0. In the first quarter of 2021, through the remediation methods listed in the SQSP, 7% OR 5 accounts were rectified and employers began reporting correctly. However, there was an increase of 12%, nine new employers, who met the threshold of 8 quarters with no wages reported. While the methodologies are somewhat effective, new reimbursable employers meeting the eight quarters keep the % of failing reimbursable employers outside of allowable variance. TPS will continue to send the list of new employers who fall into this category to Tax Dept. on a quarterly basis for intervention with these employers. Additional discussions will occur to identify other measures that might be taken to bring this population to a passing level.

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):

Email blasts were sent, the result was not that responsive. DUA also sent communications ad hoc mail, via paper and are waiting results.

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

MDUA continues to implement strategies to reduce improper reporting by reimbursable employers. While these activities are successful, this is an ongoing task as new employers reach the threshold of eight quarters of $0 each quarter. MDUA has difficulty in the current system identifying these reimbursable employers until they reach the threshold. Activities that continue to be performed are email blasts, letters, and phone calls to these reimbursable employers in order to educate them on proper filing of wages.

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

MDUA continues to implement strategies to reduce improper reporting by reimbursable employers. While these activities are successful, this is an ongoing task as new employers reach the threshold of eight quarters of $0 each quarter. MDUA has difficulty in the current system identifying these reimbursable employers until they reach the threshold. Activities that continue to be performed are email blasts, letters, and phone calls to these reimbursable employers in order to educate them on proper filing of wages.

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

Completion Date

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

4. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

5. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

6. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	

Benefit Accuracy Measurement (BAM)

State: Massachusetts | Federal Fiscal Year: 2021-2022 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report

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Performance Measures	ALP	GAP Based on SQSP 2021 Performance Level	GAP Based on SQSP 2022 Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2020 Quarter 1	3/31/2021 Quarter 2	6/30/2021 Quarter 3	9/30/2021 Quarter 4	12/31/2021 Quarter 5	3/31/2022 Quarter 6	6/30/2022 Quarter 7	9/30/2022 Quarter 8
BAM Operations Compliant - 60-Day Paid Timeliness	≥ 70%	76.19%	52.20%	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50.00%	60%	65%	70%
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**48.19%**			
BAM Operations Compliant - 90-Day Paid Timeliness	≥ 95%	94.84%	65.86%	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50.00%	75.00%	85.00%	95.00%
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**69.77%**			
BAM Operations Compliant - 120-Day Paid Timeliness	≥ 98%			Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50.00%			
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**74.42%**			
BAM Operations Compliant - 60-Day Monetary Timeliness	≥ 60%	74.67%	25.84%	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50.00%	55.00%	60.00%	60.00%
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**52.63%**			
BAM Operations Compliant - 90-Day Monetary Timeliness	≥ 85%	91.33%	33.33%	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50.00%	60.00%	70.00%	85.00%
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**76.32%**			
BAM Operations Compliant - 120-Day Monetary Timeliness	≥ 98%			Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50.00%			
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**91.58%**			
BAM Operations Compliant - 60-Day Separation Timeliness	≥ 80%	71.06%	27.00%	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50.00%	55.00%	60.00%	60.00%
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**38.46%**			
BAM Operations Compliant - 90-Day Separation Timeliness	≥ 95%	92.76%	35.14%	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50.00%	60.00%	70.00%	85.00%
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**71.79%**			
BAM Operations Compliant - 60-Day Nonseparation Timeliness	≥ 80%	79.81%	35.90%	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50.00%	55.00%	60.00%	60.00%
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**63.89%**			
BAM Operations Compliant - 90-Day Nonseparation Timeliness	≥ 95%	94.70%	41.00%	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50.00%	60.00%	70.00%	85.00%
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**78**			
BAM Operations Compliant - Paid Comparison Reports	< -10 & > 5%	2.06%	8.23%	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**-8**			
BAM Operations Compliant - Monetary Comparison Reports	≥ 15%	11.76%	41.87%	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**1**			
BAM Operations Compliant - Separation Comparison Reports	≥ 15%	17.33%	64.50%	Target	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%	15.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	5.00%
				Actual	**-75.68%**	**Not available due to program implementation**	**Not available**	**-4%**	**-2.05%**			
BAM Operations Compliant - Nonseparation Comparison Reports	≥ 15%	14.42%	25.10%	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.00%	15.00%	10.00%	5.00%
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	**4.36%**			
BAM Operations Compliant - Paid Sample Selection	480 or 360	504	342	Target	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Meet	Meet	Meet	Meet
				Actual	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Fail			

Regional Office Comments in cell below:

Alternate Year UIPL 24-21 Attm 1, BAM CAPs required for failed performance; FY22 CAPs assigned. 09.12.2021 RE: RO QC AR.

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

The Summary must provide

Alternate Year Plan Updates

A. The Reason for the deficiency.

The cause for the discrepancy is unknown at this time.

Alternate Plan Year Updates: the primary reason for BAM deficiencies is the suspension of the BAM program after receipt of waiver from ETA for suspension of PCA for one quarter and suspension of DCA investigations through June 2021.

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.

UI Performs staff will obtain raw data from both the BAM DCA separation universe and the ETA 207 report from the same time period. Analysis will occur to determine the adherence of both the BAM universe and ETA 207 to prescribe standards established in ETA Handbooks. Analysis will occur to identify discrepancies between the universe and the 207 universe for further analysis. Modifications will be made to either or both the BAM DCA Separation Universe and the ETA 207 report to bring the variation into compliance.

Alternate Plan Year Updates: Reimplementation of the BAM program has been completed as of July 2021. Timeliness will be monitored to determine an accurate reflection of timeliness, and if intervention is needed to meet established timeliness standards. Comparison report data that was within norms became skewed with Covid. The PCA comparison has already returned to a normal (-2.87) variance within established standards. The cause for the variation was related to erroneous processing by the state system UI system. This error was corrected through coding changes and MDUA resubmitted ETA 5159 reports for accuracy. Type 2 Monetary comparison drastically varied while CARES Act programs were in effect. Changes were implemented in both the BAM Universe and the ETA 218 to ensure accuracy of reporting and the comparison data has fell to within norms. The ETA 218 incorrectly included claimants that were in a status of "Not Established;" these were a type of shell claim for processing interstate claims. The BAM Universe of monetary denials erroneously excluded claims that had a current status of "Inactive." After fixes,testing showed that implemented changes brought the variation into established norms for compliance. MDUA is currently in the process ofdata analysis to identify cause of variance of separation and non-separation issue counts with ETA 207 to identify desired changes for comparison.

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.

Resources to obtain data for analysis is limited due to competing priorities. This comparison discrepancy has risen and post pandemic report development, it is expected that Data Warehouse resources will be devoted to remedying this.

Alternate Plan Year Updates: The only CAP BAM had was for variance of comparison data for Separation Denials being outside established limits. This was set aside while BAM worked and fixed variance for Monetary Denials and Paid Claims.

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.

BAM performs calculations to determine variance of all populations on a quarterly basis and will continue to do so; monitoring trends if the universe is moving positively or negatively towards comparison thresholds, taking action to analyze and modify BAM Universe or ETA 207 as required.

Alternate Plan Year Updates: BAM will continue to identify the percent variance between BAM universes and ETA reports on a quarterly basis. If PCA or Type 2 DCA Monetary fall out of variance after fixes, analysis of data will occur to determine adherence to rules of reporting and Universe Development.

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.

(Repeated Major Actions in this cell.)

Milestones

	Completion Date
1. Analyze ETA 207 and BAM DCA Separation Universe to validate compliance with ETA established standards as well as determine why there are discrepancies between the counts.	6/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
Analysis of data has not occurred. Staff have and continue to be dedicated to assisting with the Covid effort.
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
Analysis of data has not occurred. Staff have and continue to be dedicated to assisting with the Covid effort.
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
Data not available as MDUA received a waiver of program implementation through June 2021.
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
Analysis of ETA 207 has not occurred. During Covid there was a dramatic increase in comparison of BAM Monetary Type 2 Denials and the ETA 218. MDUA dedicated resources to analyzing and modifying these two in order to reduce the comparison discrepancy. Changes were made that decreased the discrepancy; primarily understanding how to identify "shell claims", used to facilitate payments between MA and other states, within the UIOnline system and ensuring that these claims and false monetaries were not included in the report or BAM sampling.
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
Analysis of ETA 207 has not occurred. IT staff necessary to assist with analysis continue to work on other priorities are unavailable for this task.
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

	Completion Date
2. Identify and report defects/enhancements to facilitate changes necessary to ETA 207 for improved data accuracy.	12/31/2021

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

3. Implement changes necessary to bring comparison data into acceptable variance threshold.	Completion Date 3/31/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

4. Monitor quarterly data to track changes to comparison data and initiate analysis based on sustained movement towards outer comparison threshold.	Completion Date 9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
Pending Milestone 1.
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

5. Monitor case completion for timeliness for each investigator. 1:1 weekly meetings with BAM investigator with discussion on timeliness performance and efficiencies to improve timeliness.	Completion Date 9/30/2022

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):
2nd year milestone
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):
2nd year milestone
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):
2nd year milestone
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):
2nd year milestone
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):
Paid claim sampled pulled adequate sample for all 13 weeks with the minimum pulled on batch 202143. A paid claim slipped through the sample that was paid on PEUC, a program not covered by BAM. The case needed to be deleted and brought MDUA below the minimum 6 paid case sampling.

6. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date

Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):

Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):

Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):

Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):

Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):

Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):

Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):

Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):

% of Employer Tax Liability Determinations Made Timely

State: Massachusetts | **Federal Fiscal Year: 2021-2022 SQSP Corrective Action Plan & Progress Report**

Back to Biennial Overview 2021 | Back to Alternate Overview 2022 | Instructions

Performance Measures	ALP	CAP Based on SQSP 2021 Performance Level	State's Target/Actual Performance	12/31/2020 Quarter 1	3/31/2021 Quarter 2	6/30/2021 Quarter 3	9/30/2021 Quarter 4	12/31/2021 Quarter 5	3/31/2022 Quarter 6	6/30/2022 Quarter 7	9/30/2022 Quarter 8
% of Employer Tax Liability Determinations Made Timely	90%	82.5%	Target	80.0%	82.0%	84.0%	70.0%	70.0%	70.0%	72.0%	72.0%
			Actual	**62.0%**	**74.0%**	**70.0%**					
			Target								
			Actual								
			Target								
			Actual								
			Target								
			Actual								
			Target								
			Actual								

Regional Office Comments in cell below:
GPRA Measure: State self assigned this CAP FY21.

Corrective Action Plan Summary:

The Summary must provide:

A. The Reason for the deficiency.

DUA embarked on a clean up effort in recents months and has been reviewing the non-liable employer list to ensure the status of employer accounts were accurate. In doing so, many employers were made liable retroactively. Moreover, during the pandemic, there have been an influx of employers retroactively registering in order to report wages so claimants can collect. We found employers that had been reporting UI to the wrong state. All of these things contributed to the decrease in our timely determination of employer liability.

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.

We plan to continue the clean up effort and validate our liable employer list against the DFML employer list. Once the clean up effort is completed, MA DUA will be back on track and will resume meeting this important metric. This is a metric we've habitually met and expect to return to successful results.

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.

N/A

D. A brief description of plans for monitoring and assessing accomplishment of planned actions and for controlling quality after achieving performance goals.

We have various reports that we've created and added to our arsenal in order to continuously review employer liability determinations to ensure that liable employers aren't slipping through the cracks.

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. DUA will soon be embarking on the development of a new UI system and it is our hope that we will be able to add proper registration controls that will allow DUA to review and approve pending registrations prior to submission and thereby improve our ability to meet this metric.	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
I was not able to enter a completion date on the Milestone, there was no drop down	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

3. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

4. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

5. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

6. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

7. (Enter next milestone here)	Completion Date
Quarter 1 status report (12/31/2020):	
Quarter 2 status report (3/31/2021):	
Quarter 3 status report (6/30/2021):	
Quarter 4 status report (9/30/2021):	
Quarter 5 status report (12/31/2021):	
Quarter 6 status report (3/31/2022):	
Quarter 7 status report (6/30/2022):	
Quarter 8 status report (9/30/2022):	

5. UI PROGRAM INTEGRITY ACTION PLAN (UI IAP)

Alternate UI Integrity Action Plan (IAP)

Back to Biennial Overview 2021		Back to Alternate Overview 2022	
State	Federal Fiscal Year	Accountable Agency Official(s):	
Massachusetts	2022	*(Enter the name and title of the staff person who is accountable for reducing UI improper payments.)*	
	Top Three Root Causes (Calendar Year 2020)	Calendar Year 2019	Calendar Year 2020
	https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/unemployment-insurance-payment-accuracy/data	(% of $ Overpaid)	(% of $ Overpaid)
Root Cause #1:	Separation Issues	13.634%	32.183%
Root Cause #2:	Benefit Year Earnings	46.319%	26.411%
Root Cause #3:	Other Eligibility	0.000%	24.328%

National Priority Strategies and Additional Strategies

Tools, Strategies, Process Improvements, Procedural Changes to Combat Fraud and Identity Theft and Enhance Recovery Efforts

Use of UI Integrity Center Resources

State and Employer Use of SIDES

Support Claimant Compliance with State Work Search Requirements

Overpayment Recovery Efforts (Including High Dollar Overpayments)

Summary: Provide a detailed summary of the integrity plan that the state developed to combat fraud and identity theft; reduce the UI improper payment rate (targeting root causes); improve prevention, detection, and recovery of improper and fraudulent overpayments; and address the current National Priorities and additional strategies outlined in the SQSP UIPL.

Tools, Strategies, Process Improvements, Procedural Changes to Combat Fraud and Identity Theft and Enhance Recovery Efforts

Since March of 2020, MDUA embarked on an effort to improve our identification verification (IV) process by partnering with internal and external organizations. The highlights of these efforts include engaging a vendor to provide initial claim IV analytics. This new tool allows us to receive an initial fraud score on each new claim within 72 hours of the claim filing. The tool also leverages our relationship with other organizations to have many different points of information be impactful to the fraud score. MDUA also implemented recaptcha and multi-factor authentication technology to improve internal security controls. Lastly, MDUA enlisted the services of ID.me to process claims with questionable IV fraud scores. MDUA has seen a dramatic impact of our IV efforts, specifically, the reduction in overpayments attributable to IV denials.

Use of UI Integrity Center Resources

Accessibility: Investigate

Since March of 2020, MDUA embarked on an effort to improve our identification verification (IV) process by partnering with internal and external organizations. The highlights of these efforts include engaging a vendor to provide initial claim IV analytics. This new tool allows us to receive an initial fraud score on each new claim within 72 hours of the claim filing. The tool also leverages our relationship with other organizations to have many different points of information be impactful to the fraud score. MDUA also implemented recaptcha and multi-factor authentication technology to improve internal security controls. Lastly, MDUA enlisted the services of ID.me to process claims with questionable IV fraud scores. MDUA has seen a dramatic impact of our IV efforts, specifically, the reduction in overpayments attributable to IV denials.

Use of UI Integrity Center Resources

MDUA looks to the Integrity Center as a close partner in reducing improper payments. As MDUA scaled up its workforce early in the pandemic we relied heavily on the advice and services of the Integrity Academy. This had a tremendous impact on out ability to accurately process claims for UI benefits. As an early adopter of Integrity Data Hub (IDH) services MDUA was well positioned to utilize IDH data for IV analytics and related staff investigations. Late in 2019, MDUA engaged the UI Integrity State Services team in an on-site review of all thing's improper payments. Because of this effort we were able to reduce out improper payment rate dramatically before the pandemic consumed us all.

State and Employer Use of SIDES

MDUA acknowledges the positive impact the SIDES product has had for many states. As an early tester and adopter of SIDES we were able to learn first-hand about how this tool impacts the business process. Although we were an early adopter a decision was made not to continue with this tool. Our review found our UI system was better positioned to achieve the goal of receiving employer information accurately and timely. MDUA continues to monitor SIDES enhancements along with our business process for any potential future use of this product.

Support Claimant Compliance with State Work Search Requirements

Prior to 2020, work-search errors were our #1 root cause impacting our improper payment rate. During 2020, we experienced a dramatic drop in work search errors. This was accomplished in part by clearly defining and messaging acceptable work search activities to claimants as well as re-enforcing documentation requirements. Along with the help of Massjobs Career Services, we were able to reduce the improper payment rate attributable to work search errors as noted by or most recent results.

Overpayment Recovery Efforts (Including High Dollar Overpayments)

During FY 2022, MDUA will utilizes a full suite of tools to recover overpayments. When an overpayment is first established the claimant is prompted to repay the funds using check and credit card options. The claimant is also advised that non-fraud overpayment can be recouped by payment plan and future UI benefit entitlement. A third recovery option would be state and TOPS tax intercept performed annually. In some extreme situations civil and criminal remedies are coordinated with state and federal law enforcement. MDUA has not experienced a High Dollar Overpayment. We continue to monitor for this while we review all overpayments for efficiencies.

Six-Month Update (October-March): Provide a progress report on all integrity strategies outlined in the IAP and provide details on any new identity theft and fraud prevention strategies, solutions, and/or activities; changes to existing integrity strategies; plan or strategy delays; positive outcomes; and identified successes.

Accessibility: Investigate

1. Develop messaging campaign for claimants and employers	DUA will develop a messaging strategy for employers and claimants which educates both groups on importance of proper BYE reporting	3/30/2022	Program staff and IT staff
2. Implement messaging strategy	DUA will promote new messaging to both groups.	6/30/2022	Program staff and IT staff
3. Monitor effectiveness	DUA will monitor the effectiveness of strategy.	9/30/2022	Program staff
Additional:			

Root Cause #3: Other Eligibility

Strategies	Actions	Targets and Milestones	Resources
1. Cross Functional Committee review	Convene the Cross Functional Committee in order to identify efficiencies with the employer initial/additional claims process.	9/30/2022	Program staff and IT staff
1. Training	Develop training and awareness for staff to be delivered through weekly meetings.	3/30/2022	Program staff
2. Monitor effectiveness	DUA will monitor the effectiveness of strategy.	9/30/2022	Program staff
Additional:			

Tools, Strategies, Process Improvements, Procedural Changes to Combat Fraud and Identity Theft and Enhance Recovery Efforts

Strategies	Actions	Targets and Milestones	Resources
1. Continuous monitoring	FAST - FIVS. Implemented to assign a fraud score to each initial claim	9/30/2022	Program staff, IT staff, and external vendor
2 Continuous monitoring	ID.me - Implemented to perform additional ID verification on claims with a high or questionable fraud score	9/30/2022	Program staff, IT staff, and external vendor
3 Continuous monitoring	Internal business processes	9/30/2022	Program staff and IT staff
Additional:			

Use of UI Integrity Center Resources

Strategies	Actions	Targets and Milestones	Resources
1 Continous monitoring	DUA has engaged all available tools offered by Integrity Center and will continue to monitor the use of these tools for effective and our ability to leverage any additional resources as they become available.	9/30/2022	Program staff and IT staff
2			
3			
Additional:			

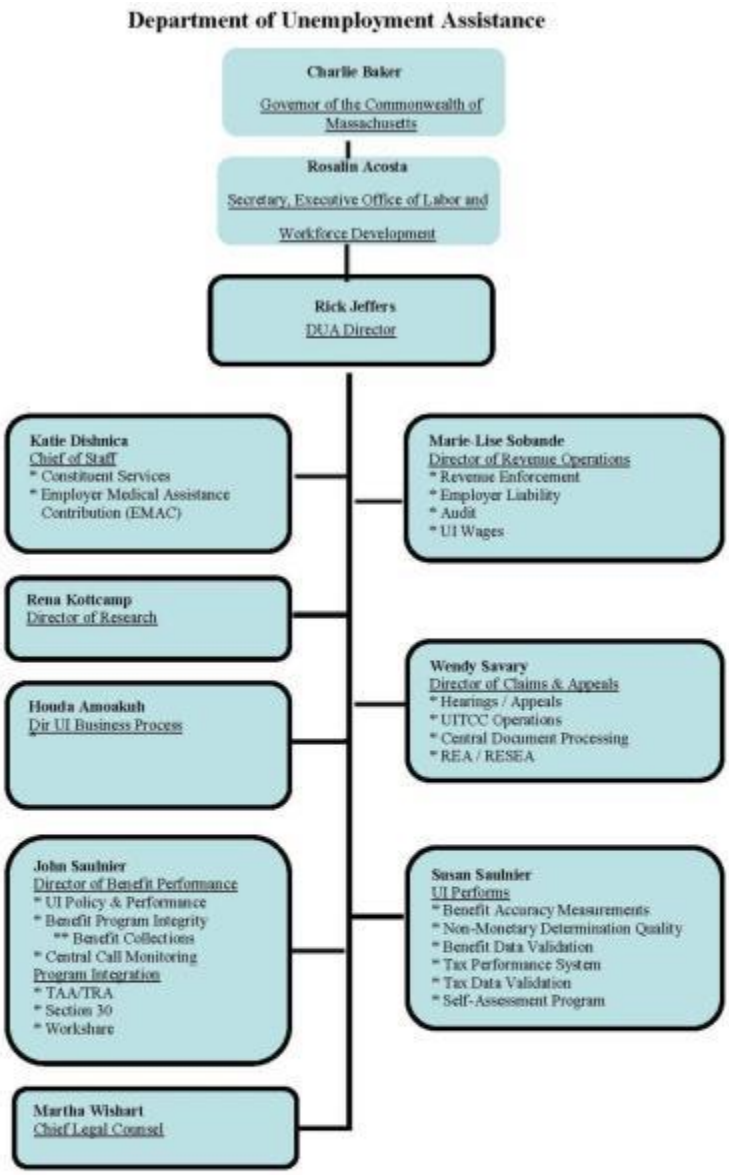
2 Continuous monitoring	ID.me - Implemented to perform additional ID verification on claims with a high or questionable fraud score	9/30/2022	Program staff, IT staff, and external vendor
3 Continuous monitoring	Internal business processes	9/30/2022	Program staff and IT staff
Additional:			

Use of UI Integrity Center Resources

Strategies	Actions	Targets and Milestones	Resources
1 Continous monitoring	DUA has engaged all available tools offered by Integrity Center and will continue to monitor the use of these tools for effective and our ability to leverage any additional resources as they become available.	9/30/2022	Program staff and IT staff
2			
3			
Additional:			

State and Employer Use of SIDES			
Strategies	Actions	Targets and Milestones	Resources
1 Continous monitoring	DUA will monitor SIDES enhancement and internal business process for efficiencies.	9/30/2022	Program staff and IT staff
1 Continous monitoring	DUA will implement the use of SIDES if enhancements are more beneficial than the existing processes and procedures.	9/30/2022	Program staff and IT staff
3			
Additional:			
Support Claimant Compliance with State Work Search Requirements			
Strategies	Actions	Targets and Milestones	Resources
1. Continuous monitoring of messaging strategy to staff, employers, and claimants	DUA will monitor the effectiveness of the existing strategy (including messaging on UIO, Agency website, training staff to educate claimants, etc.)	9/30/2022	Program staff
2			
3			
Additional:			
Overpayment Recovery Efforts (Including High Dollar Overpayments)			
Strategies	Actions	Targets and Milestones	Resources

6. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



7. SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE

U.S. Department of Labor
SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE

OMB Control No.: 1205-0132 Expiration Date: 02/29/2024

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Employment and Training Administration	FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2022	STATE Massachusetts
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE STATE QUALITY SERVICE PLAN SIGNATURE PAGE		
This Unemployment Insurance State Quality Service Plan (SQSP) is entered into between the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, and Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance **(NAME OF STATE AGENCY)** 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. 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.		
TYPED NAME AND TITLE	**SIGNATURE**	**DATE**
Richard Jeffers **STATE ADMINISTRATOR (print name)**		November 18, 2021
DOL – REGIONAL OFFICE APPROVING OFFICIAL (print name)		
DOL – NATIONAL OFFICE APPROVING OFFICIAL (print name) (if required)		

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR STATES ELECTING TO INCLUDE UI IN THE COMBINED STATE PLAN

1. SUBMIT AN SQSP IN THE FOLLOWING MANNER DEPENDING ON THEIR TIMING IN THE SQSP CYCLE:

A. IF A STATE IS IN THE FIRST YEAR OF THEIR 2-YEAR CYCLE, THE STATE IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THE MOST RECENTLY APPROVED COMPLETE SQSP PACKAGE. A COMPLETE SQSP PACKAGE WILL INCLUDE THE TRANSMITTAL LETTER, BUDGET WORKSHEETS/FORMS, STATE PLAN NARRATIVE, CAPS (INCLUDING THE MILESTONES AND THE COMPLETION DATE FOR

EACH MILESTONE), THE UI IAP, ORGANIZATIONAL CHART, AND THE SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE. ONE OF THE KEY GOALS FOR THE UI PROGRAM IS TO ENSURE THAT CLAIMANTS ARE ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY RETURN TO WORK. AS SUCH, THE SQSP STATE PLAN NARRATIVE MUST PROVIDE A DISCUSSION OF THE PLAN COORDINATION WITH OTHER WIOA COMBINED PLAN PROGRAMS TO ENSURE A COORDINATED EFFORT AND INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY.

DUA is in the second year of the two-year cycle.

B. IF A STATE IS IN THE SECOND YEAR OF THE 2-YEAR CYCLE, THE STATE IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THE MOST RECENTLY APPROVED COMPLETE SQSP PACKAGE WITH A MODIFICATION THAT MUST INCLUDE THE TRANSMITTAL LETTER, BUDGET WORKSHEETS/FORMS, ORGANIZATIONAL CHART, AND THE SQSP SIGNATURE PAGE. THE MODIFICATION MAY ALSO INCLUDE CAPS FOR NEW IDENTIFIED PERFORMANCE DEFICIENCIES, AND ANY REQUIRED MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING CAPS. THE CAP MUST LIST BOTH SPECIFIC MILESTONES FOR KEY CORRECTIVE ACTIONS OR IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES, AND THE COMPLETION DATE FOR EACH MILESTONE.

See Contents of a Complete UI SQSP Package

2. SUBMIT THE REQUIRED OFF-YEAR SQSP COMPONENTS AS A MODIFICATION TO THE COMBINED STATE PLAN ON THE SAME CYCLE AS THE REGULAR SQSP PROCESS WHICH MUST BE APPROVED BY SEPTEMBER 30TH EACH YEAR

Please see the responses provided above in SQSP State Plan Narrative and Correction Action Plan..

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

A. 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)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

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.

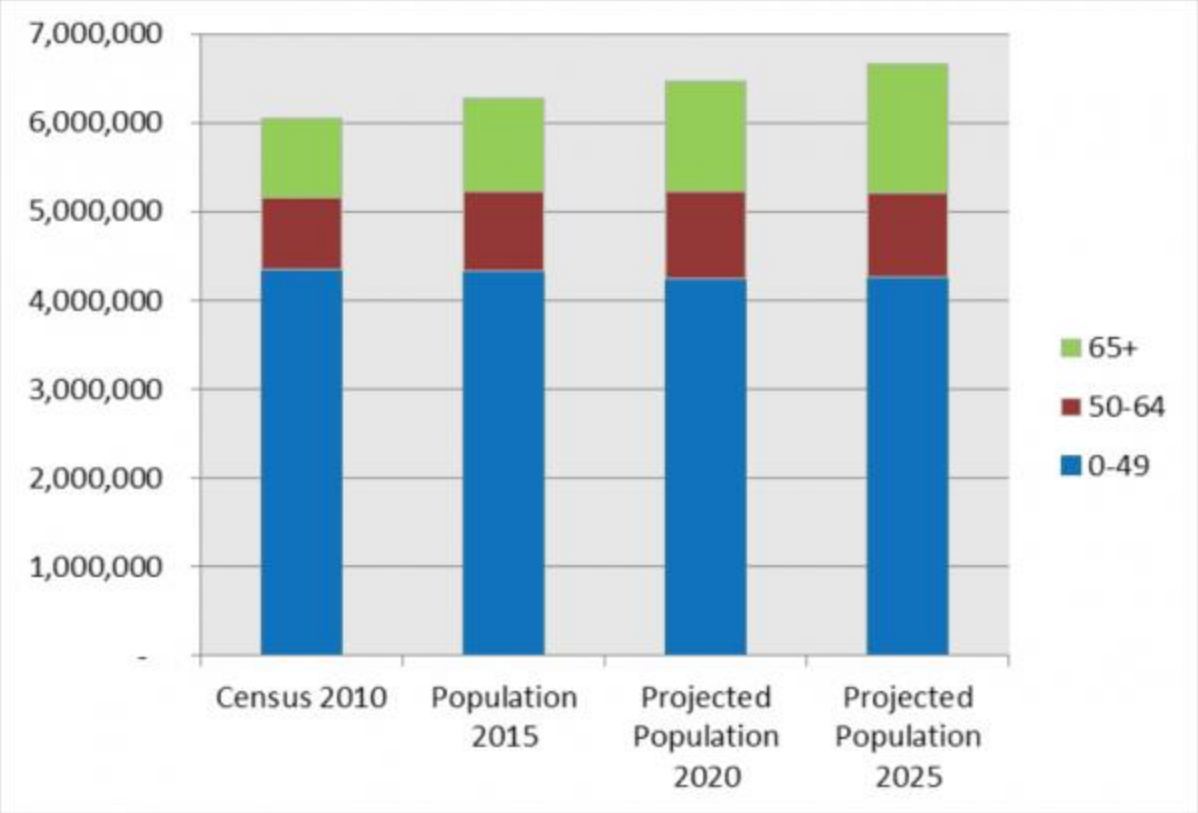
Older Workers in Massachusetts:

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.

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. Over 15% (32,000) of these individuals were unemployed and seeking assistance from the MassHire system in 2019, comprising 24% of its case load.

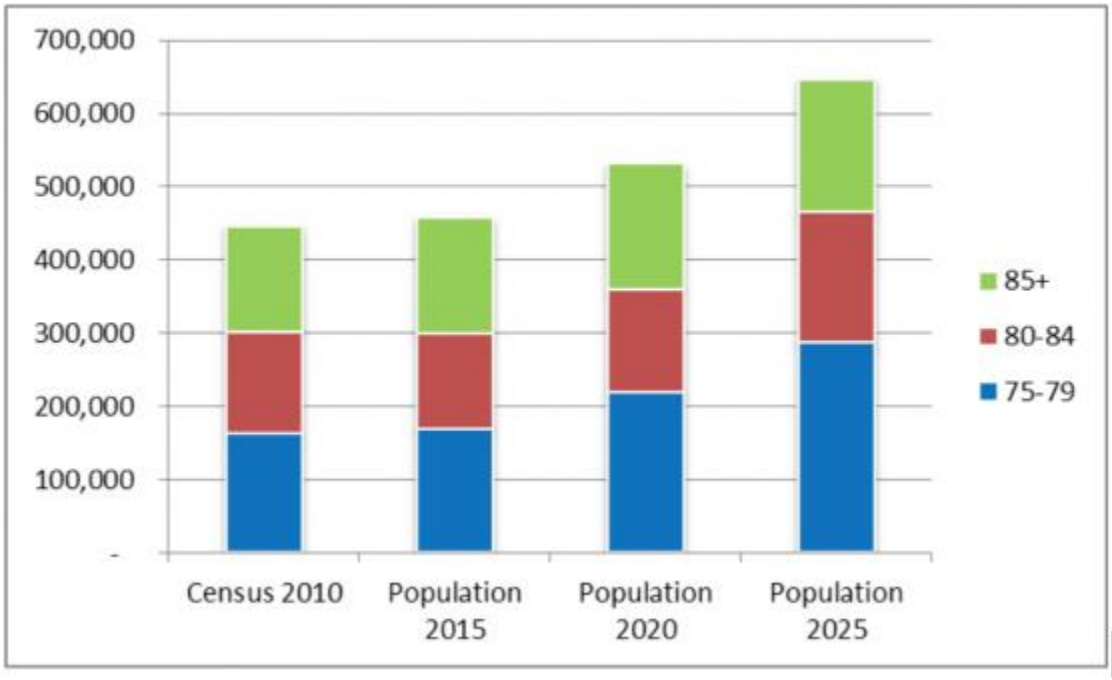
The chart below demonstrates the projected Massachusetts population by age group.

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. 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.

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. According to the Elder 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.

Based on the economic analysis section, the 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. Many of these occupations require High School Diploma or less and maybe a good match with SCSEP participants skills and interests.

Other 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.

Some but not all of the above can be suitable for older workers who often have barriers to employment, including chronic health conditions or other barriers.

SCSEP will continue to work with all WIOA partners to develop new training opportunities for individuals interested in the in-demand occupations.

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))

- 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 sough after roles. Moreover, many training resources are limited to on-line offerings, and thus creating an additional barrier to employment.

- Identify available jobs and training or certificate needed;
- Identify the most effective training providers;
- 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.

Massachusetts SCSEP participants are over 60% female (see Figure 90). Less than 70% have a college degree (See Chart 5). Additionally, Charts 7 describes the U.S. Department of Labor's identified barriers to employment with poverty being the most predominant factor (88%). [1]

Figure 80: PY21 Gender by numbers YTD

Female	Male
311	212

Figure 81: Education Level of Participants (by percent)

	14
9th grade – 11th grade	8
High School diploma or equivalent	30
1 – 3 years college	18

	14
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)

Age		Total
	55-59	144
	60-64	152
	65-69	95
	70-74	51
	75 & over	20

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

	Percent
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

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Veterans (or eligible spouse of veteran)	5
Post-9/11 era veterans	0

	Percent
Individuals receiving public assistance	80
Individuals with severe disability	1
Individuals who are frail	0

[1] DOLETA SPARQ PY21 Data for State and National Grantees

Figure 84: Occupations and Skill Training.

Occupations and Skill Training.

Occupational Skills training will be provided based on the labor market demand. Customer service jobs are widely available now and the types of skills required can be obtained through a combination of the remote training and a community service assignment that has an element of customer service, i.e. senior center receptionist, or a soup kitchen server.

Another example is the Recovery from Addictions Program (RAP) operated by the Department of Mental Health (DMH) that is seeking dedicated and compassionate individuals who are passionate about making a difference in the lives of persons with substance addiction and to encourage/motivate individuals in their recovery to work towards treatment goals. These are competent paraprofessional jobs, and candidates perform work under guidance with a framework of defined procedures, policies and standards. This position will work with, and assist professional staff in providing day-to-day direct care to individuals who suffer with drug and alcohol substance issues. The Recovery Treatment Worker will teach and assist clients in performing activities of daily living (ADL) functions, implement and execute behavioral programs, and works with clients on an individual or small group basis. SCSEP participants can be trained and matched for these positions.

Healthcare support jobs require basic medical terminology, coding and billing skills training. There are a number of providers that can help participants to obtain the remote and in person 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

3. 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))

- 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 sough after roles. Moreover, many training resources are limited to on-line offerings, and thus creating an additional barrier to employment.

- Identify available jobs and training or certificate needed;
- Identify the most effective training providers;
- 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.

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

B. SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

1. A DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PROGRAMS. THIS MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN, BUT REGARDLESS OF PLACEMENT IN DOCUMENT, MUST INCLUDE:

A. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH WIOA TITLE I PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PLANS FOR USING THE WIOA ONE-STOP 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 four years, EOEA has also been co-located and 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 one-stop 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. As an outcome, the number of referrals to SCSEP changed from 0 to 100 during the most recent fiscal year.

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 Job Fairs and similar events, aiming at older workers and the local employers.

<u>Coordination with other training services</u>:

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.

B. 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.

C. 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:

- Promote job openings at COAs.
- 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.
- Write and speak about the benefits of hiring older workers in their newsletters and public events.
- Include older workers' issues in their marketing and outreach efforts.
- 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[1], 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.

[1] The future of work after COVID-19 Report

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.

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.

D. 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.

E. ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT SCSEP IS AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND THE STEPS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENCOURAGE AND IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH THE ONE-STOP 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:

- Workers assessments (skills, personal preferences, work history)
- Individual service planning and program referrals
- Service monitoring by case management (through integrated systems)
- 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.

F. 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.

2. 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.

3. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITY OLDER INDIVIDUALS UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (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:

- Identifying and recruiting Host Agencies that serve minority populations;
- Intensify efforts in reaching out to minority- and immigrant-owned businesses that would provide unsubsidized placements for the participants.

4. 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.

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:

- 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.
- Compile and analyze research results and develop a plan of action which will be disseminated to all SCSEPs.
- Initiate and execute the plan of action to recruit host agencies and place participants at host agencies to meet community service needs.

5. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO IMPROVE SCSEP SERVICES, INCLUDING PLANNED LONG-TERM CHANGES TO THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE, 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))

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. THE STATE'S 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.

C. LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

1. 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))

The table below 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;

Massachusetts: Profile of General Population 2010. *(Based on the U.S. Census Bureau)*

Total Population	6,789,319	100.0%
55 - 64 Years	901,717	13.3%
65 - 84 Years	894,411	13.2%
85+ Years	155,340	2.3%
Veteran Status		
Civilian Population - 18+ Years	5,075,535	
Civilian Veterans	325,299	6.4%
Disability Status of the Civilian		
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%
Language Spoken at Home		
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 & 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%

Total Population	6,789,319	100.0%
Percent of Families and People Whose Income in the Past 12 Months is Below the Poverty Line		
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%

2. LIST THE 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.

Figure 97: 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

County	Total Population	SCSEP eligible number of people	State Grantee	National Grantees
Suffolk	730,932	32,225	14	163
Worcester	801,227	21,935	20	93
Statewide Total	**6,586,366**	**194,235**	177	902

3. DESCRIBE CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.

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.

There are no current slot imbalances in Massachusetts. However, there is significant over and under enrollment in all regions.

EOEA will continue to hold informational session to recruit SCSEP-eligible population in the under enrolled areas.

EOEA will work with sub grantees, National Grantees and WIOA partners to improve unsubsidized job placement in the areas where there is significant over-enrollment.

4. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCSEP POSITIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT:

A. MOVES POSITIONS FROM OVER-SERVED TO UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS WITHIN THE STATE IN COMPLIANCE WITH 20 CFR 641.365.

EOEA will continue to coordinate efforts for equitable distribution of slots with National Grantees and will move positions from over-served to underserved locations if such need arises.

B. EQUITABLY SERVES RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

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.

County	Total Urban	Total Rural	Percent Urban	Percent Rural
Barnstable	199,733	16,155	92.5	7.5
Berkshire	89,762	41,457	68.4	31.6
Bristol	494,365	53,920	90.2	9.8
Dukes	10,082	6,453	61.0	39.0
Essex	711,619	31,540	95.8	4.2
Franklin	32,523	38,849	45.6	54.4
Hampden	423,765	39,725	91.4	8.6
Hampshire	114,697	43,383	72.6	27.4

County	Total Urban	Total Rural	Percent Urban	Percent Rural
Middlesex	1,457,576	45,509	97.0	3.0
Nantucket	8,250	1,922	81.1	18.9
Norfolk	662,529	8,321	98.8	1.2
Plymouth	443,904	51,015	89.7	10.3
Suffolk	721,488	535	99.9	.01
Worcester	651,696	146,856	81.6	18.4
Total	**6,021,989**	**525,640**	**92.0**	**8.0**

C. SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

EOEA will work with the National Grantees to ensure equitable distribution of slots in all counties of the Commonwealth. EOEA will take the steps necessary to avoid disruptions to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365.

Table below shows a profile of Massachusetts General Population with the distribution of eligible individuals who are afforded priority service as provided under the Older Americans' Act, section 518(b): (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;

Massachusetts: the relative distribution of SCSEP eligible individuals

County	Total Population	SCSEP eligible
Barnstable	215,769	7,220
Berkshire	129,288	5,380
Bristol	548,922	17,960
Dukes	16,766	655
Essex	748,930	23,360
Franklin	71,599	2,445
Hampden	463,783	17,995
Hampshire	157,822	3,860
Middlesex	1,518,171	35,120
Nantucket	10,142	405
Norfolk	675,436	14,360
Plymouth	497,579	11,315
Suffolk	730,932	32,225
Worcester	801,227	21,935

County	Total Population	SCSEP eligible
Statewide Total	**6,586,366**	**194,235**

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, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits, Consolidated Federal Funds Report. Last Revised: Thursday, 07-Jun-2012

5. THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))

EOEA will work with the National Grantees to ensure equitable distribution of slots in all counties of the Commonwealth. EOEA will take the steps necessary to avoid disruptions to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFR 641.365.

Table below shows a profile of Massachusetts General Population with the distribution of eligible individuals who are afforded priority service as provided under the Older Americans' Act, section 518(b): (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;

Massachusetts: the relative distribution of SCSEP eligible individuals

County	Total Population	SCSEP eligible
Barnstable	215,769	7,220
Berkshire	129,288	5,380
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Hampshire	157,822	3,860
Middlesex	1,518,171	35,120
Nantucket	10,142	405
Norfolk	675,436	14,360
Plymouth	497,579	11,315
Suffolk	730,932	32,225
Worcester	801,227	21,935
Statewide Total	**6,586,366**	**194,235**

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, Nonemployer Statistics, Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners, Building Permits, Consolidated Federal Funds Report. Last Revised: Thursday, 07-Jun-2012

6. THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

A. RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

County	Total Urban	Total Rural	Percent Urban	Percent Rural
Barnstable	199,733	16,155	92.5	7.5
Berkshire	89,762	41,457	68.4	31.6
Bristol	494,365	53,920	90.2	9.8
Dukes	10,082	6,453	61.0	39.0
Essex	711,619	31,540	95.8	4.2
Franklin	32,523	38,849	45.6	54.4
Hampden	423,765	39,725	91.4	8.6
Hampshire	114,697	43,383	72.6	27.4
Middlesex	1,457,576	45,509	97.0	3.0
Nantucket	8,250	1,922	81.1	18.9
Norfolk	662,529	8,321	98.8	1.2
Plymouth	443,904	51,015	89.7	10.3
Suffolk	721,488	535	99.9	.01
Worcester	651,696	146,856	81.6	18.4
Total	**6,021,989**	**525,640**	**92.0**	**8.0**

B. HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

Persons in poverty, percent -

County	Persons in poverty, percent
Barnstable	8.0
Berkshire	11.3
Bristol	10.8
Dukes	7.7
Essex	10.7
Franklin	10.6

County	Persons in poverty, percent
Hampden	16.7
Hampshire	11.1
Middlesex	7.3
Nantucket	5.9
Norfolk	6.5
Plymouth	6.2
Suffolk	17.5
Worcester	9.0

C. ARE MINORITIES

The Massachusetts counties with the greatest percentage of minority populations in 2018 were Suffolk, Hampden , and Essex. The counties with the lowest percentage of minority populations were Franklin , Barnstable, and Berkshire.

(Percent)

County	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Hispanic or Latino	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Black or African American
Barnstable	0.8	1.6	3.2	0.1	3.4
Berkshire	0.3	1.7	5.1	0.1	3.5
Bristol	0.6	2.5	8.4	0.1	5.7
Dukes	1.3	1.1	3.8	0.1	4.5
Essex	0.9	3.9	21.9	0.2	7.1
Franklin	0.5	1.8	4.2	0.2	1.6
Hampden	0.8	2.7	26.1	0.2	10.8
Hampshire	0.3	5.8	5.8	0.1	3.4
Middlesex	0.3	12.9	8.3	0.1	5.9
Nantucket	0.4	1.7	15.3	0.1	10.7
Norfolk	0.2	11.8	4.8	0	7.8
Plymouth	0.3	1.5	4.1	0	11.3
Suffolk	0.7	9.3	23.4	0.2	24.7
Worcester	0.4	5.4	11.9	0.1	6

D. ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT

Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2014-2018 - (Percent)

Language Spoken at Home State-wide		
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 & 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%

Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2014-2018 - (Percent)

County	Percent
Barnstable	8.6
Berkshire	8.1
Bristol	21.4
Dukes	13.1
Essex	26
Franklin	7.1
Hampden	25.6
Hampshire	12.4
Middlesex	26.4
Nantucket	11.4
Norfolk	21.7
Plymouth	13.2

County	Percent
Suffolk	40.1
Worcester	19

E. HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

According to the Massachusetts State Plan on Aging 2018-2021, "The term “Greatest Social Need” refers to needs resulting from non-economic factors inclusive of physical and mental disabilities, language barriers, and cultural, social, or geographical isolation. Elders with Housing Concerns had the highest frequency (55.0%) of attendance at activities. The next highest rates were Isolated Elders (47.7%), Caregiver Support (43.0%), Nutrition & Meals (41.1%), and Disabled Elders (40.3%). The lowest observed categories of Social Needs were Workforce Support (9.3%), Rural Elders (11.6%), and Grandparents Taking Care of Grandchildren (15.1%)."

Particular attention is reserved for older individuals with limited English proficiency and elders living in rural areas. EOEA will continue to work with AAAs in order to provide services to the individuals with the greatest social need.

F. FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS, AS DEFINED IN TEGL 17-20

In order to improve services to re-entry population, EOEA will work with the Department of Corrections (DOC) to learn about the current numbers of SCSEP-eligible inmates that maybe re-entering community during PY21-24. There are many steps that need to be taken prior to release, including: obtaining state ID, MassHealth applications, and locating housing. If these are in place, SCSEP is able to work together with DOC on assessment and program placement for an appropriate Community Service Assignment.

Finding new Host Agencies will be another priority and it may take additional time to find a Host Agency with the supervision and employment training opportunity needed to help individuals re-integrate. More information gathering from the local communities is needed to better understand the challenges of this population as they age.

7. 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))

While there are no plans for positions to be redistributed, EOEA in partnership with National Grantees will avoid disruptions of services to SCSEP participants to the greatest extent possible.

Currently there are certain areas of the state that have over-enrollment due to the effect of COVID-19 that prevented many people from obtaining unsubsidized employment.

EOEA will work with sub grantees, National Grantees and WIOA partners to improve unsubsidized job placement in the areas where there is significant over-enrollment.

County	Total Population	SCSEP eligible number of people	State Grantee	National Grantees
Barnstable	215,769	7,220	0	35

County	Total Population	SCSEP eligible number of people	State Grantee	National Grantees
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
Statewide Total	**6,586,366**	**194,235**	177	902

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR APPENDIX

ALL WIOA CORE PROGRAMS

ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES - ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	79.0%	79.0%	79.0%	79.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	78.0%	78.0%	78.0%	78.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,200	$6,300.00	$6,200	$6,400.00
Credential Attainment Rate	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%
Effectiveness in	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Serving Employers				

[1]

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES - DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$8,800	$10,000.00	$8,800	$10,500.00
Credential Attainment Rate	66.0%	71.0%	66.0%	71.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	40.0%	45.0%	40.0%	45.5%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1]

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES - YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	72.0%	72.0%	72.0%	72.0%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$3,600	$3,600.00	$3,600	$3,700.00

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Credential Attainment Rate	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	45.0%	45.0%	45.0%	45.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

WAGNER-PEYSER ACT - WAGNER PEYSER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 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	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM - ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	43.5%	43.5%	44.0%	44.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter	44.5%	45.5%	45.0%	45.5%

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
After Exit)				
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,900	$6,900	$7,000	$7000
Credential Attainment Rate	28.5%	28.5%	29.0%	29.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	47.0%	47.0%	47.5%	47.5%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM (COMBINED OR GENERAL) - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	51.0%	51.0%	52.0%	52.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	48.0%	48.7%	49.0%	49.7%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$4,500.00	$4,500.00	$4,600.00	$4,600.00
Credential Attainment Rate	20.0%	20.0%	22.0%	22.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	35.0%	35.0%	40.0%	40.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM (BLIND) - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Indicators	PY 2022 Expected Level	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Expected Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	51.0%	51.0%	52.0%	52.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	48.0%	48.7%	49.0%	49.7%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$4,500	$4,500	$4,600	$4,600
Credential Attainment Rate	20.0%	20.0%	22.0%	22.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	35.0%	35.0%	40.0%	40.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

"Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being developed and this data will not be entered in the 2022 State Plan modifications.

ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

Additional Indicators of Performance
1. Number and percent of customers enrolled in training and exited who were employed in a training related job 2nd quarter after exit.
2. Number and percent of veterans employed in the 2nd quarter after exit
3. Number and percent of individuals with language barriers at registration employed in the 2nd quarter after exit.
4. Number and percent of individuals with a disability who were employed in the 2nd quarter after exit.
5. Number and percent of individuals receiving TANF and SNAP benefits who were employed in the 2nd quarter after exit.
6. Number of older workers (50+) who were employed in the 2nd quarter after exit.

OTHER APPENDICES

Updated Response:

As stated in 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA .."there are six primary indicators of performance for which each of the state's core programs must negotiate targets with its respective Federal agency." MA agrees that performance indicators are the same across partner agencies, however performance levels will be different based on populations served and negotiated by each Partner agency.

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 and 2021 State Agriculture Overview

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 A: Cost of Living and Affordability

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.

ATTACHMENT B: Occupations: Typical Education Categories

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+:

- Doctoral or professional degree
- Master's degree
- Bachelor's degree

Sub-BA:

- Associate's degree
- Postsecondary non-degree award
- Some college, no degree

HS or Below:

- High school diploma or equivalent
- No formal educational credential

ATTACHMENT C: Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities: O*NET Definitions and Occupation Profile Example

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.

*O*NET Ability 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.

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.
Multilimb 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

Importance	Knowledge
74	**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.
58	**English Language** — Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
50	**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 disorders.

Importance	Skill
72	**Service Orientation** — Actively looking for ways to help people.
66	**Social Perceptiveness** — Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do.
63	**Active Listening** — Giving full attention to what others are saying, taking time to understand their points, asking questions, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
56	**Speaking** — Talking to others to convey information effectively.
53	**Monitoring** — Monitoring/Assessing performance of yourself, other individuals, or organizations to make improvements or take corrective action.

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.

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 sector.

Figure 2.24 Massachusetts Manufacturing Employment, Seasonally Adjusted

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

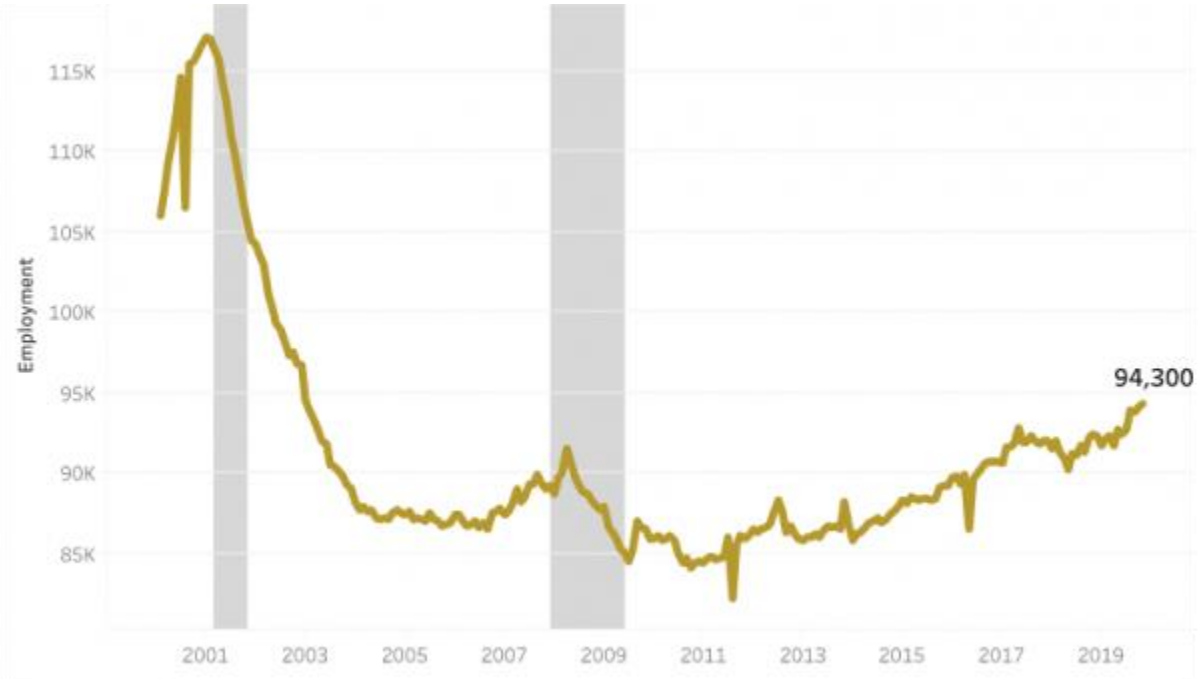
Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

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.

Figure 2.30 Massachusetts Financial Activities Employment, Seasonally Adjusted

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

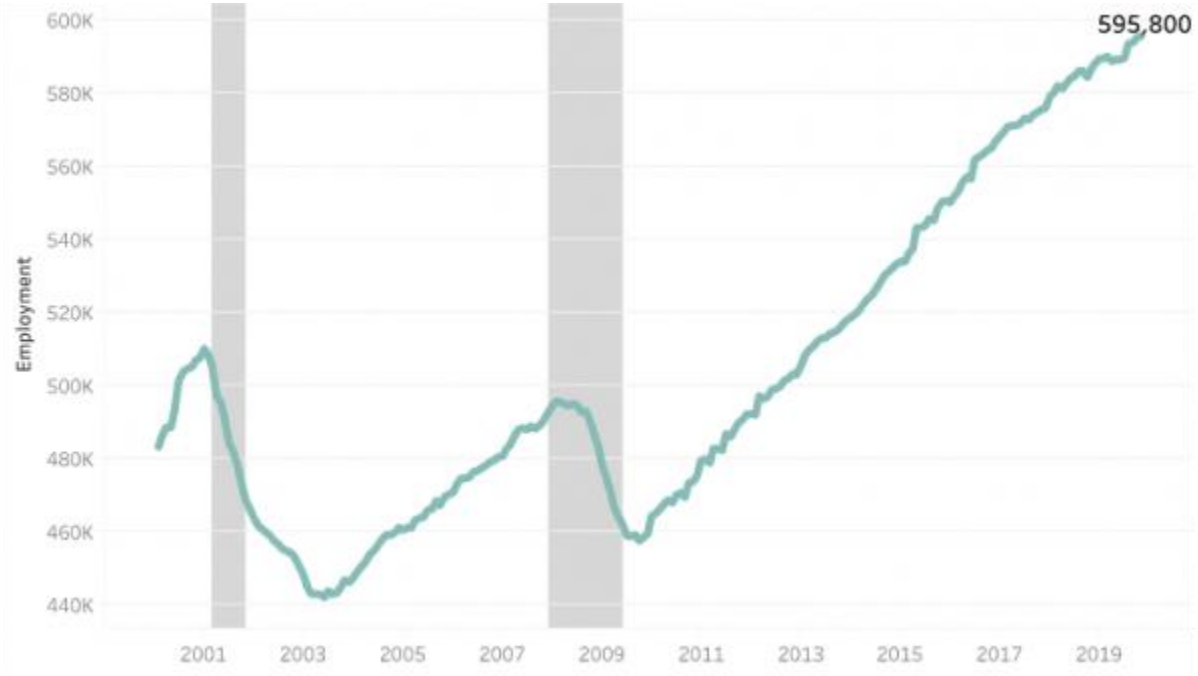
Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

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.

Figure 2.32 Massachusetts Professional and Business Services Employment, Seasonally Adjusted



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

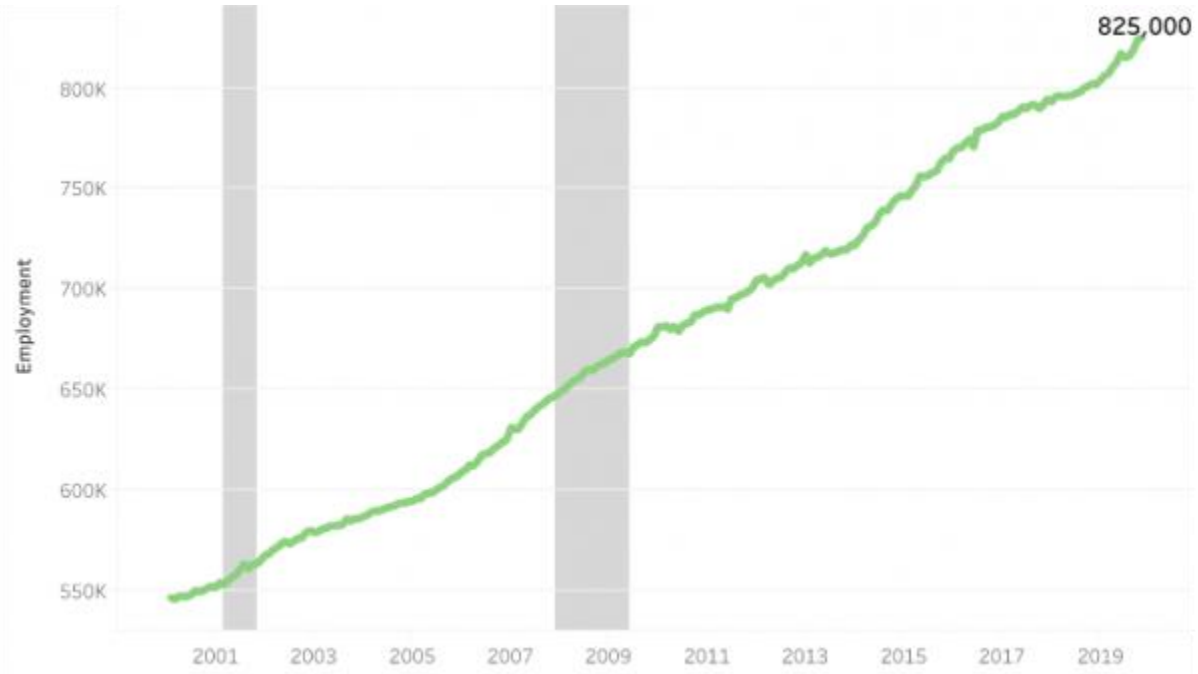
Source: Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance/BLS, December 2019

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

ATTACHMENT E: MassHire Charter

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!"

ATTACHMENT F: Universal Design Principles

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:

- Provide the same means of use for all users: identical whenever possible; equivalent when not.
- Avoid segregating or stigmatizing any users.
- Provisions for privacy, security, and safety should be equally available to all users.
- Make the design appealing to all users.

Examples for a MassHire Career Center:

- During orientation, ask all customers if they need assistance completing registration rather than only individuals you think may have a disability.
- 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 on-line, 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 on-line 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:

- 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.
- Provide information in multiple languages.
- 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:

- Provide adjustable chairs, desks, and tables for workstations and classrooms.

- 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.
- 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.

ATTACHMENT G: Draft High-Quality Youth Program Elements

Developed by the Massachusetts Workforce Development Board Youth Committee (February 2018)

1. **Work-based learning experiences**
    a. Structured exposure to work opportunities
2. **Robust case management**
    a. Caring adults who provide support, coaching, and on-going feedback to build self-efficacy
3. **Access to support services**
    a. Connect to resources to enable participation such as childcare and transportation
4. **Employer Engagement**
    a. Demand-driven program design and structure to lead to job placement and career opportunities
5. **Employability ("soft") Skills Development**
    a. Job readiness skills: communication, teamwork, problem solving, etc.
6. **Occupational or Academic Skills Progression**
    a. Enhances literacy and numeracy skills to ensure career growth

ATTACHMENT H: WIOA STATE PLAN Metrics Definitions

Statewide Metrics Definitions

Statewide Metric	Definition
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)

ATTACHMENT I: Statewide Partner Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

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:

1. **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
2. **Effective Service Delivery**
   a) Engagement of businesses and alignment of education and training activities through career pathways
   b) Partnerships and investments in the MassHire Career Center delivery system
3. **Increased Accountability**
   a) Common, federally-designed WIOA measures across WIOA titles I, II, III, IV as identified by the federal government
   b) State-designed performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of education and workforce programs
   c) 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:

- **Design career pathways** aligned with business demand across federal, state, and community-based partners
- **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
- **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)
- **Meet the needs of both job seekers and businesses** who engage in the public workforce system
- **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:

1. **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.

2. **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.

3. **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.

4. **Guide the continued development of Local Area partnerships and Local Area MOU agreements** (as required by WIOA Section121(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:

1. **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;
2. **The Dislocated Worker Program (Title I),** as part of MDCS, EOLWD;
3. **The Youth Program (Title I),** as part of MDCS, EOLWD;
4. **The 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);
5. **The Wagner-Peyser Act Program** (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III), as part of MDCS, EOLWD;
6. **The Vocational Rehabilitation Program** (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV), as part of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS);
7. **Federal-state unemployment compensation program**, as part of the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA), EOLWD;
8. **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;
9. **Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program** (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.) as part of MDCS, EOLWD;
10. **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program** (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) as part of Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), EOHHS; and

11. **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;
12. **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.

1. Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
   a. Massachusetts Office of Business Development
   b. Department of Housing and Community Development
2. Executive Office of Education
   a. Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Educational Act of 2008, Chapter 70, Chapter 74 funded programs
   b. Department of Higher Education
3. Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services
4. Division of Apprentice Standards
5. Department of Transportation
6. Department of Correction
7. Commonwealth Corporation
8. Community Based Organizations
9. Operational ABLE
10. Senior Services America, Inc.
11. Business associations
12. 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:

- Focus on Business-Driven Services
- Priority of Service for Individuals with Barriers to Employment
- Streamlining Workforce Structures (Workforce Boards, Service Delivery, etc.)
- Partnerships Across WIOA Programs
- Regional Planning
- 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:

- *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;
- *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;
- *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

- *Track and evaluate the outcomes for individuals who face barriers to employment.*

IV. MOU Agreements for State Partners

A. 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:
   a) Program eligibility criteria for services and referral processes for the WIOA Core Program (Section III A and B)
   b) Business services offered by each MOU partner
   c) Labor market information on high-demand industry and careers produced by the MassHire Department of Career Services and Department of Unemployment Assistance
   d) 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.)
   e) 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.
    a) See Sections VII C-F for detail on calculations for state and local area cost-sharing mechanisms.

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. In accordance with the WIOA Joint Core Partner Local MOU Policy Guidance, Local Area MOUs outline steps to address the following items:

1. A strategy and process to share information on the labor market.
2. 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

1. 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.
2. 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 VI, 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.

E. **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**

1. **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:
   - Intake
   - Needs assessment
   - Basic skills assessments
   - Identification of appropriate services to meet needs
   - Referrals to other MassHire Career Center partners
   - Business services
   - 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.

2. **Infrastructure Costs**
MassHire Career Center infrastructure costs are defined as non-personnel costs necessary for the general operation of the MassHire Career Center, including:
   - Facility and rental costs
   - Utilities and maintenance
   - Equipment (including assessment-related and assistive technologies for individuals with disabilities)
   - Technology to facilitate access to the MassHire Career Center (including planning and outreach)
   - 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:

Secretary Rosalin Acosta
Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Secretary Marylou Sudders
Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Director Alice Sweeney
Massitre Department of Career Services

Director Richard Jeffers
Department of Unemployment Assistance

Commissioner Toni Wolf
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Secretary Elizabeth Chen
Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Therese Rowland, Interim President & CEO
Commonwealth Corporation

Secretary James E. Peyser
Executive Office of Education

Secretary Michael Kennealy
Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development

Commissioner Jeffrey Riley
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Commissioner Amy Kershaw
Department of Transitional Assistance

Commissioner David D'Arcangelo
Massachusetts Commission for the Blind

Secretary Francisco E. Urena
Department of Veterans' Services

Commissioner Carlos E. Santiago
Department of Higher Education

Director Patrick Mitchell
Division of Apprentice Standards

Jennifer Maddox, Undersecretary
Department of Housing and Community Development

Christine Garland, VP of Workforce Development
Senior Service America, Inc

Commissioner Carol Mici
Department of Correction

Mariah Walsh, President and CEO
Operation ABLE

APPENDIX

Definitions

1. ***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.
2. ***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).
3. ***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).
4. ***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)
5. ***Common Measures***: Primary indicators of performance," for its six core programs
6. ***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
7. ***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.
8. ***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.
9. ***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)(I) provides that designation of a fiscal agent does not relieve the CEO from his/her liability for any misuse of grant funds.
10. ***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
11. ***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).
12. ***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).
13. ***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.
14. ***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.
15. ***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.
16. ***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.
17. ***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.
18. ***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.
19. **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.
20. ***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.
21. ***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
22. ***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.
23. ***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.

24. ***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.
25. ***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.
26. ***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.

ATTACHMENT J: MassHire Career Centers and Locations

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
[illegible]

MassHire Downtown Boston Career Center
[illegible]

MassHire Metro North Career Centers
[illegible]

MassHire Framingham Career Center
[illegible]

MassHire Kenwood Career Center
[illegible]

Northeastern Massachusetts

MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Centers
[illegible]

MassHire Lowell Career Center
[illegible]

MassHire North Shore Career Centers
[illegible]

MassHire North Shore Youth Career Center*
[illegible]

Southeastern Massachusetts

MassHire Attleboro Career Center
[illegible]

MassHire Cape & Islands Career Center
[illegible]

MassHire Greater Brockton Career Center
[illegible]

MassHire Greater Brockton YouthWorks*
[illegible]

MassHire Fall River Career Center
[illegible]

MassHire Youth GrowthZone*
[illegible]

MassHire Greater New Bedford Career Center
[illegible]

MassHire Taunton Career Center
[illegible]

MassHire South Shore Career Centers
[illegible]

Central Massachusetts

MassHire North Central Career Center
[illegible]

MassHire SouthMetro Career Center
[illegible]

MassHire Worcester Career Center
[illegible]

Western Massachusetts

MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Centers
[illegible]

MassHire Holyoke Career Center
[illegible]

MassHire Berkshire Career Center
[illegible]

MassHire Springfield Career Center
[illegible]

For more information about MassHire Career Centers, visit www.mass.gov/careercenters

* Affiliated limited services – Contact the career center for hours of operation and services available.
** Youth-specific Career Center

ATTACHMENT K: Census of Agriculture State Profile for Massachusetts

2021 State Agriculture Overview pg.1

2021 STATE AGRICULTURE OVERVIEW

Massachusetts

† Survey Data from Quick Stats as of: Mar/14/2022

Farms Operations†

Farm Operations - Area Operated, Measured in Acres / Operation	69
Farm Operations - Number of Operations	7,200
Farm Operations - Acres Operated	500,000

Livestock Inventory †

Cattle, Cows, Beef - Inventory (First of Jan. 2022)	8,000
Cattle, Cows, Milk - Inventory (First of Jan. 2022)	9,500
Cattle, Incl Calves - Inventory (First of Jan. 2022)	38,000
Hogs - Inventory (First of Dec. 2021)	8,500

Milk Production †

Milk - Production, Measured in Lb / Head	19,700
Milk - Production, Measured in Lb	197,000,000

Crops - Planted, Harvested, Yield, Production, Price (MYA), Value of Production †
Sorted by Value of Production in Dollars

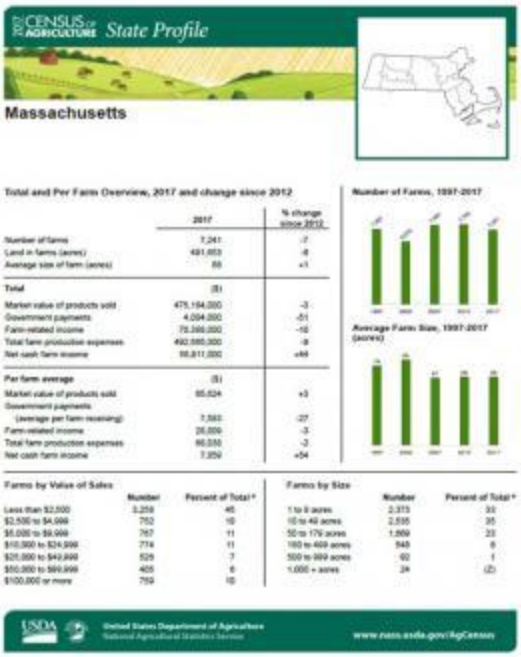
Commodity	Planted All Purpose Acres	Harvested Acres	Yield	Production	Price per Unit	Value of Production in Dollars
HAY & HAYLAGE						
HAY & HAYLAGE						12,650,000
HAY & HAYLAGE, (EXCL ALFALFA)						10,500,000
HAY & HAYLAGE, ALFALFA	1,000					2,150,000
HAY						

2021 State Agriculture Overview pg.2

HAY		55,000	1.45 TONS / ACRE	80,000 TONS	158 $ / TON	12,650,000
HAY, (EXCL ALFALFA)		50,000	1.4 TONS / ACRE	70,000 TONS	150 $ / TON	10,500,000
HAY, ALFALFA		5,000	1.9 TONS / ACRE	10,000 TONS	215 $ / TON	2,150,000
CORN						
CORN	14,000					
CORN, SILAGE		11,000	17 TONS / ACRE	187,000 TONS		
CRANBERRIES						
CRANBERRIES				2,100,000 BARRELS		

(NA) Not Available
(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations
(S) Insufficient number of reports to establish an estimate
(X) Not Applicable
(Z) Less than half the rounding unit

SOURCE: USDA, NASS



CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE State Profile

Massachusetts

Total and Per Farm Overview, 2017 and change since 2012

	2017	% change since 2012
Number of farms	7,241	-7
Land in farms (acres)	491,053	-8
Average size of farm (acres)	68	+1
Total	(D)	
Market value of products sold	475,184,000	-3
Government payments	4,094,000	-51
Farm-related income	75,366,000	-10
Total farm production expenses	492,595,000	-8
Net cash farm income	90,811,000	+44
Per farm average	(D)	
Market value of products sold	65,624	+3
Government payments (average per farm receiving)	7,583	-27
Farm-related income	26,006	-3
Total farm production expenses	68,036	-3
Net cash farm income	7,259	+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	3,259	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	1,589	22
180 to 499 acres	548	8
500 to 999 acres	62	1
1,000 + acres	34	(Z)

USDA United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus

Massachusetts, 2017
Page 2

CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE State Profile

Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold

	Sales ($1,000)	Rank in U.S. *	States Producing Item
Total	475,184	47	50
Crops	365,324	42	50
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas	5,369	47	50
Tobacco	5,733	6	15
Cotton and cottonseed	-	-	17
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes	122,041	25	50
Fruits, tree nuts, berries	89,433	15	50
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, sod	139,745	35	50
Cultivated Christmas trees, short rotation woody crops	3,536	15	50
Other crops and hay	15,633	44	50
Livestock, poultry, and products	111,861	47	50
Poultry and eggs	12,194	42	50
Cattle and calves	11,147	45	50
Milk from cows	45,336	26	50
Hogs and pigs	3,594	40	50
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, milk	2,300	41	50
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, donkeys	3,430	43	50
Aquaculture	29,400	16	50
Other animals and animal products	5,749	37	50

(Z) Percent of U.S. agriculture sales

Share of Sales by Type (%)

Crops	77
Livestock, poultry, and products	23

Land in Farms by Use (acres)

Cropland	171,496
Pastureland	48,241
Woodland	134,159
Other	75,627

Top Counties: Land in Farms (acres)

Worcester	86,398
Franklin	68,247
Plymouth	63,536
Berkshire	58,647
Hampshire	55,644

Total Producers * 12,778

Sex	
Male	7,206
Female	5,572
Age	
<35	1,093
35 – 64	7,391
65 and older	4,315
Race	
American Indian/Alaska Native	29
Asian	95
Black or African American	166
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4
White	12,403
More than one race	80
Other characteristics	
Hispanic, Latino, Spanish origin	207
With military service	1,102
New and beginning farmers	3,939

Percent of farms that:

Have internet access	84
Farm organically	3
Sell directly to consumers	25
Hire farm labor	33
Are family farms	95

Top Crops in Acres *

Forage (hay/haylage), all	79,024
Vegetables harvested, all	15,014
Land in berries	14,594
Corn for silage or greenchop	13,659
Cranberries	13,005

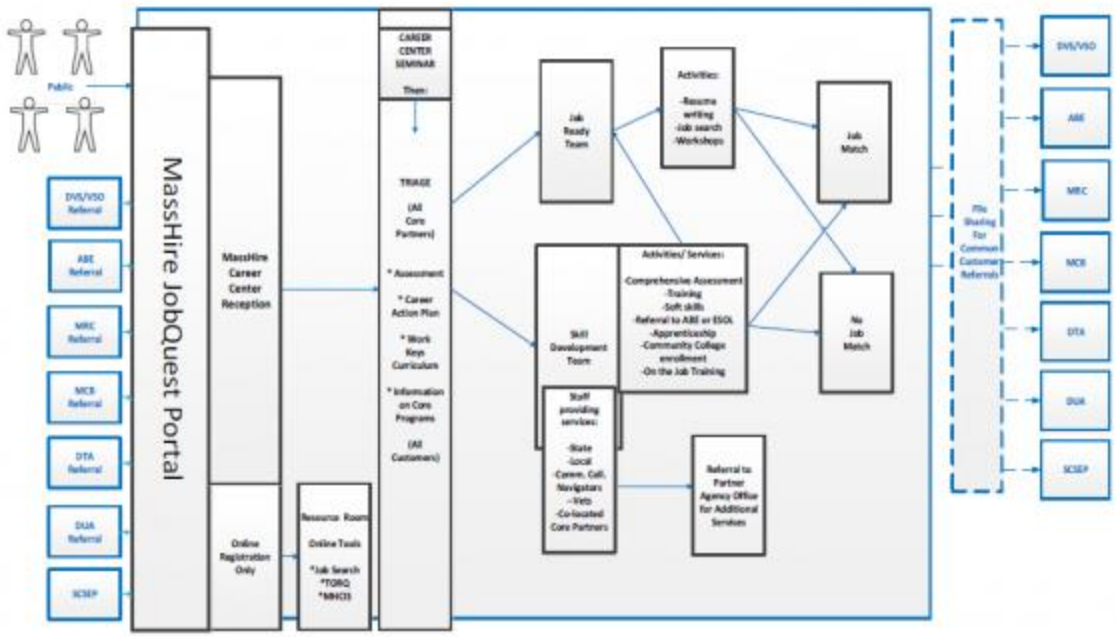
Livestock Inventory (Dec 31, 2017)

Broilers and other meat-type chickens	17,663
Cattle and calves	35,574
Goats	7,432
Hogs and pigs	(D)
Horses and ponies	14,594
Layers	155,668
Pullets	10,139
Sheep and lambs	13,210
Turkeys	21,227

See 2017 Census of Agriculture, U.S. Summary and State Data, for complete footnotes, explanations, definitions, commodity descriptions, and methodology.
* May not add to 100% due to rounding. * Among states where data can be displayed. * Data suppressed for a maximum of four producers per farm. * Crop commodity names may be shortened; see full names at www.nass.usda.gov/publications/glossary.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.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

ATTACHMENT L: Integrated, technology-based job seeker flow chart at for Career Centers (with Core Program partners)



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		

ATTACHMENT M: EOLWD/MDCS 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 staffto 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*trainingprovides 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:

- Department of Transitional Assistance – *Training delivered: July – August 2017*

- Executive Office of Elder Affairs – Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) - *Training delivered:December 2017 – April 2018*
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission - *Training delivered February - March 2019*
- 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.

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:

- 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,
- reduce travel time and costs for attending centrally scheduled MOSES training, and
- 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 on-line 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 GenderIdentity and Expression in the Workplace [Online
- DomesticViolence, Sexual Assault and Stalking Awareness
- ProjectManagement 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.

Technology and Virtual Communication

The use of technology as an educational tool is becoming increasingly important to save time, share resources and engage broader audiences. Learning Management Systems (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.

MA 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 can be applied in identifying IRCs.
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	November2018 – 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.	MassHire BizWorks 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 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.