



**GREATER NEW BEDFORD
WORKFORCE BOARD**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Local 4-Year Plan

Fiscal Years 2022 - 2025

Preamble

We are the MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board (MWB), a business-led, policy-setting board that oversees workforce development initiatives in the ten-community region stretching from Dartmouth to Wareham, MA. Our Mayor Jon Mitchell appoints the Board members that are composed of business, civic, education, labor, and community leaders. Established under federal law, the Board's Chairman is a member of the private sector. The current Board Chair is David Slutz. We employ a staff of full-time professionals however; the Board consists entirely of volunteers. All Board meetings are open to the public.

We are conveners, brokers, and collaborators organizing all workforce development efforts in the towns of Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Freetown, Lakeville, Marion, Mattapoisett, New Bedford, Rochester and Wareham. We oversee all actions and collaborate on every aspect of the operations of the MassHire Greater New Bedford Career Center (MCC) which is presently operated jointly by ²Equus Workforce Solutions, Inc. (Equus) and the Massachusetts Division of Career Services (MDCS).

One of our main responsibilities is to direct federal, state, and private funding for educational and occupational skills programs. In addition to responsibilities mandated under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), we are called upon to play a major role in a variety of workforce initiatives that define our goals based on local community needs.

We are directed by our Chief Elected Official, Board of Directors, and the several standing committees that include our Executive Committee, Performance and Oversight, Business Development, and the Youth Council. The members of these committees volunteer their time in providing us with their expertise, solutions, and connections that assist us in moving the needle in workforce development exponentially.

Our Mission and Vision

The MassHire system creates and sustains powerful connections between businesses and job seekers through a statewide network of employment professionals. MassHire envisions a better future for people and businesses of Massachusetts through meaningful work and sustainable growth. The organization serves businesses, job seekers, and the youth through several services, such as job matching, apprenticeships, occupational skills training, and job fairs.

Our Initiatives

The MWB primary goal is to help job seekers, community partners, and businesses of Greater New Bedford with their workforce development needs. Our initiatives focus on supporting priority industries through the Southeastern Regional Blue Print area.¹We support local workforce industries including the Maritime and the Offshore Wind sub sector. We continue to partner closely with regional schools, agencies and businesses to support the workforce and economic health of Greater New Bedford and the

¹ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/southeast-regional-workforce-skills-planning-initiative-regional-blueprint>

² As of July 2022, the MWB procured a new MCC operator and awarded contract to Equus Workforce Solutions, Inc.

Southeast Region as a whole. We are part of the super Region #6 along with the Bristol, Brockton and South Shore Workforce Board areas.

Table of Contents

(a) Strategic Planning elements, including:	5
(1) A regional (local) analysis of;	5
(2) Describe the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the businesses in your region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.....	35
(3) Please provide an analysis of your regional workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.	38
(4) Please provide an analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the local area. This analysis must:.....	46
(5) Please describe the MassHire Board’s strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency that includes goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in §677.155(a) (1).	55
(6). Taking into account analyses described in 1 through 4 above, what is your regions strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs and required partners to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in paragraph (a)(5) of this section...	57
(b) Under WIOA, the plan must include a description of the following requirements (WIOA secs. 108(b) (2)–(21) :	58
(1) Identify the following elements of the workforce development system in your local area:	58
(2) Please describe how your Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:	61
(3) Please describe the strategies and services that will be used in your local area:	64
(4) Please provide a description of how your Board:	68
(5) Please describe the MassHire Career Center System in your area, including:	71
(6) Please provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in our local area.	75
(7) Please provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in your area including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. Please include an identification of successful models of such activities.	76
(8) Please explain how the Board coordinates relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.	82
(9) How does the Board coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area? Please also describe how other programs and services in your local area are leveraged to compliant workforce investment activities.....	83

(10) What plans, assurances, and strategies do you have in place for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services and other services provided through the Career Center delivery system?.....	83
(11) How are career and training services, required under WIOA, be provided to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs) through the MassHire Career Center(s)?	84
(12) Please describe how the Board coordinates WIOA title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA title II? This description must include how the MWB carries out the review of local applications submitted under title II consistent with WIOA secs. 107(d) (1) (A) and (B) (i) and WIOA sec. 232:	85
(13) Please provide the name and contact information of your Fiscal Agent.	86
(14) Please describe the competitive process that is used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA title I activities.....	87
(15) Please provide the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official consistent with WIOA sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of your local area and to be used by the Local Board for measuring the performance of your local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA title I subtitle B, and the CareerCenter system in the local area.	87
(16) What are the actions and activities that support the MassHire Board’s continued status as a high-performance workforce board.....	91
(17) How are the training services outlined in WIOA sec. 134 provided through the use of individual training accounts? If contracts for training services are or will be used, how is/will the use of such contracts coordinated with the use of individual training accounts?	94
(18) Please describe the local area strategy and service plans for utilization of the following work-based training models.	96
(19) Please describe the process the Board uses, consistent with WIOA sec. 108(d) to provide up to a 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of your local plan, particularly for representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations.....	98
(20) Describe progress made implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake, referral and case management information system for WIOA Partner Shared Customers.....	99
(21) Please describe how the Board will implement the Virtual Career Pathway tool locally both for customers who can be wholly served by the Virtual Tool and those who will need to request personalized assistance.	99
(22) Please describe the local policy and process that ensure priority for adult career and training services is given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec 134 (c) (3) (E), § 680.600 and 100 DCS 18.101.1.	101
(23). Attachments.....	103
Attachment A – WIOA Partner MOU Referral Form	103
Attachment B - Operational Definitions of Performance Indicators.....	104

(a) Strategic Planning elements, including:

(1) A regional (local) analysis of;

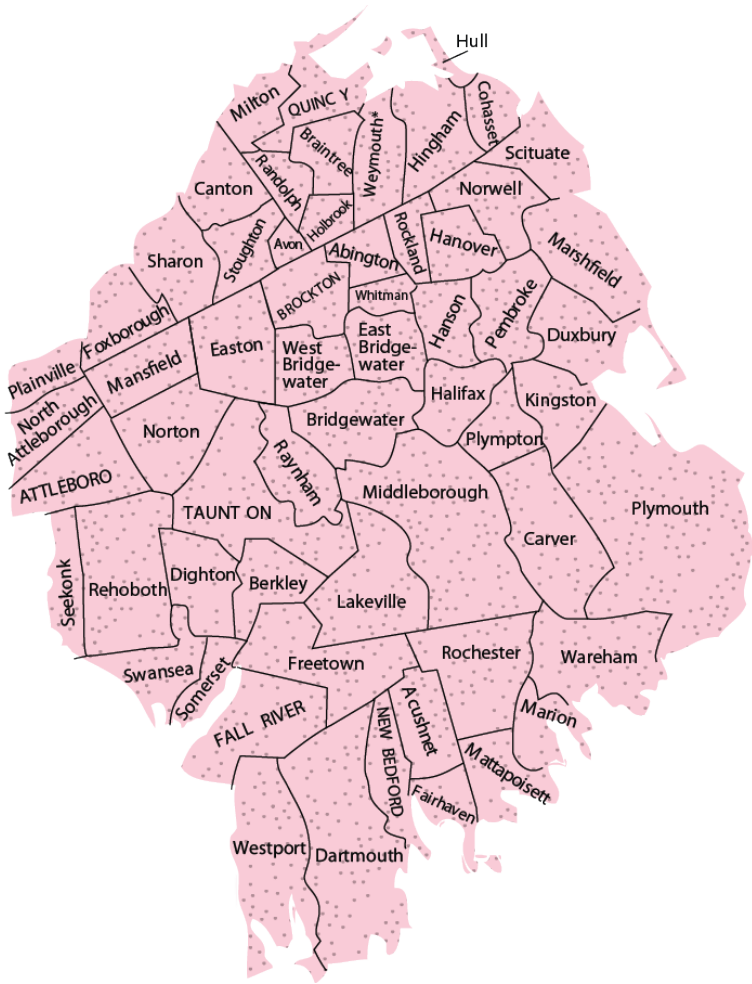
- (i) Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and
- (ii) Employment needs of businesses in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
- (iii) As appropriate, your local area may use an existing analysis, which is a timely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

Stretching from southern portion of Norfolk County just south of Boston southward to the entirety of Plymouth and Bristol Counties, the southeastern region shares most of the Massachusetts border with Rhode Island to the west with the eastern border primarily a long stretch of coastline from Hull to Plymouth and Wareham to Westport. The Southeast region of Massachusetts includes 56 communities encompassing four Workforce Development Areas (Bristol, Brockton Area, Greater New Bedford and South Shore) with both common and divergent labor markets. The primary concentration of population is centered in six gateway cities located within the region.

Historically, the dense population made these communities ideal for factories and multi-unit residences to supply the workforce, however, these now 100 year+ facilities are posing challenges to the new industries and residents who are no longer focused on working and living in the same vicinity. From the foundation days of fishing & shoemaking, industries within the Gateway Cities face challenges on transition into new technology, regulations and transportation for their work force. Just as all the Workforce Boards have the commonality of urban Gateway Cities, within each region there are also pockets of suburbia, filled with small businesses driving the local economy that demands a different response in planning for the workforce. Many of these businesses have few opportunities for training and often have difficulty in filling both entry and mid-level jobs.

The Southeast region accounts for approximately 21% of the state's residents at the end of the decade. However, there was little growth in the native-born population over the decade. Instead, strong annual growth in the region's immigrant population (2.2%) was the primary factor in the Southeast's total population increase. The region has seen increased diversity over the past decade, with growing Black, Asian and Hispanic populations. The population also became older as baby boomers approached retirement age. This resulted in all cohorts of residents age 45 and older growing during the decade, while nearly all the cohorts of those ages 44 and younger declined. (Commonwealth Corporation/New England Public Policy Center of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, *Labor Market Trends in the Southeast Region*)²

² Commonwealth Corporation/New England Public Policy Center of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, *Labor Market Trends in the Southeast Region*



Region # 6

Greater New Bedford- SDA

As each region has at least one Gateway City within its borders, the demands are similar in reference to English language acquisition, building work ready skills (41% population, 25 and older have a High School diploma or less) and adapting to the change of available labor pools.

(Foreign born: Brockton 28.3%, Fall River 19.4%, New Bedford 21.5% and Quincy 32.8%),

Within the UMASS Donahue Institute Report, *Long-Term Population Projections for Massachusetts Regions and Municipalities*,³ it is estimated that the southeast should expect to see continued population growth over the next decade but at a slower rate in the future. The UMASS Donahue Institute model estimates that the region will add another 39,490 residents between 2010 and 2020. By 2035, it is estimated that the southeast region will approach 1.19 million persons. The report indicates that continued modest growth will be driven by immigration of persons in their thirties and international migration. It is anticipated these two factors will counter population loss through domestic out-migration. It is relevant to note that domestic out-migration is strongly concentrated among the college-age population reflecting a long-term struggle to retain college graduates within the region.

³ UMASS Donahue Institute Report, *Long-Term Population Projections for Massachusetts Regions and Municipalities*,

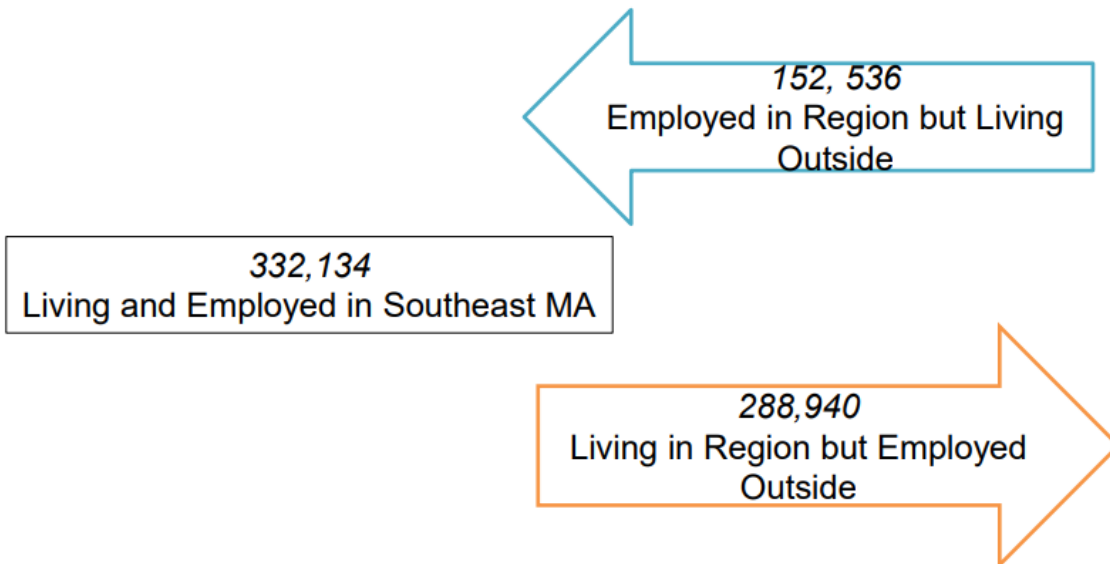
The report also projects that the population will continue to age in the southeast. Significantly, it is estimated that 24% of the region's population will be over the age of 65 by 2035, compared to 14% in 2010. This age shift absent significant growth of the overall population has potentially significant labor supply implications in the region. Ultimately, as region's population ages, the share of the working-age and young people is declining.

The trends of a limited growth in the region's labor force are even more ominous when one considers the fact that southeastern MA employers face a net loss of approximately 135,000 employees who leave the region for work. More specifically, 332,134 individuals are living and employed in the southeast. While 152,536 individuals are employed in the region while living outside, a far more significant number (288,940) who live in the southeast are employed outside the region. This results in a net loss of approximately 135,000 employees who leave the region for work.⁴

Demographic Deep Dive

Regional Commuter Patterns

The Southeast MA's employers face a net loss of approximately 135,000 employees who leave the region for work.



U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter)

⁴ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/south-shore-local-plan-package/download>

The priority industry sectors of Southeast Region #6 include Healthcare, Professional and Technical Services, and Financial Services⁵. We also recognize Manufacturing as a critical industry for employers and job seekers and we have included Construction as it will heavily relied on when combined with Offshore Wind. The coronavirus pandemic in the U.S. continues to accelerate, sending a shock wave through the economy at large, upending multiple industries, and shining a spotlight on the critical role U.S. manufacturer’s play in meeting the needs of this growing crisis. ⁶ Many manufacturers idled production as states moved to close all “non-essential” businesses, while others have pivoted sharply, retooling their facilities to produce lifesaving equipment like masks and ventilators. Meanwhile, manufacturers in specific subsectors are cranking up production to support and supply the nation’s critical infrastructure.

Some of those critical infrastructures are:

- Medical supplies
- Primary metals
- Machinery
- Electrical Equipment, Appliance & Component
- Transportation Equipment
- Chemicals
- Defense
- Food
- Energy

At the local level, additional priority industry sectors are Maritime and its sub-sector Off Shore Wind remain on the near forefront of our minds.

Manufacturing

The current employment needs of manufacturing businesses are growing rapidly but are not reflective of current LMI analysis reports. In manufacturing needs in the areas of precision machinists and welders are growing in numbers that exceeds supply. The growth has crept up quickly and employers are beginning to become concerned with on time deliveries and competitiveness. A challenge for us is to show this growth using these sites because what is happening now is not yet projected in these reports. We know this through local knowledge, employers who are reaching out reporting vacant positions with continued growth and recent news articles on the growth in manufacturing and the addition of jobs in MA and across the country.

Manufacturing is a priority industry sector for the Greater New Bedford Area. Within the manufacturing sector, multiple labor supply gaps exist and are likely to increase in the near and longer term. The manufacturing sector is marked by an aging labor pool in the southeast with 34% of the workforce over the age of 55. As a result, the industry faces large scale attrition over the next 5-10 years which has been confirmed through feedback from the region’s manufacturers, particularly among members of our Manufacturing Collaborative SAMC.⁷

⁵ <https://www.mass.gov/doc/southeast-regional-workforce-skills-planning-initiative-regional-blueprint>

⁶ <https://www.industryselect.com/blog/critical-manufacturing-industries-by-subsector>

⁷ <https://www.samcnetwork.org/>

This issue is compounded by the fact that the region has a limited training pipeline to develop the future workforce in this industry. The region's vocational technical high schools provide valuable programs and a supply of graduates who enter the manufacturing field, but this number does not meet the demand or level for skilled employees in this industry. While additional training opportunities for adults exist through partnerships among workforce boards, vocational technical high schools and community colleges and some credentialing is present (i.e. MACWIC), the programs are not as formalized as in other industry clusters and in many cases, lack systemic funding.

Another contributing factor in the limited talent pipeline is the perception among area youth that manufacturing is a declining industry that does not offer strong career ladder opportunities or good wages. The MWB continues to support upgrading of equipment and training at area Comprehensive and Vocational Technical schools to align resources that meet Advanced Manufacturing employee needs. This effort is being bolstered by Governor Baker's Skills Capital Grant program that is providing state of the art training equipment to meet 21st Century needs to compete globally. To date, the Workforce Board has supported in excess of \$2,000,000 Skills Grant applications that have updated Machinist training equipment, installed Robotics labs and modernized Welding shops throughout the local area among 4 high schools.

This work prompted EOHEd to advise the Governor to increase funding for manufacturing training within his FY19 budget that extended into FY20-FY23. The MWB is the lead workforce board for a 5-year grant totaling 3.2ml. from the Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development (EOHEd) for the Southeast Region and Cape & Islands. Because of the scope and depth of this grant EOHEd named Captains for the four workforce board areas that were leading this grant, Central, Northeast, Southeast & Cape Cod and Western Regions. We continue to be level funded for \$437,500 in annual awards to provide training in the region with entities such as among 3 other WBs, 9 Vocational High Schools, and Cape Cod and Bristol Community Colleges that continues to focus on increasing the employer pipeline and upskilling incumbent workers.

The grant is expected to be recurrent until 2023 with the New Bedford Workforce Board leading the effort. New Bedford is also leading the effort in two other manufacturing grants. New Bedford is also leading the effort in two other manufacturing grants. We anticipate continued funding from the state level for the advanced manufacturing grant will continue. The collaboration with the captains and our funder, the Center for Advanced Manufacturing at The Mass Tech Collaborative remains strong as we continue to increase awareness of manufacturing as a viable career choice.

MassBridge/DoD

The MWB was very involved in the Statewide Manufacturing Community of Practice (COP) headed up by Commonwealth Corporation that soon gained the interest of the Skills Cabinet members, MassTech Collaborative (MTC), the Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative (AMC) and Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD). The COP included MWB from around the State. Our collaboration and efforts gained the interest of yet another entity, the Department of Defense (DOD). They saw how MassHire could assist them with their ploy to guide and change the manufacturing curriculum for community colleges and vocational schools throughout MA. They had another need, a need to assist them with marketing manufacturing and building a pipeline of technicians for their 16 Institutes.⁸ We automatically became

⁸ <https://www.manufacturingusa.com/>

eligible for a grant through the DOD with many other entities. The MWB is the fiscal agent for this three-year grant totaling \$742,096.

The objective of this initiative is to develop and test a well-connected, state-based training and career pathway model for technicians that meet the talent needs of the Manufacturing USA Institutes and that can be deployed nation-wide. Multiple studies and surveys, as well as virtually every manufacturer in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, confirm that there is a shortage of skilled manufacturing workers. Deloitte predicts that millions of such jobs will be available over the next 10 years across the country.⁹ This represents a major opportunity for new students as well as adult learners to upskill their capabilities and their economic prospects, but also a serious challenge for manufacturers who particularly need technicians with the skills required for the next generation of advanced manufacturing processes and factory environments. In particular, it is not clear that the US is training and producing sufficient technicians who will have the skills required to operate and maintain the advanced equipment that will realize the promise of the Manufacturing USA Institutes.¹⁰

This effort will analyze the nature of this challenge and design and develop a curriculum bridge that spans the observed gaps between the Commonwealth's current, state-wide advanced manufacturing programs and the needs of the Manufacturing USA Institutes. The curriculum will be deployed through vocational programs, high schools, community colleges, and supporting universities, with specific connectivity that pulls students to careers in Manufacturing USA technologies. The existing state-wide advanced manufacturing strategic plan identifies branding and marketing of manufacturing as one of the most important and common challenges to the success of existing training programs. Therefore, this model will also integrate a re-branding, re-naming, marketing and recruiting campaign for advanced manufacturing careers, taking advantage of the natural appeal of the Manufacturing USA vision and technologies to prospective trainees. The deliverable is a state-wide integrated program, developed in three phases from prototyping to state-wide deployment, that will provide a stackable pathway from our existing training to Manufacturing USA and that can be duplicated as a national model. The MassBridge/DoD grant funds filter through the DoD-sponsored manufacturing innovation institute called Advanced Functional Fabrics of America (AFFOA) the only institute located right here in Cambridge, MA through MTC to us.

In the next 3-5 years, this grant will inevitably change the curriculum of Vocational and Higher Educational facilities thereby advancing manufacturing programs in areas such as digital production, robotics, additive manufacturing, flexible electronics, photonics, sensor and systems, and bio-fabrication.

As of FY22, further continued funding for this grant is pending.

⁹ <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/energy-and-resources/articles/manufacturing-industry-outlook.html>

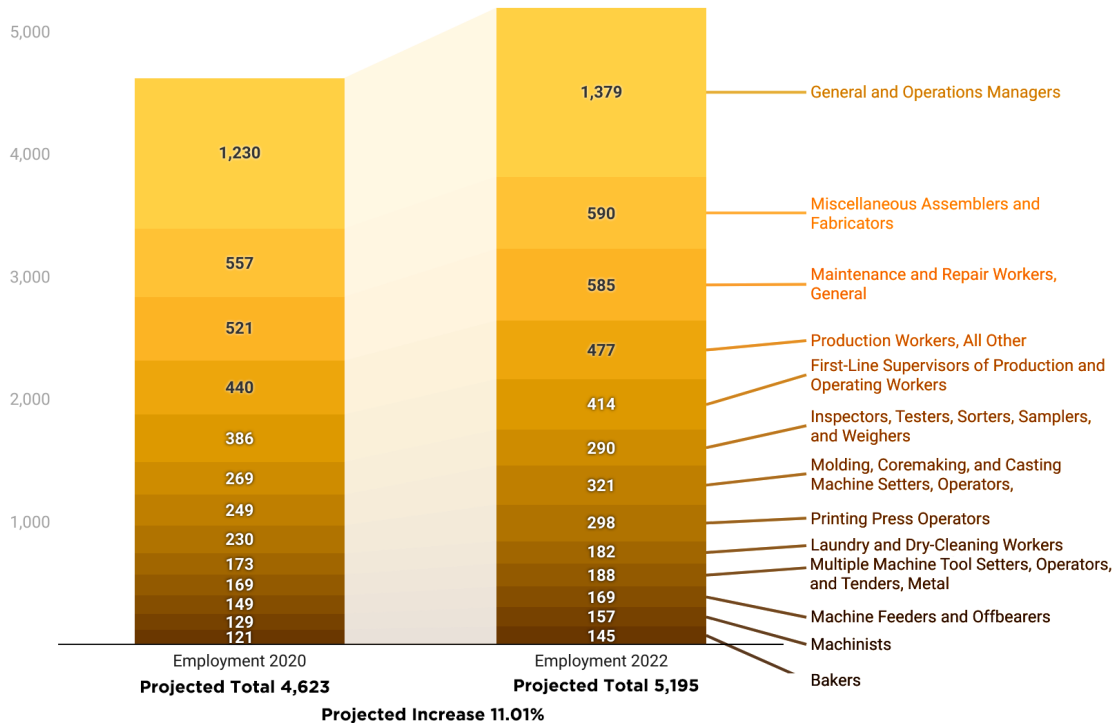
¹⁰ <https://www.manufacturingusa.com/institutes>

Manufacturing Sector	Business Types	Key Regional Employers
Precision Parts	Number of establishments. Precision Machining is a subcategory of manufacturing, a component industry of fabricated metals and a stand-alone industry under NAICS 333327: Aerospace, Defense, Medical, Automotive; Custom Work; Doctor Blades (printing); Industrial Material Handling Systems	Accuounds, Potentia Holdings LLC; North Easton Machine Company; Evans Machine Co; Bendon Gear; Tech Etch; Depuy Synthes Companies; Flexco Concepts; Lockheed Martin, Five Star Companies, Tegra Medical, Raytheon, General Dynamics, GE, Precix, Atkore International, Maplewood Machine, Johnson & Johnson, Belcan, Teufelberger Fiber Rope Corp, Randolph Engineering,, HTP Comfort Solutions LLC; Symmons Industries, Inc; Poyant, Blount Fine Foods, Morgan Advanced Materials.
Welding	NAICS 333992 - Welding and Soldering Equipment Manufacturing - This industry comprises establishments primarily engaged in manufacturing welding and soldering equipment and accessories (except transformers), such as arc, resistance, gas, plasma, laser, electron beam, and ultrasonic welding equipment; welding electrodes; coated or cored welding wire; and soldering equipment	Horacio's, Inc; MA Automation Corporation; SenCorp, Inc; Bobby T's Machine, Davico, Epec Engineered Technologies, Reliable Truss, Dartmouth Building Supply, Edge Tech, Flexco Concepts, Ever Source, ITPI Composites. Whaling City Iron, Marine Hydraulics,
Ship/Boat Building	NAICS Code 336611 - Ship Building and Repairing is a final level code of the Manufacturing Sector. There are 381 companies classified in this industry in the USA with an estimated employment of 104,760 people.	Gladding-Hearn Shipbuilding/Duclos Corp; Cape Cod Shipbuilding Co, Brownell Boat, East Coast Fabrications, New Bedford Ship Supply, Ocean Marine Fabricating, TMH Machining & Welding, Concordia Company, Davis & Tripp, West Marine, Jose Matos Marine Repair, South Shore Boatworks, Bethlehem Steel Company, Son's Marine and Industrial, American Overseas Marine Corp, Avalon Bay Shipyard LLC, Cape Cod Shipbuilding, LWS Inc., Antonio Macedo, Triad Boatworks, Teufelberger Fiber Rope Corp.
Appliances	NAICS 335220- Major Household Appliance Manufacturing -This industry comprises establishments primarily engaged in manufacturing household-type cooking appliances, household-type laundry equipment, household-type refrigerators, upright and chest freezers, and other electrical and nonelectrical major household-type appliances, hot water heaters, garbage disposal units and sewing machines	Whirlpool Corporation; Merrow Sewing Machine Company, Stan & Paul's, Nate Lions, Advance Air and Heat Co, Cape Cod's Barbecue Grill, Fireplace & Patio Superstore, HTP Comfort Solutions LLC, The O'Keefe Group LLC, Advanced Compactors, LLC.

The charts below highlight manufacturing short term occupational projections.

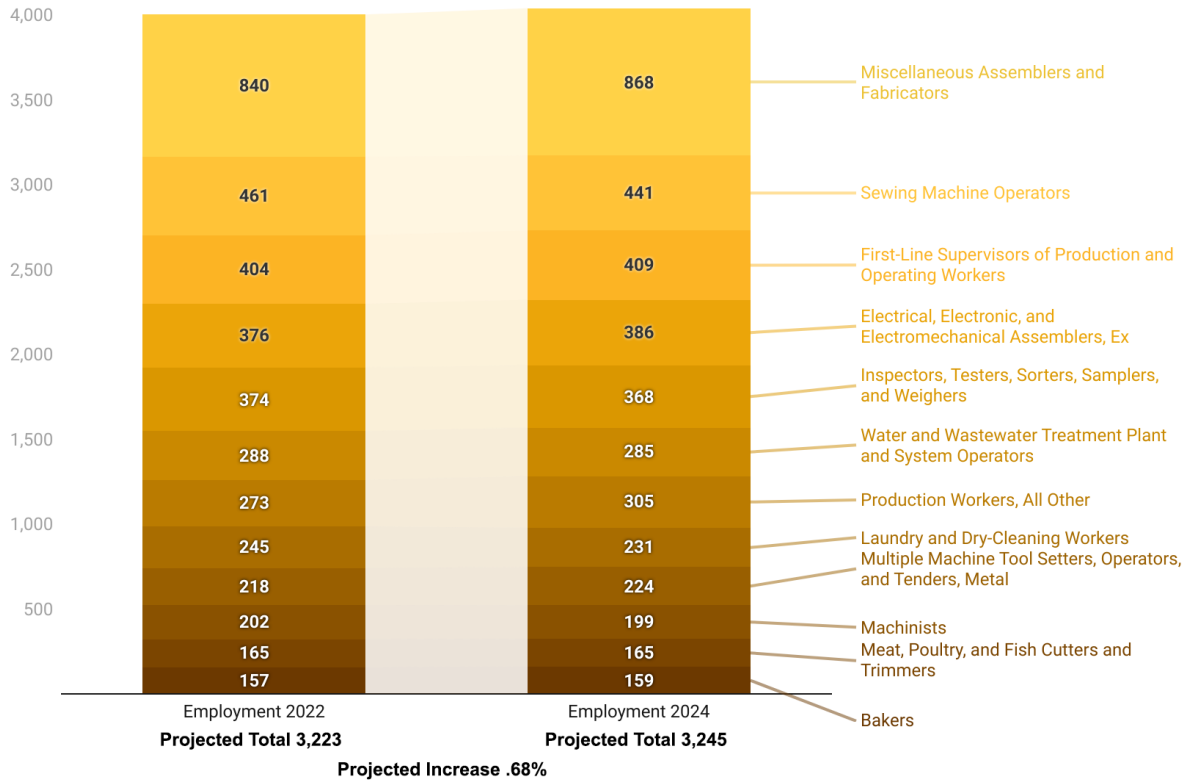
Manufacturing Short Term Occupational Projections

MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Development area
2020 Q2 to 2022 Q2 Most Job Openings (SOC Codes) Massachusetts Department of Unemployment



Manufacturing Short Term Occupational Projections

MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Development area
 2022 to 2024 Most Job Openings (SOC Codes) Massachusetts Department of Unemployment



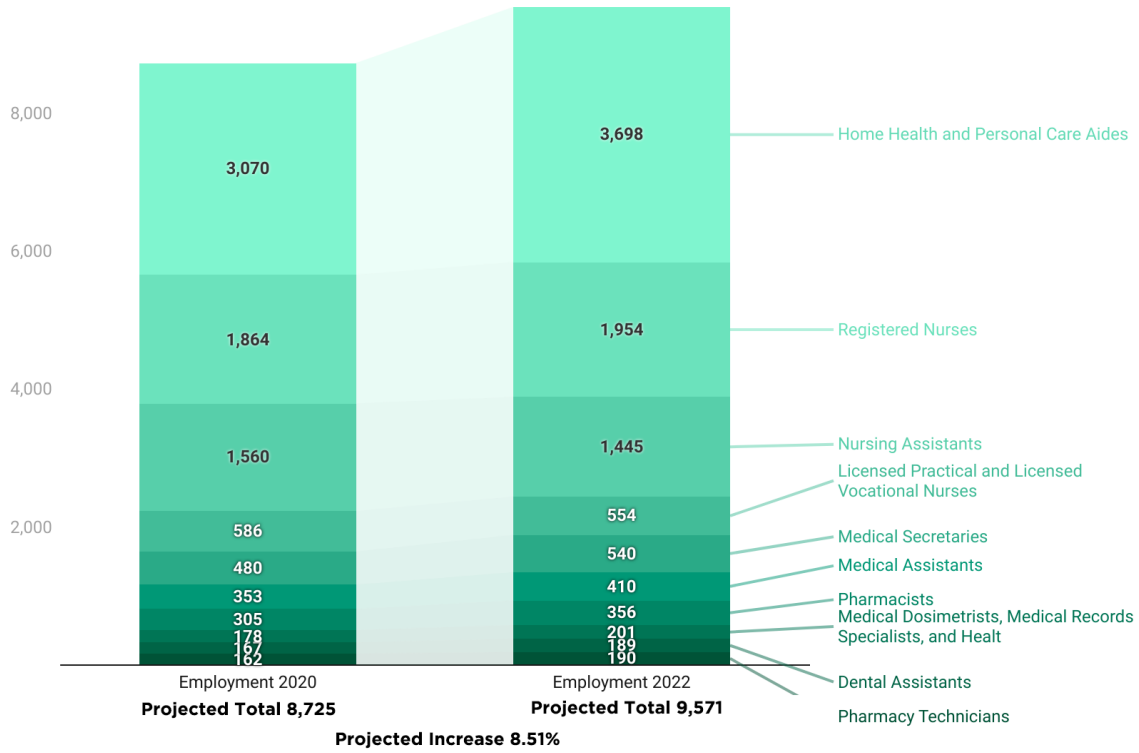
Healthcare

Healthcare remains easy to predict and to show via analysis reports due to many variables. For example, the change in our demographics and the aging population living longer, as well as advanced technology in medical equipment/detection that sends the patient home or to recovering organizations, increases the need for Home Health Aids and Certified Nursing Assistants. Healthcare organizations and manufacturers alike must become far more creative and offer competitive pay to keep positions filled and employees happy.

An initial review of projected occupational growth in each of the four southeastern workforce development areas reveals a concentration of health care occupations among the fastest growing jobs. This includes occupations at the both the entry level as well as advanced levels. The following charts represent the health care short-term occupational projections. Higher level industry trends clearly translate to the occupational level in this industry sector.

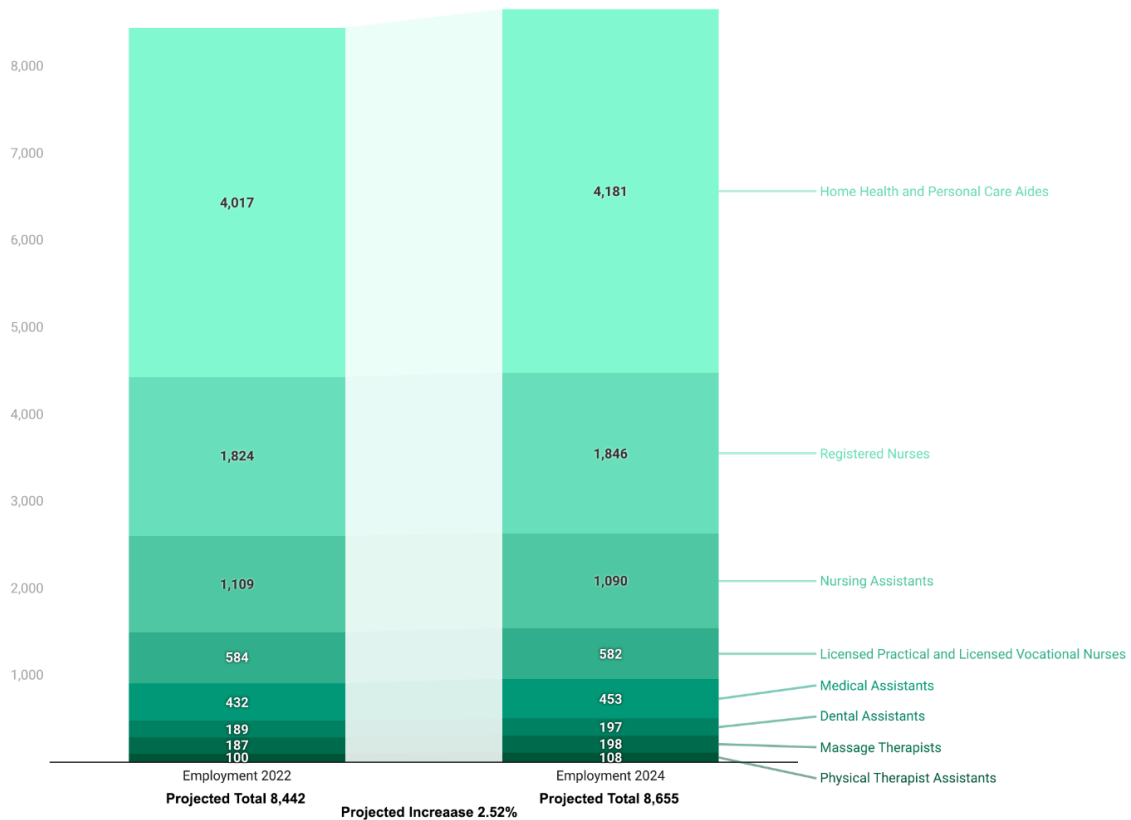
Health Care Short Term Occupational Projections

MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Development area
2020 Q2 to 2022 Q2 Most Job Openings (SOC Codes) Massachusetts Department of Unemployment



Healthcare Short Term Occupational Projections

MassHire Southeast Region 6 Workforce Development area
2022 Q2 to 2024 Q2 Most Job Openings (SOC Codes) Massachusetts Department of Unemployment



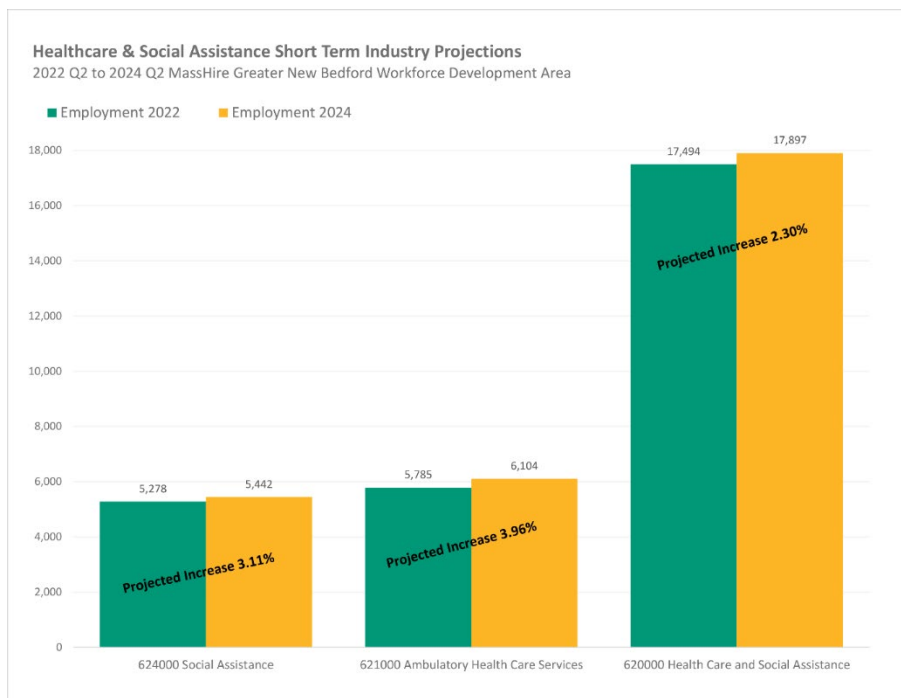
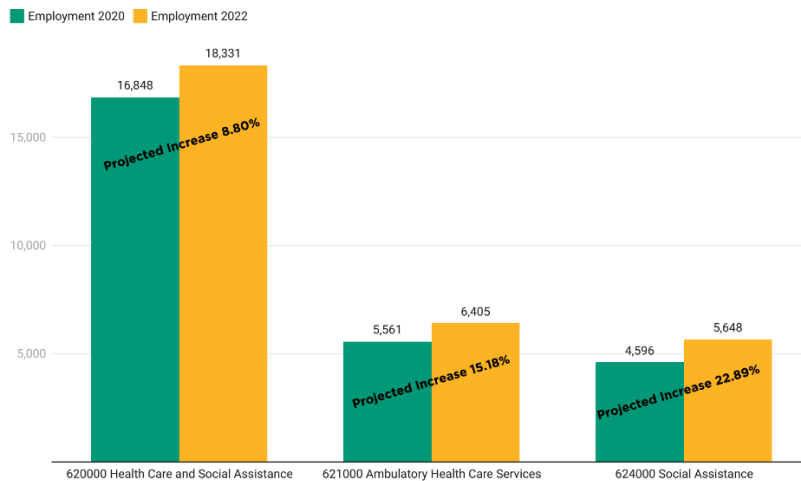
As noted in the above charts, trends demonstrate that the Healthcare industry faces significant workforce development challenges. From a labor force standpoint, multiple important occupations within this industry face supply gaps resulting in labor shortages.

In terms of career development, the industry is marked by strong career pathway opportunities with accessible entry points. We have strong employer engagement within the healthcare industry evidenced by our sector partnerships within the region and the workforce development system as a whole. The struggle in developing a talent pipeline for this industry is affected by limited training and education capacity in the region for certain occupations. For example, there is only one Associates Degree program in Radiologic Technology in the southeast region and the limited number of slots in Registered Nurse degree programs impacted by lack of teaching capacity. These challenges are occurring against the backdrop of ongoing changes in the healthcare industry accompanied by increased demand for services, forcing providers to move toward redesigned primary care models and away from acute hospital utilization.

In comparison, expected social assistance projections are also noted below.

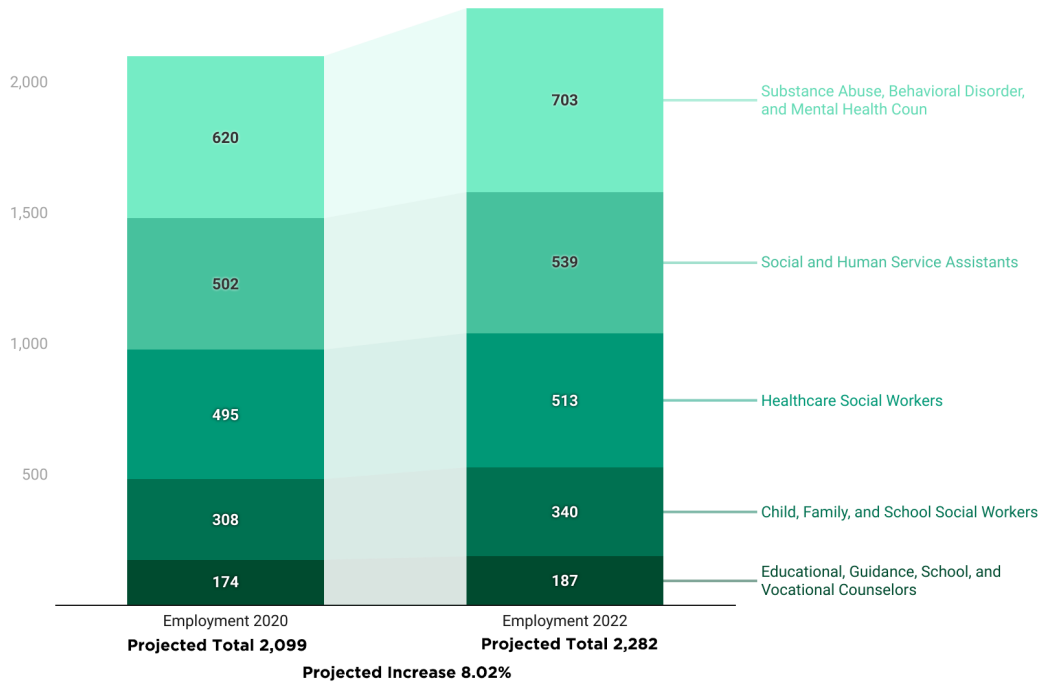
Healthcare & Social Assistance Short Term Industry Projections

2020 Q2 to 2022 Q2 MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Development Area



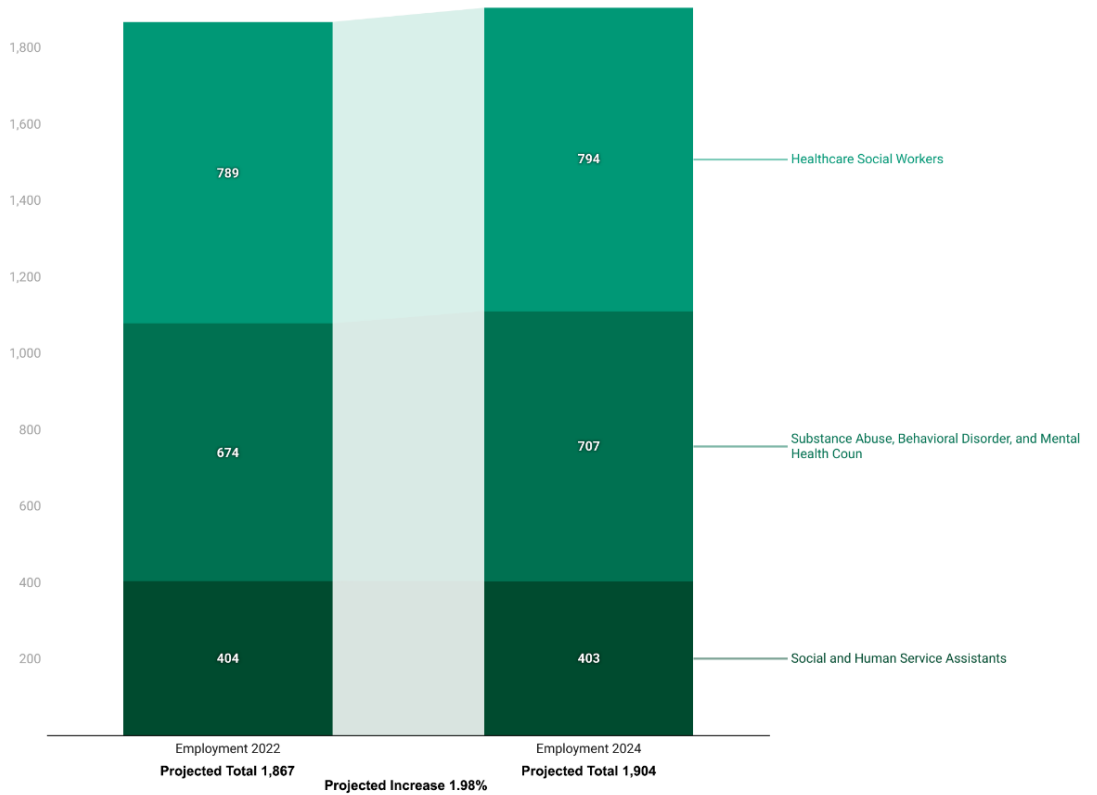
Social Assistance Short Term Occupational Projections

MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Development area
2020 Q2 to 2022 Q2 Most Job Openings (SOC Codes) Massachusetts Department of Unemployment



Social Assistance Short Term Occupational Projections

MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Development area
2022 Q2 to 2024 Q2 Most Job Openings (SOC Codes) Massachusetts Department of Unemployment



Education

In FY23, MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board identified an additional local community need for access to education career pathways. As a result, MWB to develop a trained para-professional educator workforce for the New Bedford and Fairhaven Public Schools that will add 45 new employees to the respective districts. Both districts experienced workforce attrition incidence as a result of the recent pandemic. Compounding the issue is the lack of training for these positions. Thus, it is unlikely that candidates are coming to the schools highly qualified or with the skills and understanding of the job. As a result, there tends to be high turnover in positions that work with the schools' most vulnerable population. MassHire and the school districts have aligned themselves with Lesley University to deliver core training for certification as a para-professional educator. Augmenting the training, Living Become, LLC is delivering a comprehensive Social, Emotional Learning component to better assist the Para-trainees understand the impact of personal lives in the learning environment.

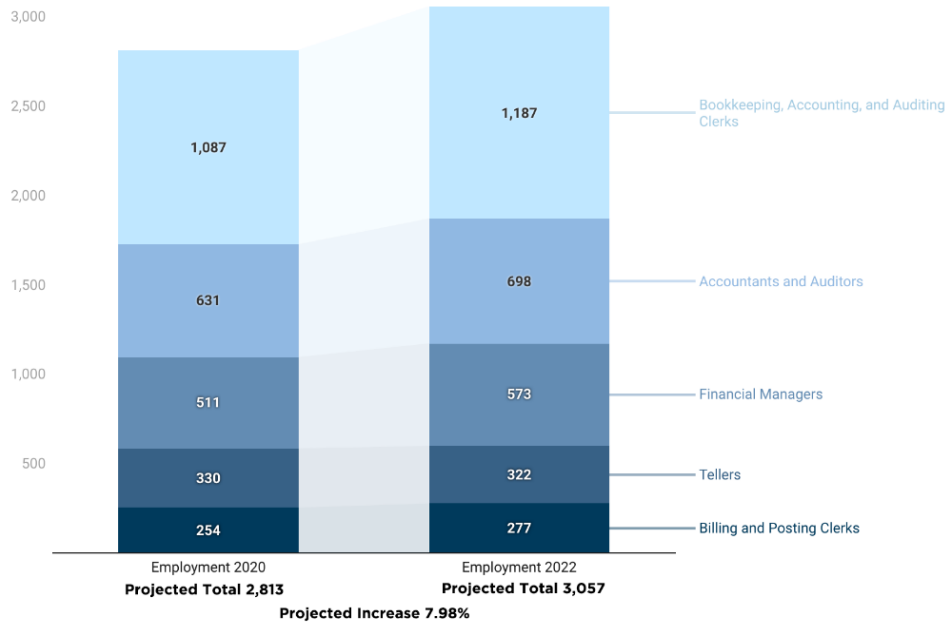
This proposal also advocates for select incumbent workers to participate in three Lesley University Special Education college courses intended not only to provide an additional knowledge base related to their work with an increase in pay, but also to motivate them to pursue an educational degree. Twelve Individuals pursuing this track will be assigned a Journey into Education and Teaching representative to assist candidates with mentoring and advice to navigate Department of Education free tuition programs to pursue a teaching degree. The first step to developing an educator career pathway for the unemployed and underrepresented in many cases is to work as a para-professional. This initiative is going to provide comprehensive mentoring and guidance that is intended to improve retention and develop a lifelong learning interest to access higher education aspirations. In effect, if successful, we will be growing our own teachers (particularly in the Special Education field) for the future. Assuming its success as a pilot project, we intend to share our experience with our State Workforce Partners for further expansion of the initiative to train and place para-professionals in classrooms throughout the region.

Financial Services

Customer Service Representatives and Tellers are common entry points into the Financial Service Industry with opportunities to secure positions with wages significantly higher than regional median wage. Historically within our region, Presidents of financial institutions began their career in the industry as a teller. This represents a four-star occupation that provides an entry-level access point to career ladders that extends beyond banking but also among nearly every industry that includes insurance representatives, financial advisors, and back office support. It represents the highest number of projected jobs (both short and long term) of any four-star occupation in the southeast (10,222 positions in 2017), is among the occupations with the largest number of active job orders in the southeast, and is also ranked as the fourth highest occupation by indexed employer demand (Sub-BA). Regional employers have identified the need to recruit individuals with strong customer service skills. The financial services industry includes a large number of programs in general Business Management and Marketing degree and certificate offerings in the region. In addition, there are bachelor's degree programs in Financial Management including one with a banking career concentration. Moreover, the MWB Youth Team has developed a Year-Round Youth Works program that includes access to training in the banking field. Youth enrolled in the training with the American Bankers Association have the potential to earn a Bank Teller certification.

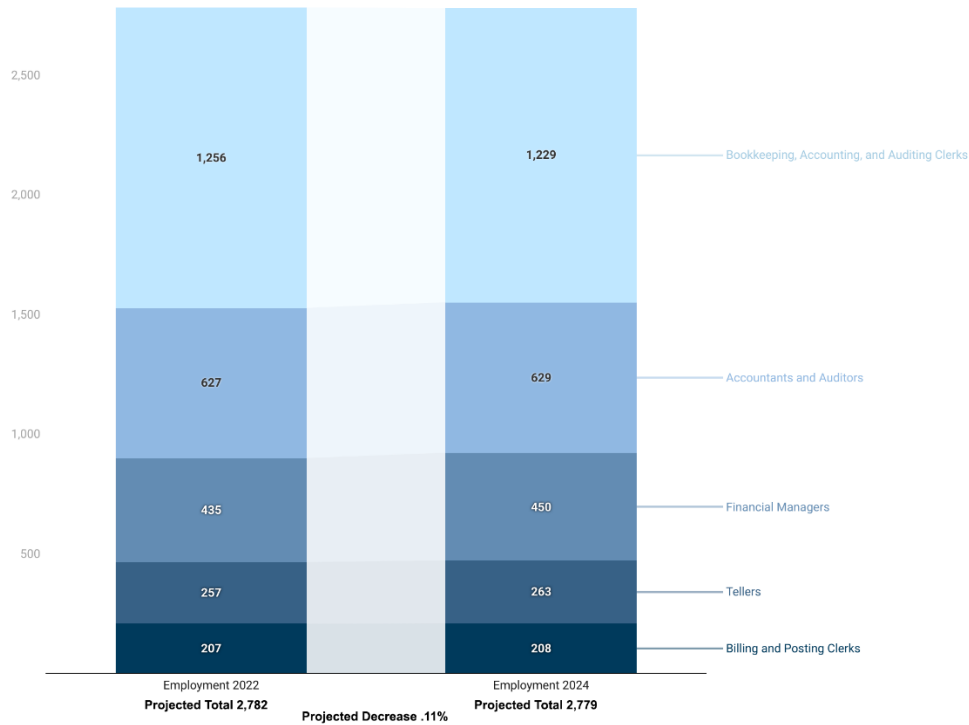
Finance Short Term Occupational Projections

MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Development area
2020 Q2 to 2022 Q2 Most Job Openings (SOC Codes) Massachusetts Department of Unemployment



Finance Short Term Occupational Projections

MassHire Southeast Region 6 Workforce Development area
2022 Q2 to 2024 Q2 Most Job Openings (SOC Codes) Massachusetts Department of Unemployment



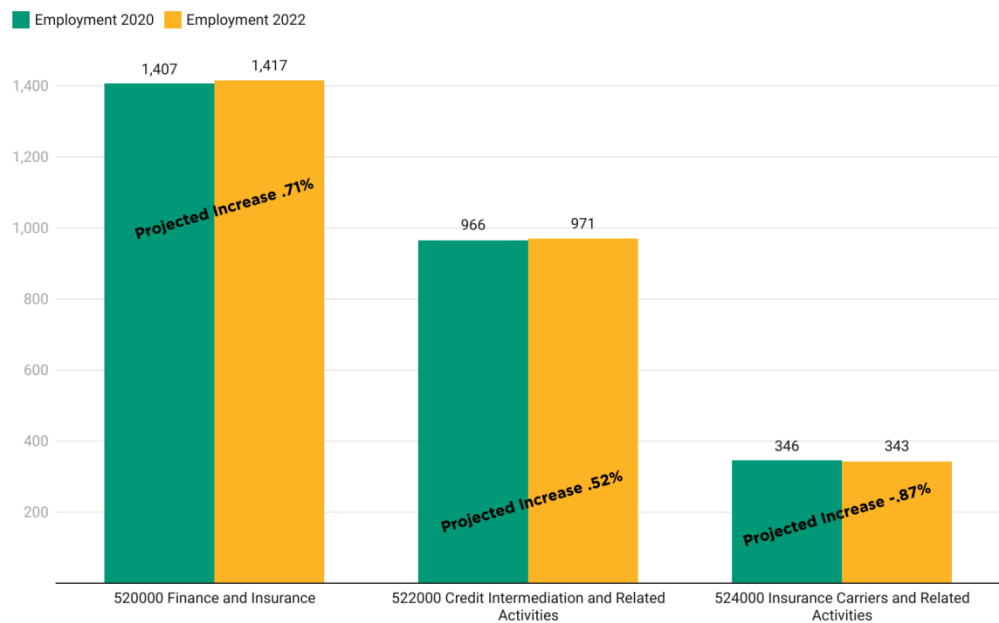
Based on the above charts, the financial services sector is an industry that in recent years has faced dramatic changes in its operations-- and it appears that such trends will continue. Technology has been integrated into consumers' lives at a rapid pace. This has had significant residual effects in the financial service industry with demand for services growing but fewer people visiting banks. Online portals and self-service kiosks are examples of technologies that have streamlined services and changed the face of the labor force. Still, the industry shows steady employment growth and importantly, significant wage growth (12.45% from 2013-2016). On a talent development level, financial institutions often used the entry level teller position as the most common access point to career ladder progression, but this has lessened as the industry has adopted a "Universal Banker" model. Representing many skill sets required by a Customer Service Representative, the Universal Banker provides customer service across a wide range of traditional financial services such as basic transactions, new accounts, and loan applications.

A significant challenge to the industry is that these, and similarly situated positions, require significant cross-training. In addition, there is a lack of training and education programs in the region that are specific to entry level positions in financial services. Feedback from local employers reveals customer

service, problem solving, work readiness skills, interpersonal skills, teamwork, financial literacy and writing skills as core competencies to succeed in the industry. Additional workforce challenges articulated by local employers include difficulty in identifying and recruiting a more diverse and multi-lingual workforce, challenges in attracting younger workers into the industry who often do not see the available career pathways, and the desire to "home grow" employees. Leaders in the industry have investigated several strategies to address some of these issues including an effort to establish apprenticeships in the region through such mechanisms as internships. Clearly, these initial efforts would benefit from additional supports in the region as the region's financial services sector has not been as systemically connected to the skills cabinet divisions as some other industries.

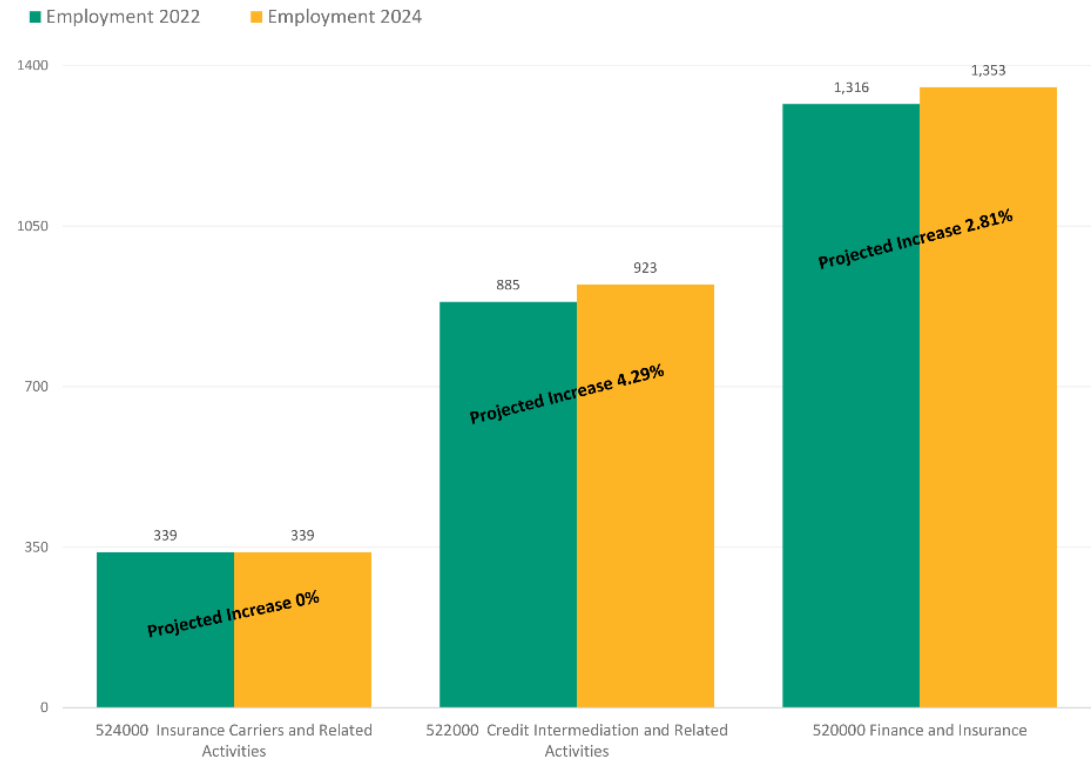
Finance & Insurance Short Term Industry Projections

2020 Q2 to 2022 Q2 MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Development Area



Finance & Insurance Short Term Industry Projections

2022 Q2 to 2024 Q2 MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Development Area

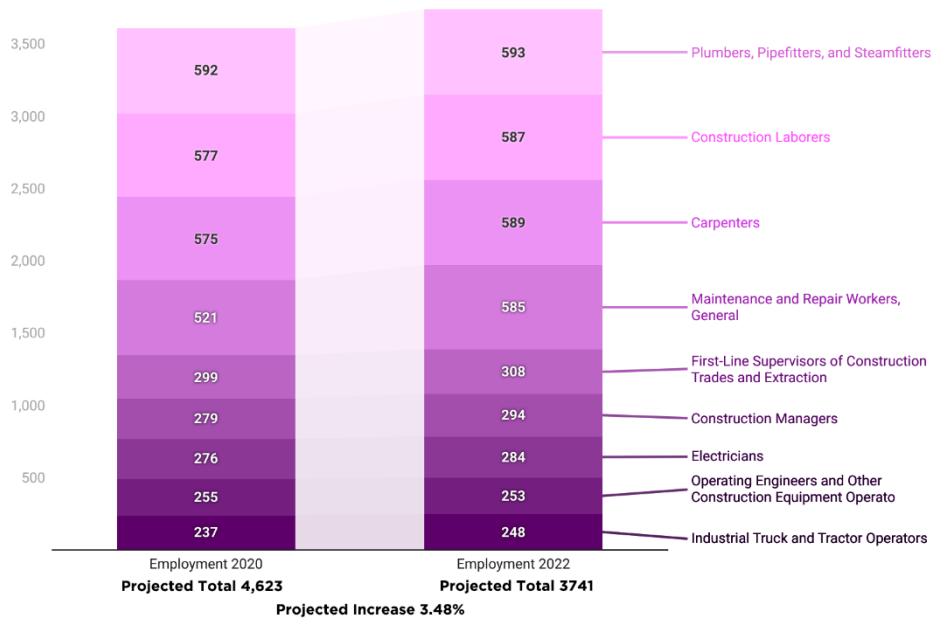


Construction

Although construction is not a priority industry, it is vital to the growth of our region. Hence, we chose to include construction numbers in the plan as this is an industry that has grown and continues to grow considerably, not to mention the impact these occupations will have on our offshore wind and marine sectors.

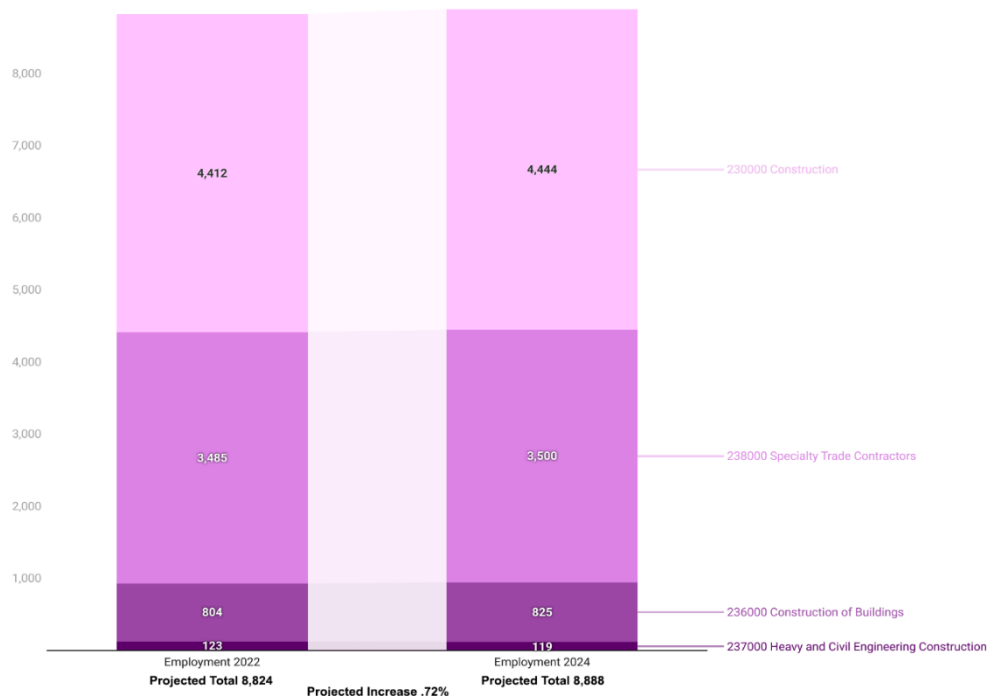
Construction Short Term Occupational Projections (Copy)

MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Development area
2020 Q2 to 2022 Q2 Most Job Openings (SOC Codes) Massachusetts Department of Unemployment



Construction Short Term Occupational Projections

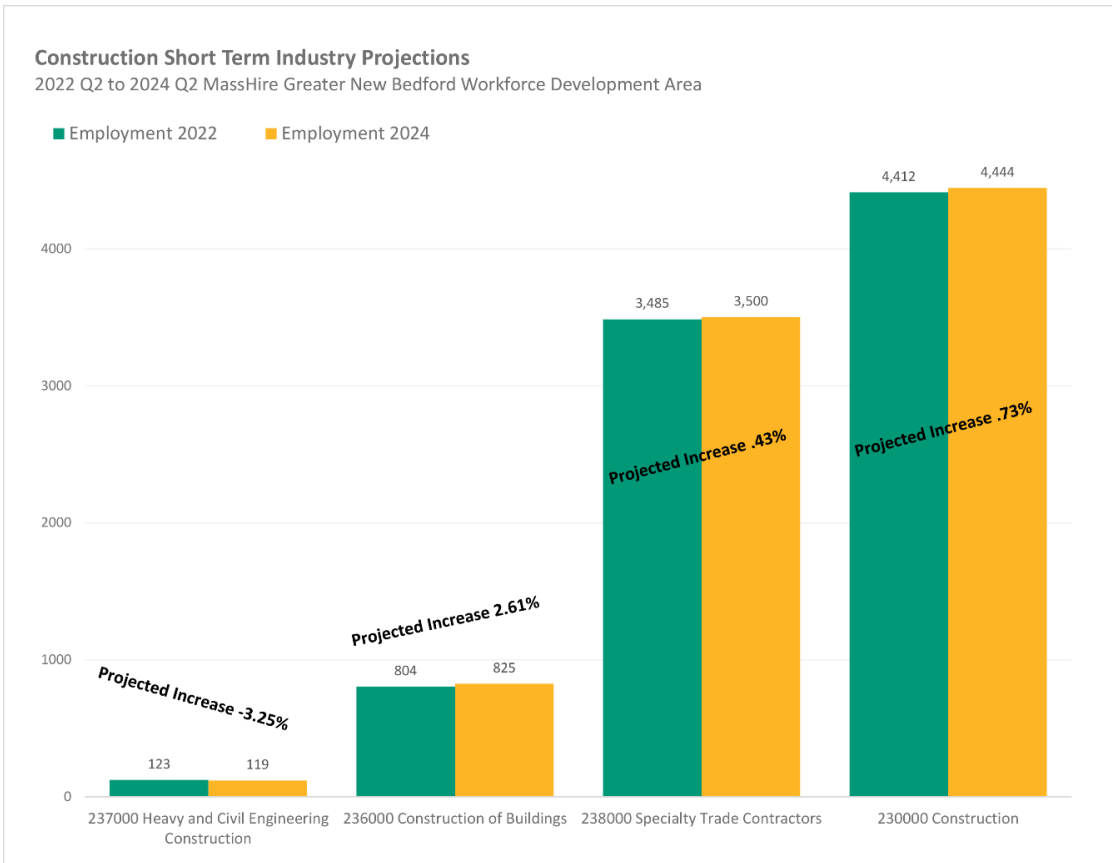
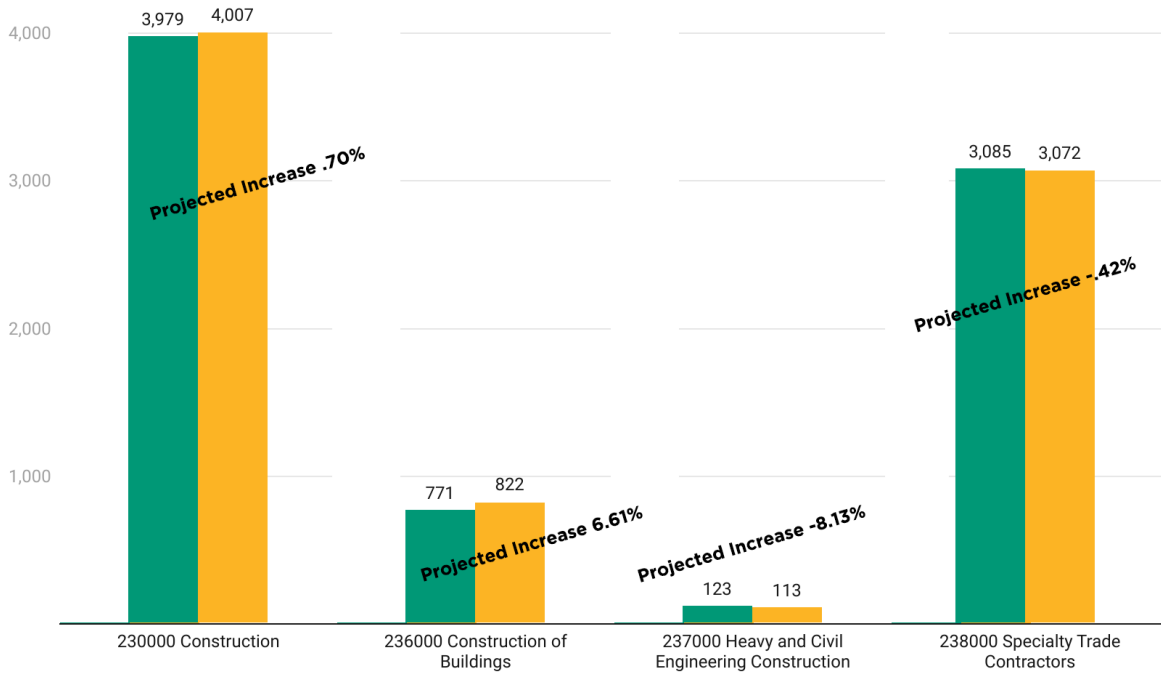
MassHire Southeast Region 6 Workforce development area
2022 Q2 to 2024 Q2 Most Job Openings (SOC Codes) Massachusetts Department of Unemployment



Construction Short Term Industry Projections

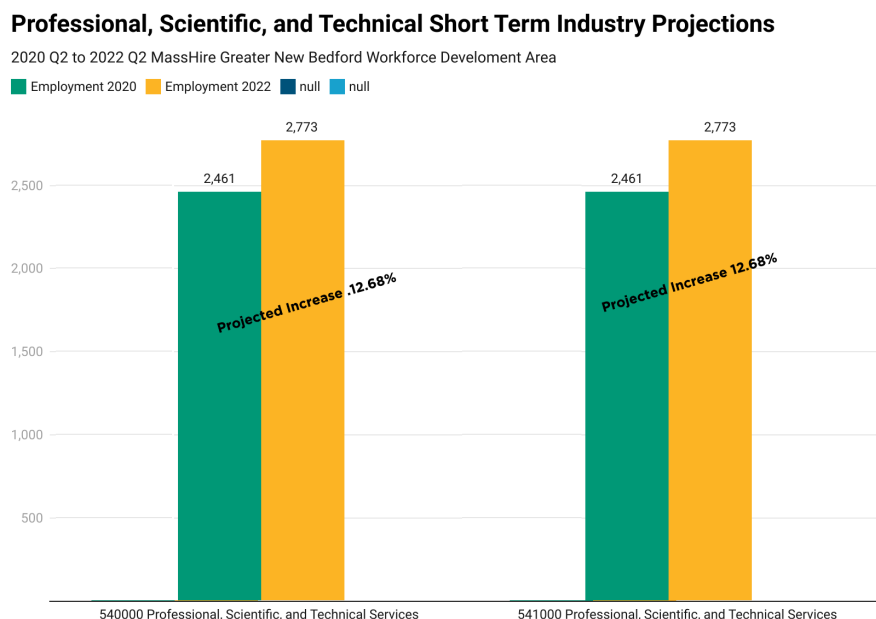
2020 Q2 to 2022 Q2 MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Development Area

■ Employment 2020 ■ Employment 2022 ■ null ■ null



Professional and Technical Services

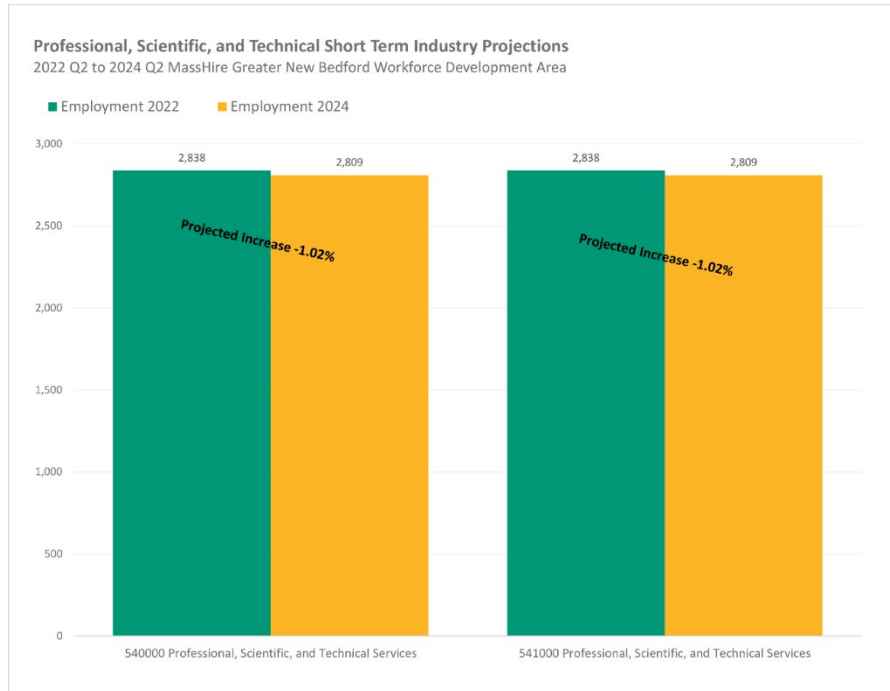
As seen in the data below, from 2020 -2022, the Professional and Technical Services sector has seen a 12.68% increase in the employment. The occupations within this industry are among the highest average weekly wages within the region (\$1,505 per week).



It is evident that these occupations cut across industry sectors with shortages having a ripple effect among many area employers in different fields. Multiple degree programs exist in professional and technical services particularly in computer/IT concentrations, including bachelor's degree programs in Computer Science and Information Technology. Associates Degrees and certificate programs include Computer Networking, Computer Technology, Computer Science, Web/Mobile Developer and Computer Network Technician.

The industry also aligns with regional priorities such as STEM initiatives occurring among education and workforce development partners. Professional and Technical Services offers a range of high-level services and with few exceptions employers within this sector engage in activities that require high levels of expertise, advanced training and degree attainment. Moreover, wages in this industry have increased 8.67% over the same period, representing the fourth highest average weekly wage in the southeastern region. The industry also has the third highest number of establishments in the region (3,748). In addition, many of the occupations within this sector, particularly in computer/IT occupations cut across multiple industry clusters. In most of these cases, the jobs are high demand (4 and 5 Demand STARS) rating and show strong projected growth. Examples include Computer Systems Analysts (16.4% projected long term growth) and Computer User Support Specialist (11.1% projected long term growth). It is also significant to note that attracting interest within this sector is a regional economic development priority supported by both the workforce development and education sectors.

We experience an ongoing struggle within this industry to develop a talent pipeline and retain skilled workers. As noted above, labor supply gaps are evident in multiple targeted occupations within this industry. Part of this results from the rapid changes in technology that result in shifting and new skill sets necessary for workers to perform their jobs. However, it also evident that previously cited demographic data around educational attainment within the region reveals a challenge in identifying job seekers who require the skills to the highest demand positions. This also poses a challenge for training and degree programs in the area to change based on industry skill set requirements. We are slowly, but surely, finding a decrease of -1.02% in current and future employment projections in this industry as seen on the applicable chart below.



Current and past level industry trends affecting workforce need

A number of additional industry concerns (transportation, regulation, energy costs) are not easily addressed by our partnership. Transportation is a significant issue that has resulted in the decline of the labor pool for employers due to job seekers being unable to access employment and training throughout the southeast region. As a result, employers have shown a willingness to work with partners to identify creative solutions to address transportation issues. Additionally, the expansion of the commuter rail in the southeast region offers the opportunity to increase access to education, training and employment opportunities.

Investing in the training and development of entry-level employees, particularly with small businesses, can be challenging due to limited resources, time issues, and lack of knowledge regarding assistance available through workforce development, education and economic development entities. Those results included greater collaboration among employers, Vocational

High Schools and Workforce Boards to establish baseline training needs aforementioned in this section.

Our workforce and professional lives change constantly, and we can all attest to that having lived through the pandemic. We were pushed into new technology usage at all levels, technology that would suit our staff, job seekers and employers. These are some trends that we need to expand upon and explore more closely in order to move forward smoothly and effectively.

a. Learn & develop

We need to adopt a culture of learning in order to increase employee's productivity and agility. Corporate learning has risen to be one of the top trends in the current workforce. Changes in business environments require constant development and retraining. In addition, we must continue to provide development opportunities to staff to assist us with increasing employee retention and satisfaction. One of the most important factors for employees is professional development. In a study by Gallup, 87%¹¹ of millennials reported that developing in a job is important for them.

b. Diversity

We have all attended many webcasts and heard much about diversity-- and there is a reason for it. Diversity has been on a rapid rise in the past years since workforce boards have recognized its need and value. A diverse workforce leads to increased productivity, improved creativity, and more positive image. We still have a long road ahead to ensure we are not only sensitive but purposeful to restructure throughout MassHire. However, diversity does not include only cultural differences. The percentage of employees over 65 years old is on a steady rise, and many companies have turned this into an advantage. Mentoring programs help to increase understanding between generations, resulting in more diverse workplaces. As of FY23, the MWB has designated a Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) facing staff member. This member facilitates networking and collaborative efforts with diversity related organizations in the area such as YWCA Southeastern Mass, BuyBlackNB, the Communal Space & the Greater New Bedford Youth Alliance.

c. Technological advancements

We live in a golden age of technology and need to continue to enabling distance learning. COVID-19 kicked distance learning into high gear, but that leap wouldn't have been possible without the growth and development of distance learning technology over the past few years. It all starts with adoption – 77% of US companies used online learning in 2017¹², a number that has been trending consistently upward for years. Education institutions have been leading the charge to establish distance learning for over two decades. As of FY21, half of all college students reported taking an online class in the prior 12 months. This statistic has only increased as this trend continues.

¹¹ <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236438/millennials-jobs-development-opportunities.aspx>

¹² <https://www.strategyr.com/market-report-e-learning-forecasts-global-industry-analysts-inc.asp>

In consideration of technological advancements, we have made recent increased efforts to enhance job seeker skills to be able to adapt better and use technology to their benefit. In November 2022, the MWB utilized Connecting Activities (CA) funding to purchase three (3) virtual reality (VR) headsets. Interplay Learning is a workforce skills simulation training organization that provides software with a hybrid of written curriculum and virtual stimulations exposing users to career pathway opportunities in nine (9) high demand industry careers within with the region's LMI.

The MWB received three VR headsets from South Coast Wind in January 2023. SouthCoast Wind is on the forefront of developing an offshore wind lease area off the coast of Massachusetts that will generate over 2,400 megawatts—enough to power over a million homes and businesses. The VR headsets from South Coast Wind will feature VinciVR software. VinciVR allows users to engage in interactive virtual simulations designed specifically for the exploration of the Offshore Wind industry and the career pathway opportunities Offshore Wind has to offer.

The MWB uses VR headsets to engage youth in twelve partnering schools and communities within the service delivery area by:

- Offering access to innovative hands-on career exploration, trainings, and curriculum in ten different high demand industries within the LMI
- Featuring VR headsets in MWB booths at youth job/career fairs capturing youth by the masses.
- Providing more opportunities to engage underserved youth and introduce them to career pathways and sustainable job opportunities
- Exposing youth to non-traditional gender career opportunities
- Providing employers with motivated workers who have a basic understanding of the industry and skills needed to fill gaps in the workforce
- Overcoming barriers faced when providing youth career exploration opportunities
 - Transportation
 - Lack of physical equipment and/or training space
 - Shortage of instructors and training facilitators

d. The human element

As technology advances, the role of human interaction becomes more important. One of the current workforce trends is soft skills. Leadership, communication skills, and emotional intelligence help foster human connections. Companies value these skills because they contribute to workplace satisfaction and overall productivity.

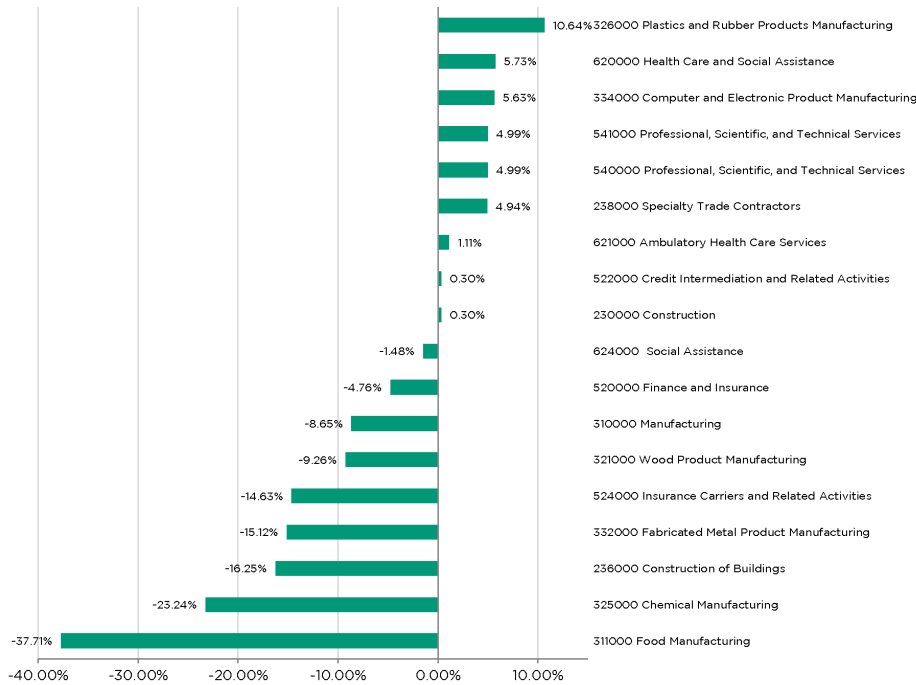
A trend related to soft skills is employee relations. In other words, this means how employees interact with each other. Employees perform better when they work with people they are comfortable with. Likewise, bad relationships or conflicts decrease productivity. By contributing to employee relations through open communication and encouraging cooperation you foster a healthy work environment. Our current workforce trends reflect the changes in our world. Nowadays, diversity is valued more than before, and technology advances more rapidly than ever. Increased use of technology allows us to refocus our efforts to creativity, judgment, and human connections.

The following two charts demonstrate the long-term occupations and industry projections for our Regional Blue Prints through 2028.



Long Term Industry Projections 2018 - 2028

Regional Blueprint Priority Industries



Employment needs of emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations

While the plan calls for emerging sectors and occupations, what we are about to embark on is no longer emerging-- it is here. The Maritime and Offshore Wind sectors are flourishing.

The maritime services combined with other cargo activity, seafood processors, and marinas in the New Bedford/Fairhaven Harbor support 36,578 jobs direct, induced, indirect and related jobs within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 2020. This is expected to grow with the Off-Shore Wind industry as well, with the new ship building location of East Coast Fabrication near Pope's Island in New Bedford. Of the 36,578 jobs, 6,225 direct jobs are generated by seafood activity, marine cargo and marinas, of which, 95% reside in Bristol County. The fishing and seafood industry at the Port of New Bedford creates 5,635 jobs, while the cargo, maritime services and marina activity creates an additional 590 jobs. Jobs related to activity in the New Bedford Harbor accounted for 23,739 jobs. These jobs include downstream logistics operations that are part of the seafood processing, such as warehousing and distribution, as well as sales to wholesalers and restaurants.

Of the 36,578 jobs held by Massachusetts residents that are supported by seaport activity in the New Bedford Harbor in 2020, 1,228 jobs are generated by maritime services, ferry operations, ship repair, cargo operations, and marina activity in the Harbor. Of the 36,578 jobs held by Massachusetts residents that are supported by seaport activity in the New Bedford Harbor in 2020, 1,228 jobs are generated by maritime services, ferry operations, ship repair, cargo operations, and marina activity in the Harbor. Of these 1,228 jobs, 590 direct jobs are generated by this activity and as a result of local purchases made by these 590 direct jobs, an additional 341 induced jobs are generated in the local economy. \$32.1 million of

local purchases by firms providing services to these Harbor activities supported an additional 297 indirect jobs.

Careers in the marine industry include a variety of sub-sectors including scientific and technical services, recreation, hospitality, transportation and logistics, professional and technical services, and food services. Major job categories in the southeast include cargo transportation, vessel operations, SCUBA diving, and Cargo Marine Transportation. Some occupations involve in arranging for overland and water transportation for export or import freight through the seaport. The freight forwarder/customhouse broker is the major participant in this category and arranges for the freight to be delivered between the Port of New Bedford and inland destinations, as well as the ocean transportation. This function performed by freight forwarders is most prevalent for general cargo commodities. For bulk cargo, arrangements are often made by the shipper/receiver.

Vessel Operations - This category consists of several participants. The steamship agents provide a number of services for the vessel as soon as it enters the New Bedford/Fairhaven Harbor, including arranging for pilot services and towing and for ship supplies. The agents are also responsible for vessel documentation. In addition to the steamship agents arranging for vessel services, those providing the services include:

- Pilots - assist vessels navigating to and from the Port of New Bedford terminals
- Chandlers - supply the vessels with ship supplies (food, clothing, nautical equipment, etc.)
- Towing firms - provide tug assist service to vessels docking and undocking at a terminal
- Bunkering firms - provide fuel to the vessels
- Marine surveyors - inspect the vessels and the cargo
- Shipyards/marine construction firms - provide repairs, either emergency or scheduled, and marine pier construction and dredging.
- Cargo Handling involves the physical handling of cargo at the Port of New Bedford between land and the vessel. Included in this category are:
 - Longshoremen - are members of the International Longshoremen's Association, involved in the loading and unloading of cargo from the vessels, as well as handling the cargo prior to loading and after unloading
 - Stevedoring firms –manage longshoremen and cargo-handling activities
 - Terminal operators - are often stevedoring firms who operate the maritime terminals where cargo is loaded and off-loaded
 - SCUBA divers - Career options - there are different types of working divers, each demanding different skills and competencies. These include:
 - Offshore Diving in support of the offshore oil and gas industries. Usually it is contract based.
 - Inland / inshore diving, for example, in support of civil engineering or marine-related projects and fish farming.
 - Scientific and Archaeological Diving in support of scientific research and education, and archaeological investigation of sites of historic interest.
 - Media Diving in support of film or TV productions which require divers to work as stunt performers, journalists, presenters, photographers, camera operators, sound and lighting technicians, and unit crews.
 - Recreational Diving involving the instruction and guiding of recreational divers.

- Police and Armed Forces. These divers are specialists who are chosen from personnel already in the service.

The Government Agencies maritime service sector category involves federal, state and local government agencies that perform services related to cargo handling and vessel operations at the Port of New Bedford. These include U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and U.S. Coast Guard.

Marinas and Ferry Boat Operations - includes those employed by the seven recreational marinas located in the Harbor which moored approximately 570 recreational boats in 2015. This also includes employees involved with the ferries located in the Harbor that travel to Cuttyhunk Island, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket as well as a water taxi that also sails to Cuttyhunk.

Port of New Bedford - this sector includes those individuals employed by the New Bedford Harbor Development Commission to oversee port activity.

Federal agencies charged with regulating offshore and maritime workplace safety have yet to develop specific guidelines for the OSW industry. Outside of the development of new regulations, the U.S. Coast Guard, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and BOEM have guidelines in place for worker safety at sea, in construction, and in long-shoring, which all apply to OSW. Fortunately, the major developers and manufacturers involved in the Massachusetts OSW industry have experience in industry developed safety standards through their European connections, such as the Global Wind Organization (GWO) and BZEE (Bildungszentrum für Erneuerbare Energien).

Over the next three years (2020 – 2023), Greater New Bedford will be the regional hub as the launch site for an 800 Mega Watt Off-Shore Wind (OSW) Farm construction project south of Martha's Vineyard Island. OSW is a sub-industry in marine and maritime. This is the first project of its magnitude in the United States with an additional 800 MW to be awarded in the upcoming year. The contract between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and Vineyard Wind will employ a myriad of workers. Construction activity related to the deployment of 1,600 MW of OSW is estimated to create between 2,279 and 3,171 direct job-years. In total, construction activities are estimated to support between 6,878 and 9,852 job-years, which includes direct, indirect (supply chain), and induced impacts as cited in a recent Massachusetts Clean Energy Corporation report.

The Business Network for Offshore Wind (Network) is the only 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization exclusively devoted to developing the U.S. OSW industry and supply chain. As a result, the Network is uniquely positioned to speak with one leading voice for the U.S. OSW business community. Massachusetts was the first U.S. state to procure a utility-scale OSW project (Vineyard Wind), followed by Rhode Island's own utility-scale OSW procurement of 400 MW from Revolution Wind.

By 2023, there will be 660 new job years associated with the Vineyard Wind Project. The Workforce Board has been actively involved in planning and understanding its role to participate in developing pipeline opportunities for residents in its region. Because of the long-term implications of new contract awards over the next twenty years, the Board's strategy includes orienting in-school youth and adult job seekers to the types of jobs available in the upcoming years and skill sets/education required to participate in the industry. Orientation to the industry will be imbedded in all the regional high schools, Connecting

Activity programs, and at the MassHire Greater New Bedford Career Center introductory orientations. Throughout, we will be the hub of information to direct potential job seekers to Bristol Community College, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Northeast Maritime Academy and UMass – Dartmouth to pursue career path education which meets OSW employment criteria.

In response to the emerging industry off the Massachusetts coast, Bristol Community College National Offshore Wind Institute (NOWI) will advance workforce development initiatives that are demonstrably relevant to career pathways that accelerate the establishment of a national offshore wind industry in the United States. Bristol Community College National Offshore Wind Institute will support the training and educational needs of the emerging offshore wind industry. Bristol Community College has partnered with Maersk Training, headquartered in Denmark, to bring these European competencies and requirements to the United States. Maersk Training has 40 years of experience in training around the onshore and offshore wind industries, and, significantly, developed the first training center in the world to be accredited by GWO.

The National Offshore Wind Institute will implement educational and training strategies that will support the next generation workforce and supply chain for the offshore wind industry. The Board will be able to work with employers and students interested in the trainings being offered at NOWI. Interested participations could benefit from On the Job Trainings or apprenticeships with employers that are supply chain based including ship builders and port operators.

New Bedford Foss Terminal

By the end of the 2023 calendar year the Port of New Bedford will add another base of operations and terminal logistics facility to support offshore wind projects located off Massachusetts and along the northeastern seaboard.

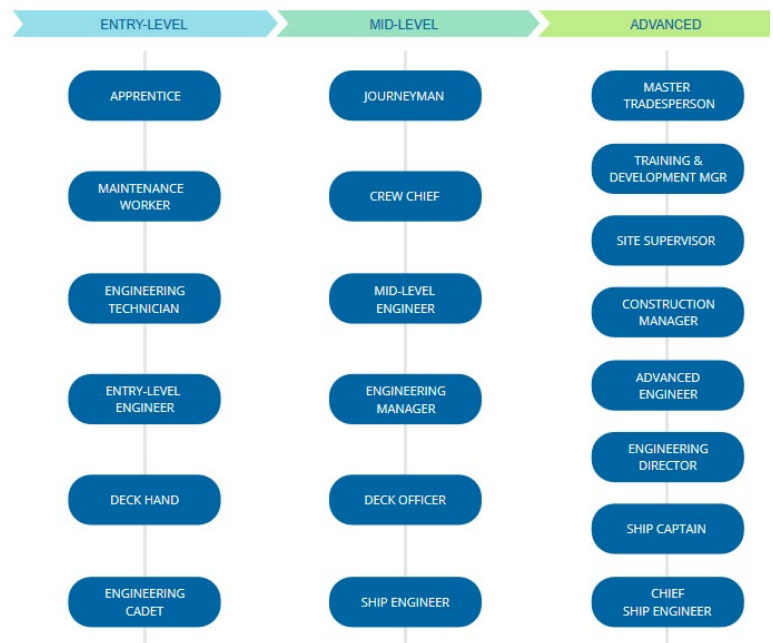
The New Bedford Foss Marine Terminal, will provide storage and laydown yards for equipment and materials, berth facilities for tug and barge operations, and host crew transfer vessel (CTV) and service operation vessel (SOV) support services. It will create new office space for project teams and a marine coordination center for technicians involved in offshore wind projects. Foss is partnering with local investors and owners of the New Bedford's Cannon Street Holdings LLC (CSH) to develop the 30-acre site. The New Bedford Foss Marine Terminal is a privately-owned facility that will provide additional support to the existing maritime terminal operated by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, which built the first U.S. offshore wind port in the City of New Bedford.



New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal

The Terminal is a multi-purpose facility designed to support the construction, assembly, and deployment of offshore wind projects, as well as handle bulk, break-bulk, container shipping and large specialty marine cargo. The first of its kind in North America, the terminal has been engineered to sustain mobile crane and storage loads that rival the highest load-bearing ports in the nation.

We see jobs being in the operations and maintenance (O&M) phase for an offshore wind farm covers the regular inspection of turbines, foundations, cables, and other all components of the wind farm, and the process of making necessary repairs or replacements. Offshore wind service technicians, water transportation workers, and engineers, among others, fill key roles during the O&M phase.



Offshore Wind will involve training on several different levels depending on the phase of the project such as:

Back Deck & Below the Water

- Back Deck Workers
- Cable Laying/Installing – also requires deep underwater divers
- Commercial Divers
- Foundations/Jackets/Transition Piece
- Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) Operations
- Health & Safety

Above-the-Water

- Turbine Installation Technicians
- Turbine Operations & Maintenance Technicians

Offshore Marine Safety

- Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET)
- Turbine Transfer Vessel
- Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping (STCW)
- Firefighting
- When we reference how the Maritime and Offshore Wind Industries are linked, these training show the significance of what this means.
- Vessel crew training and certification – STCW
- Vessel to Turbine Transfer; space to install dockside transition piece on campus to train
- Safe transfer training from vessels and ladders to platforms
- Training for all in rescue of person in water
- Confined space rescue, rescue from heights and depth in same unit.
- Partnering with Gardline

The occupations listed above are plotted out within the three phases of offshore wind through 2030. We are challenged to predict how many of these jobs will be needed locally to satisfy growth initiatives off of Nantucket sound, an offshore wind development of over 120 wind turbines. Still in order to be proactive, we must start the process of growing a labor force that has changed very quickly and one where most of our experienced labor force has already left the workforce arena taking their experience and knowledge with them. The other challenge is that the schools and universities are just beginning to change, create and offer curriculum that will help to grow the pipeline of workers needed for both growing and emerging industries of Maritime Marine and Offshore Wind.

The development of 1,600 MWs of offshore wind energy will kick-start a new and emerging industry in our region. Over 3,600 local full-time equivalent jobs are expected over the life of the project starting with in-state construction in 2019.

Trade workers play a significant role during the construction of the wind farm, including electricians, steel workers, pile drivers, crane operators, painters, longshoremen, machine operators, commercial divers, construction laborers, and others. These skilled workers will play a central role in the construction, assembly, and deployment of offshore wind projects. As much assembly as possible is performed

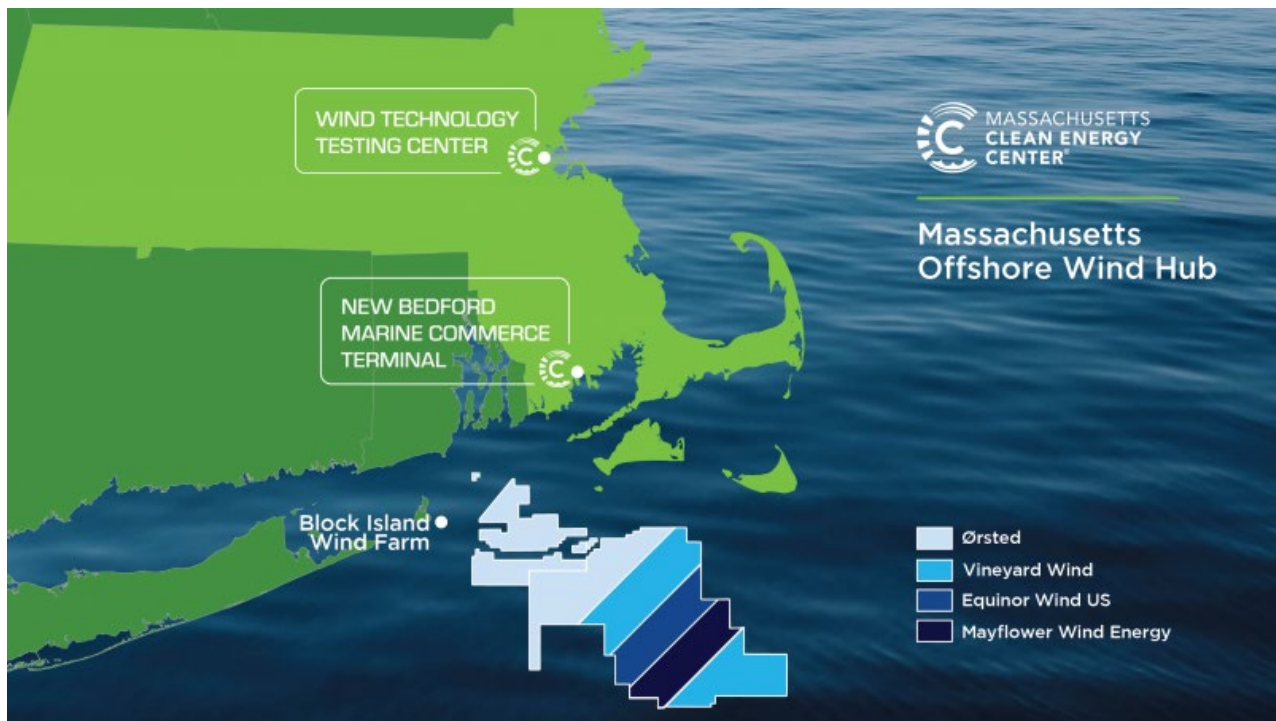
onshore, but some trade workers perform their duties offshore as part of the final installation and commissioning of the wind farm.

OSW developers active in the Massachusetts market will also require that we provide health and safety training for onshore and offshore construction workers and maintenance technicians.

Consequently, investing in health and safety training programs and facilities will be essential to enabling a local workforce to participate in and benefit from the development of an OSW industry in Massachusetts.

To date, local efforts are increasing through grants provided by Massachusetts Clean Energy Commission to Bristol Community College, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, University of Massachusetts – Amherst and Cape Cod Community College. Each of these institutions is developing specific foci in areas aligned with the Global Wind Organization (GWO) safety standards, Wind Energy Technician, and Underwater Installation standards.

We collaborate with a variety of workforce partners to identify employment needs of the region’s employer base, and respond proactively to those needs. To ensure training is available, staff continuously works with the Eligible Training Provider System (ETPS) providers to keep the training list relevant. If training for a particular occupation is not available in the region, the Board works to identify training providers and encourage them to become certified through ETPS i.e. machine technology/advanced manufacturing, marine trades& technology basic certification, MIG welding.



Aviation

Aviation is also an emerging and local critical priority industry due in part to the presence of a large transportation network on the South Coast and the presence of the regional airport for commercial and individual planes. The key career pathway is for the Aviation maintenance technicians who perform maintenance work, service, repair and overhaul airframes, power plants, and avionics and aircraft instruments. Aviation mechanics frequently are also pilots, which is another key career pathway needed for the area. There is a rising global demand for air travel is creating a shortage of airline pilots. More than 550,000 new airline pilots will be needed by 2034, according to industry projections. Due to the presence of the airport, the transportation hub, and schools, such as Bridgewater State University's airplane pilot school, there is a shortage and need for these two career pathways. Also emerging is unmanned aeronautical vehicles (UAV) such as drones for both transportation and commercial and scientific applications. The workforce board is actively partnering with employers and local educational institutions at the secondary and post-secondary level to develop frameworks and career pathways to solve business needs for qualified employees in aviation pathways. The Board has supported Greater New Bedford Vocational Technical High School (GNBVTHS) in the development of Chapter 74 aviation curriculum in partnership with Bridgewater State University and Greater New Bedford Regional Airport. GNBVTHS is the only education facility in New England preparing students to meet aviation pipeline training needs as a tracked curriculum.

In June of 2022, Mayor Mitchell and State Representative Straus hosted a visit to the New Bedford Regional Airport for Secretary Tesler. Secretary Tesler was briefed by Airport Commission members and staff on the project background and design options for a new airport terminal. The New Bedford Regional Airport was built in the 1950's and the current terminal building is the oldest commercial airport terminal in New England still in active use.

In October of 2022, the City of New Bedford was notified by MassDOT that they will be funding and authorizing the City of New Bedford and the Airport Commission to proceed with full design and engineering of the Airport Terminal Building, as MassDOT will incorporate the project into the next Commonwealth's five-year Capital Improvement Plan. The commitment from the state means the city's airport commission can begin immediate design and permitting to bring the replacement facility to a bid-ready level of completion while funding for the project's completion is included in the state's five-year Capital Improvement Plan. As a result of this funding authorization by the state, completed designs and permits can be expected by mid-2023.

The new regional airport will help meet the transportation needs of the community, while also continuing to be a part of the regional economic blueprint, which will include the ability to expand the offering of commercial air services. New Bedford Regional Airport is responsible for \$32.4 million worth of economic output for the region. Additionally, the airport is responsible for 297 jobs within the city and region with a total payroll of \$10.1 million. The jobs and payroll number include temporary and part time employment as well as full time positions at the airport.

Opioid Crisis Support

Additionally, identified as an occupational demand since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic is the need for recovery support. As a result, the MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS) and the MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board (MWB) as the lead entity, teamed up to apply for a Department of Labor grant in 2020. We were awarded the two-year grant in September of 2020. The purpose of the Opioid Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant is to address economic and workforce impacts related to widespread opioid use, addiction, and overdose. Grant funds would be used to provide temporary employment opportunities aimed at alleviating humanitarian and other needs created by the opioid crisis, as well as employment and training services to minimize the employment and economic impact of declared disasters and emergency situations. Funds would also be used to provide services that enable participants affected by the opioid crisis to reintegrate into the workforce and to train individuals to work in mental health treatment, addiction treatment, and pain management throughout greater New Bedford.

Furthermore, the opioid Disaster Recovery DWG project was meant to accomplish the following:

- Facilitate community partnerships that are central to dealing with this complex public health crisis.
- Provide training that builds the skilled workforce in professions that could impact the causes and treatment of the opioid crisis: addiction treatment, mental health, and pain management.
- Ensure the timely delivery of appropriate, necessary career, training, and support activities to dislocated workers (including displaced homemakers), individuals temporarily or permanently laid off due to the opioid crisis, long-term unemployed individuals, and self-employed individuals who are unemployed or significantly underemployed as a result of the opioid public health emergency; including individuals in populations who have been impacted by opioid use, to promote successful reemployment.
- Create paid temporary employments that addresses the unique impacts of the opioid crisis in affected communities.

Eligible participants had to meet WIOA Title I criteria and be one of the following: a dislocated worker; temporary or permanently laid off as a result of the opioid disaster; long-term unemployed; or self-employed individual who became unemployed or significantly underemployed as a result of the Opioid Disaster. Eligible participants for opioid-crisis Disaster Recovery DWGs were not required to have a history of opioid abuse or otherwise be personally affected by the opioid crisis to participate in grant-funded employment, activities, and services. Answering yes to a self-attestation question to either themselves or family members having been impacted by the crisis would start the eligibility process for a participant. The Opioid NDWG award was conditionally approved for up to \$2,368,337, with an initial award of \$800,000. The period of performance for that NDWG was July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2023. The MWB submitted a modification that would award them the remaining dollars to continue with training and employment of participants for another year through to June 30, 2024. This modification is still in pending mode. To date there have been 168 referrals to the program with 100 enrollments.

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

To meet employer needs for specific skills and knowledge from their employees, the workforce board:

- Performs real time analyses of the economic conditions in the region to learn the needed knowledge and skills of the region, learn about the workforce of its region, and workforce development activities it needs including education and training described in WIOA §108(b)(1)(D), and regularly updates such information;
- Continues to assist the Governor in developing the statewide workforce and labor market information system described in §15(e) of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 491-2(e)), specifically in the collection, analysis, and utilization of workforce and labor market information for the region;
- Conducts other research, data collection, surveys and analysis related to the workforce needs of the regional economy after receiving input from a wide array of stake-holders and then determines training necessary to carry out these functions;
- Conducts continued analysis on new industries such as offshore wind and marine trades where growth within the next 3-5 years will heavily impact employment in the Southeast Region.

Past employer feed-back indicates a convergence of common industry skill factors that contribute to the staffing challenges employers are facing when hiring and retaining qualified labor. Employers need job seekers to have soft skills, critical thinking skills, and ability to keep composure in the workplace (leave personal at home). Other common employer required and needed skill examples include:

- Job seekers need experience with the Microsoft suite.
- Many employers require job seekers to have good driving records, valid driver license, and able to pass a CORI.
- Employers need job seekers to have financial literacy and able to pass a financial background check.
- Job seekers should have good customer service skills and know how to work in teams.

Employers also felt there was a generational gap. Youth that are more oriented to technology and but not working in teams using critical thinking skills. Employers feel that the younger generation has:

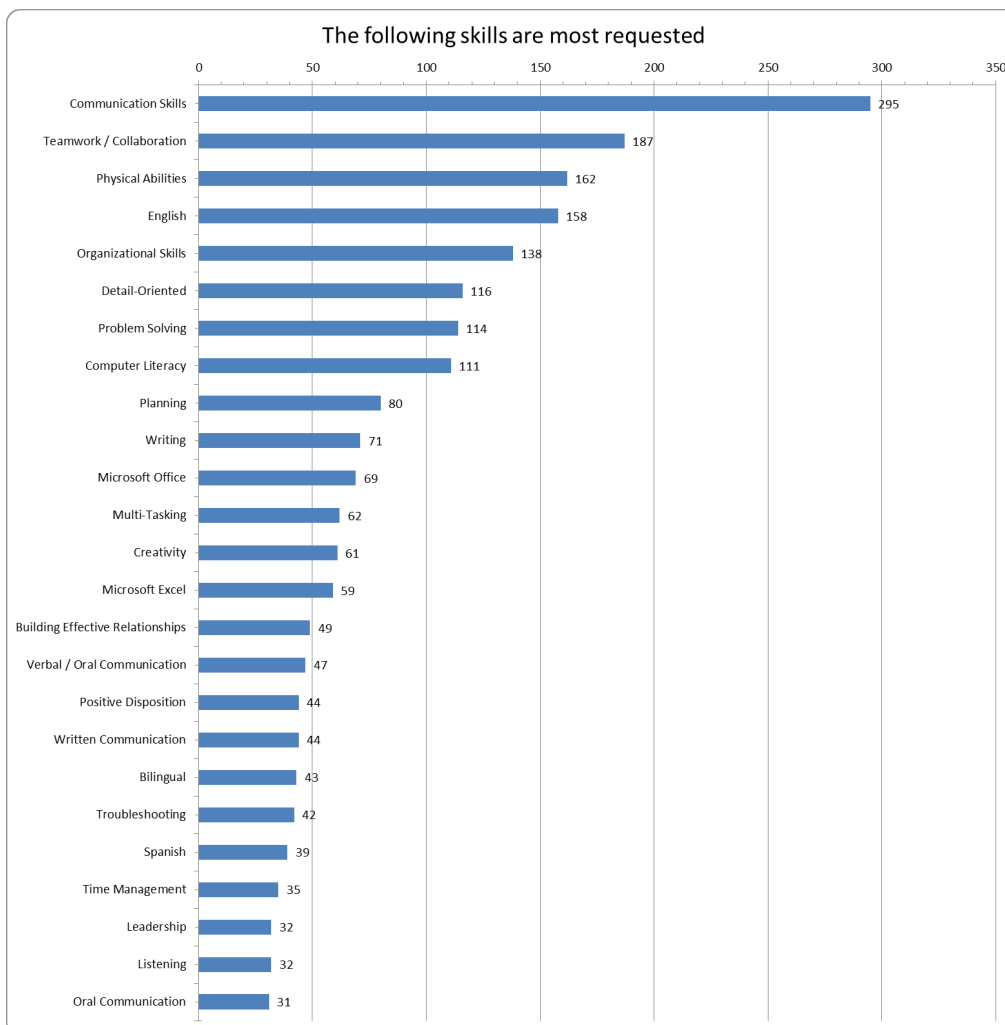
- poor conflict resolution skills
- poor communication and writing skills
- poor social skills
- some don't know how to write or read language written in cursive
- need skills on how to handle stress in the workplace

The following chart details skills employers need job applicants to possess. When we develop training plans from grants awarded to us, we make conscious decisions to also include as essential skill training components as the funding allows.

- Century in Demand Job Skills

21 st CENTURY IN-DEMAND SKILLS *Indicates Industry Specific Skills			
ENTRY LEVEL			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Skills (Oral and Written) • Ability to Take Direction • Work Ethic • Customer Service • Drug Free • Clean Driving History* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem Solving • Attention to Quality, Safety, and Precision* • Basic Computer Aptitude • Punctuality and Reliability • Integrity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension • Teamwork • Troubleshooting* • Understanding of Basic Functions of Equipment or Tools* • Adaptability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned Coordination and Project Management* • Math Skills* • Professionalism • Operating Machine Controls*
MID-LEVEL/TECHNICIAN			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant work experience • Certifications • Culture Fit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership Skills • Advanced Technical Skills* • Independent/Self-Starter • Supervisory Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Communication Skills • Professionalism/Customer Service • Project Management* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troubleshooting* • Research* Capabilities • Decision Making Skills and Courage
MANAGEMENT /ADVANCED LEVEL			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Experience • Advanced Certifications • Long-Term Vision/Planning • Negotiation Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Management and Mastery of the Process (Proposal, Development, Execution, Completion, Evaluation/Feedback) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Problem Solving • Collaboration/Teamwork • Ability to Work With Diverse Workforce • Business/Financial Acumen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service • Commitment to Culture • Self-Development • Failure Analysis

According to Burning Glass Technologies (known now as Lightcast), out of 1,594 postings in March of 2021 the skills below were the most requested in the cities and towns of our service delivery area.



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

The following charts are a representation of the number of people in the labor force in our workforce development area for the past four years pre and post COVID, the number of people employed, the unemployment rate for MA verses our area and the number of unemployed.

Year	Month	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Area Unemployed Rate	Massachusetts Unemployed Rate
2023	January	115,192	108,479	6,713	5.8%	4.1%
2023	February	115,252	108,121	7,131	6.2%	4.2%
2023	March	113,754	107,464	6,290	5.5%	3.9%
2022	January	114,797	107,160	7,637	6.7%	4.6%
2022	February	115,179	107,733	7,446	6.4%	4.3%
2022	March	115,179	108,713	6,466	5.6%	3.9%
2022	April	114,009	108,838	5,171	4.5%	3.5%
2022	May	114,675	109,487	5,188	4.5%	3.6%
2022	June	117,663	112,014	5,649	4.8%	3.9%
2022	July	117,817	112,017	5,800	4.9%	3.9%
2022	August	117,248	111,403	5,845	4.9%	3.9%
2022	September	114,461	109,251	5,210	4.6%	3.5%
2022	October	113,976	109,049	4,927	4.3%	3.4%
2022	November	113,765	108,743	5,022	4.4%	3.3%
2022	December	113,565	108,353	5,212	4.6%	3.3%
2021	January	114,749	104,017	10,732	9.3%	7.7%
2021	February	114,374	104,092	10,282	9.0%	7.2%
2021	March	114,473	105,025	9,448	8.3%	6.7%
2021	April	115,222	107,033	8,189	7.1%	6.0%
2021	May	115,710	108,106	7,604	6.5%	5.7%
2021	June	118,182	109,801	8,381	7.1%	6.1%
2021	July	118,551	110,518	8,033	6.8%	5.7%
2021	August	117,307	109,944	7,363	6.2%	5.2%
2021	September	115,231	108,723	6,508	5.6%	4.7%
2021	October	114,763	108,896	5,867	5.1%	4.2%
2021	November	114,972	109,515	5,457	4.7%	3.8%
2021	December	114,373	108,813	5,560	4.9%	3.6%
2020	January	117,266	111,336	5,930	500.0%	340.0%
2020	February	117,012	111,499	5,513	470.0%	310.0%
2020	March	115,663	110,031	5,632	490.0%	340.0%
2020	April	107,450	83,469	23,981	2230.0%	1650.0%
2020	May	114,062	91,361	22,701	1990.0%	1560.0%
2020	June	118,984	99,110	19,874	1670.0%	1440.0%
2020	July	118,959	101,778	17,181	1440.0%	1290.0%
2020	August	118,724	105,166	13,558	1140.0%	1030.0%
2020	September	117,241	104,471	12,770	1080.0%	990.0%
2020	October	116,257	106,152	10,105	860.0%	820.0%
2020	November	115,508	105,966	9,542	830.0%	770.0%
2020	December	115,379	105,590	9,789	840.0%	750.0%

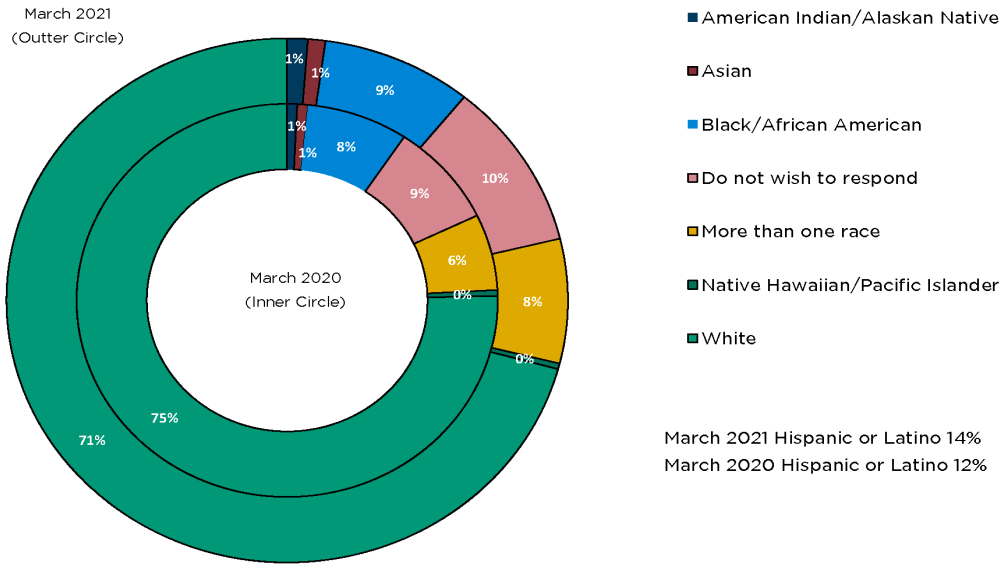
City/Town	Labor Force		Employed		Unemployed		Unemployment Rate			
	Mar-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Feb-21	OTM Δ	OTY Δ
Acushnet	6,188	6,175	5,751	5,693	437	482	7.1%	7.8%	↓ -0.7%	↑ 3.0%
Dartmouth	18,328	18,286	17,146	16,973	1,182	1,313	6.4%	7.2%	↓ -0.7%	↑ 2.6%
Fairhaven	9,423	9,395	8,764	8,676	659	719	7.0%	7.7%	↓ -0.7%	↑ 3.1%
Freetown	5,422	5,431	5,070	5,022	352	409	6.5%	7.5%	↓ -1.0%	↑ 2.7%
Lakeville	6,602	6,599	6,195	6,136	407	463	6.2%	7.0%	↓ -0.9%	↑ 3.0%
Marion	2,522	2,507	2,403	2,361	119	146	4.7%	5.8%	↓ -1.1%	↑ 1.3%
Mattapoisett	3,247	3,245	3,028	2,998	219	247	6.7%	7.6%	↓ -0.9%	↑ 3.6%
New Bedford	47,405	47,475	42,580	42,149	4,825	5,326	10.2%	11.2%	↓ -1.0%	↑ 4.6%
Rochester	3,332	3,306	3,144	3,114	188	192	5.6%	5.8%	↓ -0.2%	↑ 2.4%
Wareham	12,051	12,015	11,197	11,003	854	1,012	7.1%	8.4%	↓ -1.3%	↑ 2.7%
Greater New Bedford	114,520	114,434	105,278	104,125	9,242	10,309	8.1%	9.0%	↓ -0.9%	↑ 3.5%

Source: BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) compiled by MA DUA, not adjusted for seasonality

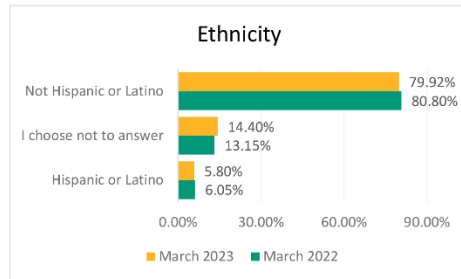
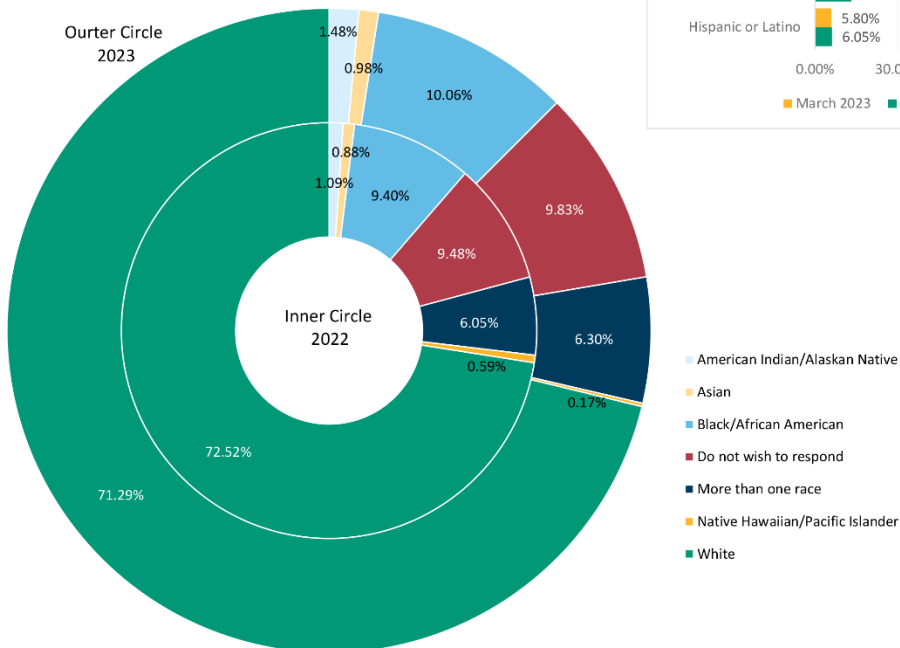
City/Town	Labor Force		Employed		Unemployed		Unemployment Rate			
	Mar-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Feb-23	OTM Δ	OTY Δ
Acushnet	6,223	6,300	5,893	5,938	330	362	5.3%	5.7%	↓ -0.4%	↑ 0.1%
Dartmouth	18,195	18,462	17,357	17,490	838	972	4.6%	5.3%	↓ -0.7%	↓ -0.2%
Fairhaven	9,404	9,561	8,955	9,023	449	538	4.8%	5.6%	↓ -0.9%	↑ 0.1%
Freetown	5,407	5,459	5,163	5,188	244	271	4.5%	5.0%	↓ -0.5%	↓ -0.3%
Lakeville	6,615	6,688	6,356	6,388	259	300	3.9%	4.5%	↓ -0.6%	↑ 0.1%
Marion	2,550	2,566	2,456	2,453	94	113	3.7%	4.4%	↓ -0.7%	↑ 0.1%
Mattapoisett	3,227	3,261	3,102	3,126	125	135	3.9%	4.1%	↓ -0.3%	↑ 0.1%
New Bedford	46,728	47,461	43,507	43,841	3,221	3,620	6.9%	7.6%	↓ -0.7%	↓ -0.1%
Rochester	3,336	3,359	3,218	3,234	118	125	3.5%	3.7%	↓ -0.2%	↓ -0.5%
Wareham	12,069	12,135	11,457	11,440	612	695	5.1%	5.7%	↓ -0.7%	↑ 0.1%
Greater New Bedford WDA	113,754	115,252	107,464	108,121	6,290	7,131	5.5%	6.2%	↓ -0.7%	↓ -0.1%

Source: BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) compiled by MA DER, not adjusted for seasonality

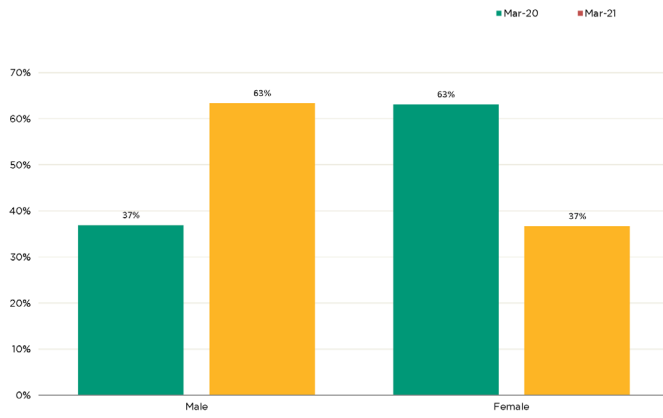
GNB WDA Unemployment Claimants by Ethnicity



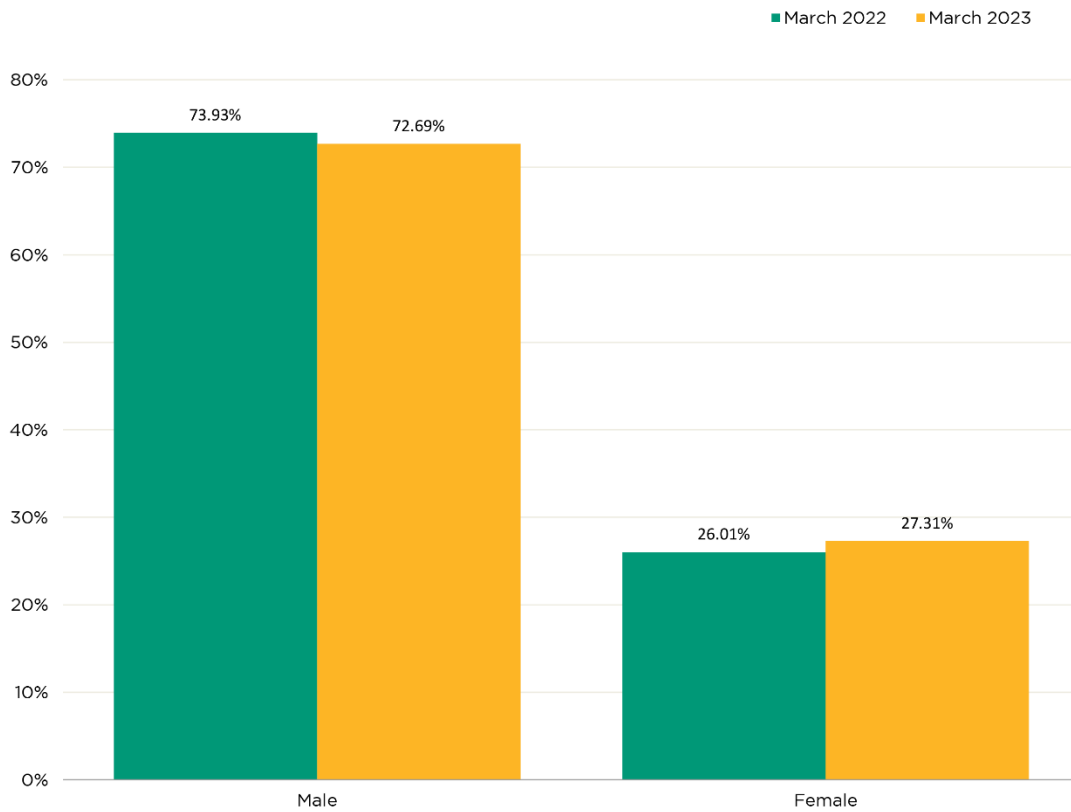
MassHire GNW WDA Demographics



GNB WDA Unemployment Claimants by Gender 2020- 2021 Comparison



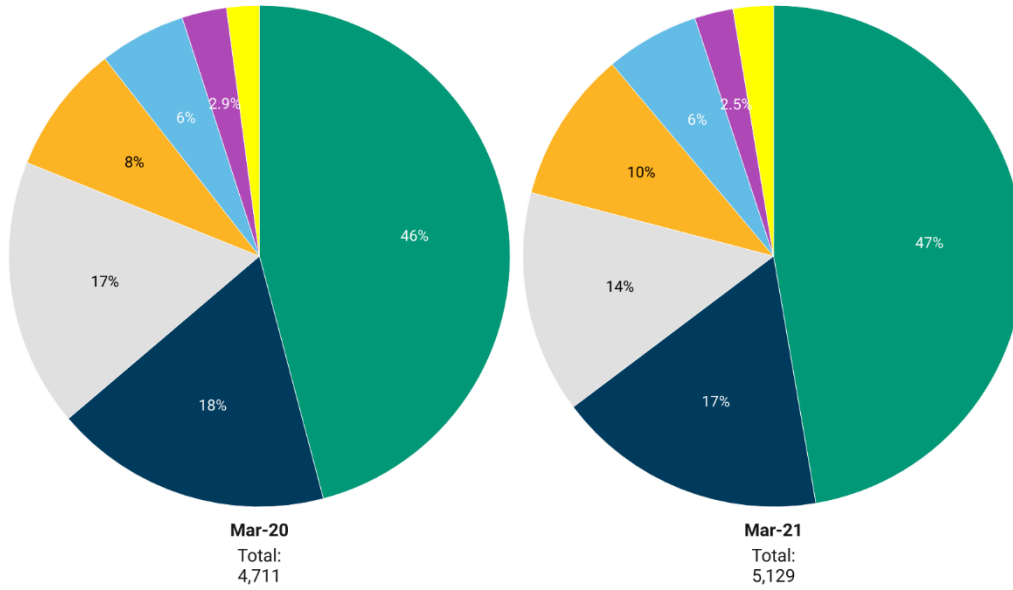
MassHire GNB WDA Unemployment Claimants by Gender 2022- 2023 Comparison



Unemployment by Education

MassHire GNB Workforce Area

■ High School or GED ■ Less than High School ■ Some College ■ Bachelor's Degree ■ Associate Degree
■ Vocational Training ■ Advanced Degree

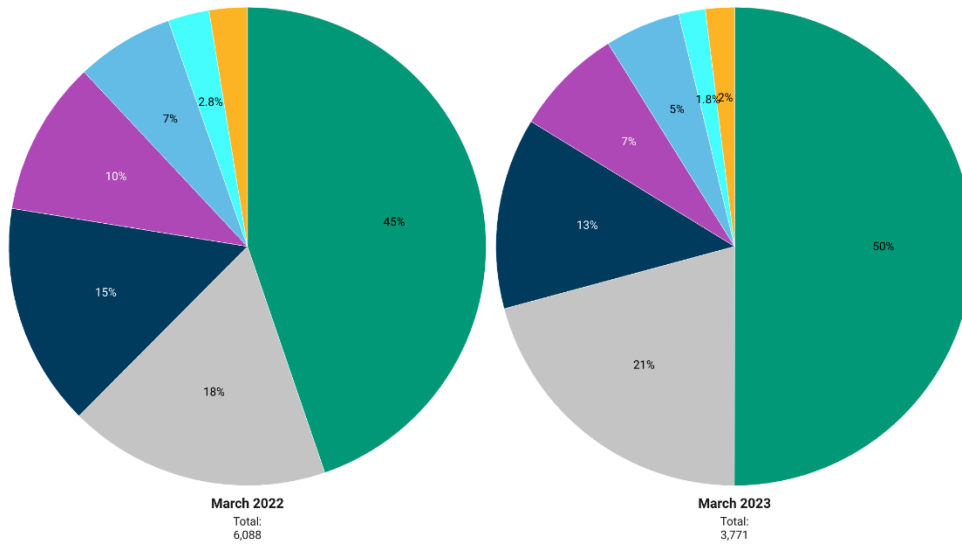


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Unemployment by Education

MassHire GNB Workforce Area

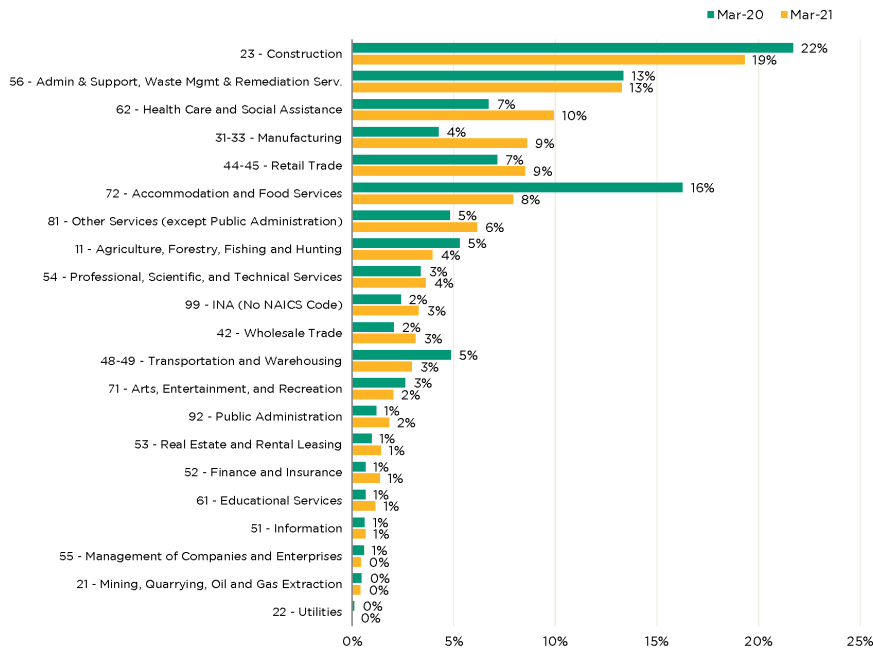
■ 2 - High School or GED ■ 1 - Less than High School ■ 4 - Some College ■ 6 - Bachelor's Degree ■ 5 - Associate Degree ■ 7 - Advanced Degree ■ 3 - Vocational Training



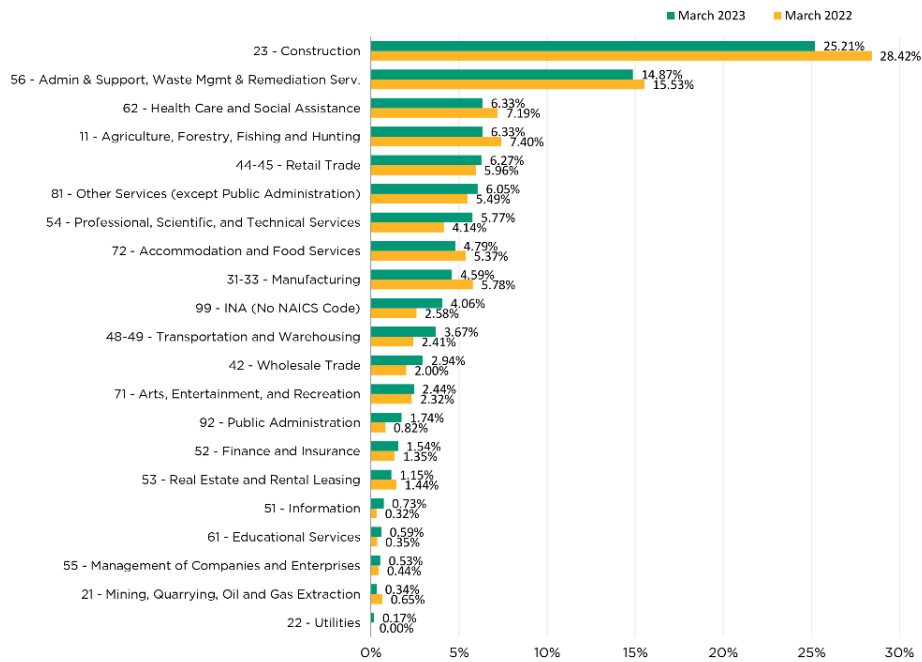
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GNB WDA Unemployment Claimants by Previous Industries of Employment



MassHire GNB WDA Unemployment Claimants by Previous Industries of Employment



Barriers to employment for the unemployed and underemployed as well as individual growth for incumbent workers are major challenges for our area. Many employers tell us that a lack of proficiency in applied math skills is one of the most common barriers; however, low-level reading skills and a lack of familiarity with computer technology are also often barriers to hiring and training opportunities. Another challenge is a lack of critical “soft skills” such as communications; teamwork, reliability, and problem-solving disqualify others from hiring and promotion opportunities. As a result of these barriers, many less-skilled production workers or potential entrants find themselves stuck in dead-end jobs or experiencing long-term unemployment, while positions requiring higher-level skills go unfilled.

We continue to strive and create best-practice programs working with our vocational and community colleges including other manufacturing entities like Southeastern MA Advanced Manufacturing Consortium and MA Manufacturing Extension Partnership out of Worcester that offer high-quality manufacturing training to help bridge the gap between potential candidates and the skill needs of employers to include career readiness.

Other barriers to employment in our priority sectors is speaking and understanding the English language; English literacy and adult education. Adult education and literacy activities are a critical part of the local workforce initiatives in the Greater New Bedford and South Coast area of Massachusetts. In our 10-municipality region, the population demographics of five of the municipalities are noted in the above charts.

Living Wage Calculation for Bristol County, Massachusetts

The living wage shown is the hourly rate that an individual in a household must earn to support his or her and their family. The assumption is the sole provider is working full-time (2080 hours per year). The tool provides information for individuals and households with one or two working adults and zero to three children. In the case of households with two working adults, all values are per working adult, single or in a family unless otherwise noted.

The state minimum wage is the same for all individuals, regardless of how many dependents they may have. Data are updated annually, in the first quarter of the New Year. State minimum wages are determined based on the posted value of the minimum wage as of January one of the coming year (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2019). The poverty rate reflects a person's gross annual income. We have converted it to an hourly wage for the sake of comparison.¹³

¹³ <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/25005>

	1 ADULT				2 ADULTS (1 WORKING)				2 ADULTS (BOTH WORKING)		
	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	0 Children	1 Child	2 Children
Living Wage	\$17.88	\$40.18	\$55.17	\$74.04	\$27.98	\$34.30	\$39.06	\$43.43	\$13.99	\$22.10	\$29.43
Poverty Wage	\$6.53	\$8.80	\$11.07	\$13.34	\$8.80	\$11.07	\$13.34	\$15.61	\$4.40	\$5.54	\$6.67
Minimum Wage	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00	\$15.00

The living wage is the minimum income standard that, if met, draws a fine line between the financial independence of the working poor and the need to seek out public assistance or suffer consistent and severe housing and food insecurity. In light of this fact, the living wage is perhaps better defined as a minimum wage covering necessary costs for persons living in the United States. For more information on what truly represents “living wage” see the Living Wage Users Guide.¹⁴

Thus, adult literacy and education is critical to workforce initiatives by providing adults with access to training and education to meet the demands and requirements of local employer job opportunities. The board aligns workforce investment through a data-driven and person-centered approach, focusing on area employment needs and working developing training and education initiatives to meet these demands, as well as meet the living wage needs of the local population.

Many of the occupations in this region require knowledge and skills in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects. This is a recurring theme, not only for in-demand occupations, but also for in-demand industries, with many STEM-oriented occupations and knowledge/skill sets crossing industries.

In July 2022, MWB received funding from the Executive Office of Education to subsidize wages for high school students participating in internships and/or employed in a STEM environment. Between July 2022 and September 2023, the MWB is authorized to subsidize wages for 110 hours per student up to \$15.00/hour. On average each partnering company employing high school students was reimbursed \$1650.00 per student. Partnering businesses included worksites in the automotive, medical and assisted living, construction, electrical, media and finance industries.

This project assisted with teaching youth skills by

- Giving students the opportunity to participate in meaningful paid work experiences in the STEM field.
- Students were able to obtain soft skills and professional etiquette by interacting with customers both in-person and virtually
- Youth gained valuable on the job training and technical skills that were transferable and applied to sustainable career pathways.

¹⁴ <https://livingwage.mit.edu/resources/Living-Wage-Users-Guide-Technical-Documentation-2021-05-21.pdf>

It is however becoming increasingly difficult to know what the future job market will look like with rapid advancements in technology such as automation, sensors, software and artificial intelligence. Although labor market data can provide robust occupational projections, job titles are becoming obsolete. Skills are the new name of the game for young or seasoned individuals who want to succeed in today's and tomorrow's labor markets. As a Board we need to be more focused and moving in the right direction to ensure conversations are happening at all standing and MOU meetings on the types of training we provide and grants we apply for that will provide the right funds to upskill people.

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

- a) include strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities,
- b) address the capacity to provide the workforce development activities around:
 - i. Education and skill need of the workforce;
 - ii. Individuals with barriers to employment;
 - iii. Employment needs of businesses.

Workforce development activities in the New Bedford Region are designed to align with current and future needs of employers. This is done with surveys for Healthcare, Manufacturing and Maritime, data reports provided by the DOL and the State including Regional Blue Prints completed by the Region #6 WDB, SWOT analysis and other deep dive instruments to gain insight to skill gap analysis and Supply Deep Dive Detail Credentials. All parties within our workforce system are communicating, collaborating and participating to better understand demand and seeking innovative solutions to match or upgrade its human resources in order to fulfill labor needs.

While the southeast is not at the state average of individuals with college degrees, the percentage of the workforce with a Bachelor's Degree or higher has increased over the past decade. As well, growth in full-time enrollment at two-and-four-year institutions in the southeast has occurred at a faster rate than Massachusetts as a whole over the past ten years. Two of the largest three degrees awarded by major field of study are in Health Sciences and Engineering and Computer Services.

Within the health care industry cluster, there are multiple degree and certificate programs within our post-secondary institutions. For example, associate degree programs include Lab Technician, Nursing, Physical Therapy, Radiologic Technology, Occupational Therapy and Respiratory Care. Bachelor's degree offerings include Medical Laboratory Science, Nursing, Health care Administration and Health Studies. Certificate programs are also offered including Medical Billing/Coding, Practical Nursing, Surgical Technology, Medical Assisting and Pharmacy Technician. Multiple degree programs exist in professional and technical services particularly in computer/IT concentrations including bachelor's degree programs in Computer Science and Information Technology. Associates degrees and certificate programs include Computer Networking, Computer Technology, Computer Science, Web/Mobile Developer and Computer Network Technician. The financial services industry includes a large number of programs in general Business Management and Marketing degree and certificate offerings in the region.

There are bachelor's degree programs in Financial Management including one with a banking career concentration. Another source of credentials within our priority industry clusters is the region's

vocational technical high schools. Within the health care industry, 222 credentials were awarded. In addition, 515 certificates were awarded in production occupations particularly within manufacturing occupations. Students also receive industry recognized credentials through these programs including Microsoft Office, Manufacturing Center Workforce Innovation Collaborative (MACWIC), National Incident Management System (NIMS), Certified Nursing Assistant, Infection Control Certification, BLS Care Provider, Cisco Certified Entry Networking Technician (CCENT), CompTIA certification and hours toward journeyman licensure in multiple construction occupations. Within the southeast, the following are programs within our vocational schools that fall within priority and critical industry clusters: Dental Assisting, Health Assisting, Medical Assisting, Programming and Web Development, Business Technology, Information Support Services and Networking, Machine Tool Technology,

Metal Fabrication and multiple building trades programs, in comparing total credentials awarded to long term projected job growth in priority industries, retention of the area workforce within these industries. As noted above, it is likely that population trends in the region will continue to impact retention. More specifically, domestic out-migration is strongly concentrated among the college-age population reflecting a long-term struggle to retain college graduates within the region. Certainly, this factor could have significant implications for the region's labor supply in our priority industries.

Additionally, in FY22, the Division of Apprentice Standards approved MWB as a Sponsor on September 29, 2021. We cover all of Region 6 of MA, including the Workforce Development Areas in the Southeastern portion of MA. This includes the Bristol, Greater New Bedford, Southshore and Greater Brockton areas. The Workforce Board is currently working on the Apprenticeship Related Technical Instruction grant for the Expansion Industries and the Construction & Building Trades Diversity grant. These specific industries include Advanced Manufacturing, Solar, Healthcare, Maritime and Banking. The Apprenticeship Team is working with regional Workforce Board partners to create apprenticeships in Region 6. Currently, we have created numerous Registered Apprenticeships including Computer Numerical Controlled Machine Operators, as well as Solar Technicians. We are in the process of creating our first Healthcare, Maritime and Banking Apprenticeships. Our program has grown over the last 2 years as we have established a network of businesses to contact in many different ways. We are utilizing flyers, brochures, social media, newsletters, email blasts as well as attending Career Fairs and local High Schools to further advertise and promote our program.

The heart of the effort of the Workforce Board is to create strong partnerships that understand the system's ability to deliver education and training that will create economic opportunity because we are conveners. We bring together business, labor, education, and economic development to focus on community workforce issues that respond to local workforce needs with an understanding and focus only possible at the regional level. We are an important nexus of communication, facilitating dialogue about workforce issues among employers, policymakers, labor, education, economic development and the public.

Regional economies have complex sets of workforce issues that span across business, community organizations, government, organized labor and residents. Workforce issues are about skilled workers, but they are also about the changing workplace, access to jobs for all populations, transportation and housing, and support for workers such as health care and childcare.

As intermediary organizations with participation from business, labor, non-profits, government, and educational institutions, LWDBs can ensure that all of the right people are in the room for critical discussions about the region's economy and workforce needs.

We bring together business leaders to respond to local workforce needs with an understanding and focus only possible at the regional level. Convening businesses within key industry sectors to better understand the needs of the industry provides valuable information for organizations providing education and job readiness services. We convene around specific issues of critical importance to the community, such as low wage workers, the aging workforce, or school dropout rates.

Our local knowledge of industry and developed partnerships over the years lead us to these beliefs and opinions of where our abilities lie and strengths and weaknesses of the system.

Strengths

- We have an active Board of Directors and several standing committees that delve into the numbers and problems at hand to discuss solutions that direct next steps to assist with improving our workforce system
- We are conveners, collaborators, brokers bringing together organizations across MA to exact meaningful change
- We possess expert knowledge of the workforce system
- Multi-year committed funding streams and/or level funded
- Our existing and in-progress Collaboratives and Websites i.e. SAMC, HealthCare, MassHire, <https://www.samcnetwork.org/>
- Our local community college offer training in growth occupations and customized training options. We have world class Universities in MA.
- We now have an in-house Apprenticeship Documentation Coordinator as well as an Apprenticeship Integration Sector Specialist who are responsible for the entire SE Region who will enable us to put some registered apprenticeships (RAP) on the map. Because of that momentum, we can now apply for the Expansion Grants. We intend to create apprenticeships within every sector.
- We are working with our Workforce Board partners regionally to create apprenticeships in Region 6. Currently, we have created numerous Registered Apprenticeships including Computer Numerical Controlled Machine Operators, as well as Solar Technicians. We are in the process of creating our first Healthcare, Maritime and Banking Apprenticeships
- All resources for our customers are integrated under one roof for a “One Stop” convenience platform
- Enrollment in the Adult Education classes is usually filled to capacity (pre-pandemic)
- Creation of our regional approach (Labor Market Blueprints) used for planning and programing by most our partners both, community based and academia when applying for grants.
- We have strong existing local partnerships among various core partners and required partners. The MOU partner process allows us to collaborate with multiple partners for client strategies.
- We work with one common data system, MOSES to schedule, monitor and report all service activities
- JOB QUEST is an excellent resource for job seekers and employers

- MCC Counselors share and customize relevant Labor Market Information (LMI) with each job seeker
- Advisory boards that exist at community colleges and vocational schools for the sectors of healthcare, manufacturing, marine/maritime do a good job in providing direction for training programs
- We have a strong Veteran's Services our local DVOP who has important ties to the community, training programs specific to Veterans
- We have engaged workforce board members who offer suggestions for training programs that benefit our local region
- Our job seekers have access to many other resources like, the MA Career Information System (MassCIS), Transferrable Occupational Relationship Quotient (TORQ), Career Ready 101 all geared to exploring and filtering through career pathways and sustainable employment and wages
- Our Youth-works Programs creates early entry points into the talent pipeline
- Our Adult Ed programs support postsecondary success through the transition to college and include us working with the MCC to collaborate on creating pathways for ABE students
- Since December 2023 the MWB Youth Team has actively visited the schools, participated in over 50 career readiness events and introduced all MassHire programming to close to 7000 youth.
- In November 2022, MWB youth team members attended the NAWDP Youth Symposium in Charlotte, North Carolina. The Symposium brought together workforce development leaders and stakeholders whose focus is to provide workforce development opportunities for youth & young adults throughout the country.

Weaknesses

- Our aging workforce and also the inability to recruit younger generation into entry level within our priority industries is a constant challenge
- Inadequate availability of Public Transportation to some of our larger employer and employers that preclude workers to second and third shift job opportunities
- Business Services representatives require greater orientation to our priority sectors
- We have an opportunity to improve data quality and data entry in MOSES especially around our "shared: customers through our MOU Partners
- Referral process needs strengthening with improved follow up and documentation and communication. There is no integrated shared information system for core partners and required partners however this process is being worked on by the State and local area
- More private-sector employers could be engaged and provide partially subsidized employment opportunities for youth in priority industry sectors
- More employers need to use available resources in the area of incumbent worker training
- Demand for ABE services outweigh available resources (wait lists)
- Training tends to be grant driven vs. systematic training
- Four-year public institutions to develop courses and programs that create pathways for incumbent worker to transition to management positions

- Proximity and disconnect to MCC
- Outside revenue – no grant writer on staff at the MWB or the MCC
- Limited tenure among WDB staff that requires intensive orientation to meet the Board’s needs

The MWB is currently leading a five-workforce regional effort as aforementioned. The effort will be sustainable for another two years to address skills gap needs of our regional employers. Training providers e.g. vocational technical schools, have advisory boards consisting of employers and workforce partners to ensure the programs they are offering training in meet employer expectations. In addition, the MCC, MOU Partners and education partners have Career Pathways to prepare individuals to be successful in post-secondary education and enter or advance within occupations. Community colleges offer credentials in many sectors that can be stackable. Career advisors/planners provide goal-setting, academic advising, and enrollment assistance. Future training for other sectors is slated to follow the same modality as described here.

Healthcare Workforce Hubs

To help with the need in Region#6 for CNAs and numerous other HC needs the MWB took the lead to apply for a three-month HealthCare Planning grant through Commonwealth Corporation for approximately 20K. We were awarded the grant to do further analysis and studies with healthcare agencies and training vendors. The hard efforts of everyone involved paid off as we were awarded the HealthCare Workforce Hubs Grant.¹⁵ Total grant amount is \$380,200 to train several cohorts of CNA throughout the SE region with other training needs as well.

On September 16, 2020 we were awarded the Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grant for Healthcare Workforce Hubs. We will lead the grant efforts along with MassHire Southeast Region 6 partners from MassHire Bristol, MassHire Greater Brockton, and MassHire South Shore Workforce Boards. We are also participating as a partner in a separate Healthcare Workforce Hubs grant awarded to the MassHire Cape Cod and Islands. This will potentially allow MCC clients who reside in areas close to the Cape (such as Marion or Wareham) access to training seats developed for that region.

The grant will be allocated in two phases, with the first lasting up to 6 months and focused on planning and capacity analysis. This will be followed by an implementation phase of up to 2.5 years for plans developed in Phase 1 that meet approval. The grant is intended to address long-standing healthcare industry training needs as well as emerging needs due to COVID-19. The initiative’s goals as stated in the grant request for proposal are, “The Healthcare Workforce Hub Initiative is designed to support regional coordination that results in additional training and placement/advancement program capacity and to fund capacity building and planning efforts to ensure workforce system-wide alignment.” The chart below represents our place on the map as part of a comprehensive inventory of the pathways of various institutes across the Commonwealth and signifies the work the MWB has completed for CNA Programs to meet the needs of healthcare employers locally and regionally.

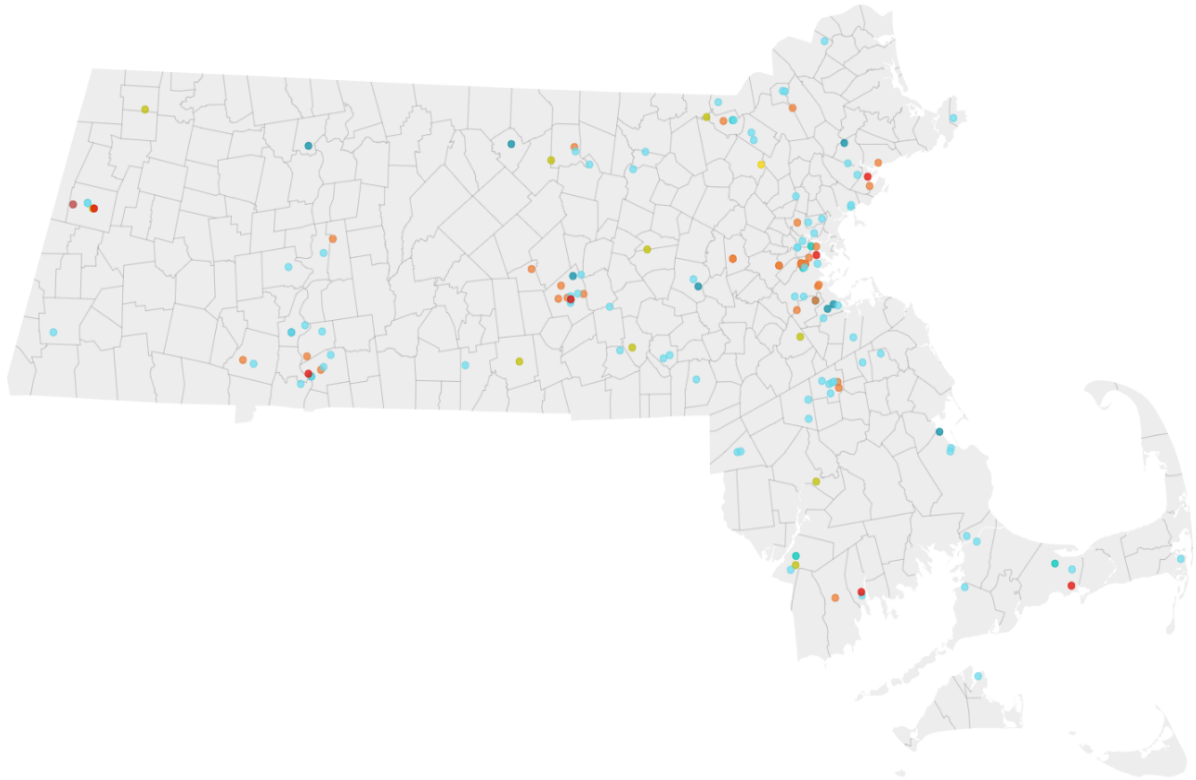
¹⁵ <https://masshiregreaternewbedford.com/senator-kenneth-j-donnely-workforce-success-grant-for-healthcare-workforce-hubs-award/>

CNA, LPN, RN programs and Healthcare Hubs across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

This map was created to geolocate the CNA, LPN, RN programs and Healthcare Hubs across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. There are distinct areas of overlap in more densely populated regions, to get a closer look use the zoom options in the lower right-hand corner of the map pane. This is a comprehensive inventory of the pathways of various institutions across the Commonwealth including: all Community Based Organizations approved by DPH, Institutions of Higher Education (private and public), Community Colleges, and Technical Education programs (RVT, CTE).

Program Type

■ CNA ■ CNA, LPN ■ CNA, LPN, RN ■ CNA, RN ■ Healthcare Hub ■ LPN ■ LPN, RN ■ RN



The initiatives' s goals vastly became a reality and due to the success and continued impact the Commonwealth is experiencing from a lack of care workers, we were able to secure a Behavioral Health grant. The MWB was granted the regional lead on this expanded initiative issued as an expansion of the HWHubs grant to address the needs for behavioral healthcare workers and industry wage advancement opportunities to make room for pipeline future professionals. As a result, we implemented an incumbent worker training for community based behavioral healthcare, including providers for substance/opioid use disorders. This regional grant again partnered the WDAs of MassHire Southeast Region 6 with six regional employers and several training providers. Programs include Certified Addiction Recovery Coach (CARC), Certified Peer Specialist, and the Substance Abuse Certificate required for licensure as a Certified Alcohol/Drug Abuse Counselor (CADC II). The CADC II program, customized by Bristol Community College specifically for this grant, has been identified as a potential model for similar college level programs in behavioral health. The grant also included a component with salary reimbursement for clinical supervision required for licensure in CARC and for master's level Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC).

Recently as of FY23, CommCorp has notified us of the potential of their reissuing a combined HWHubs and BHHubs grant to continue training efforts in these professions for an additional 3 years. Our intention is to capitalize on this opportunity by reevaluating occupational needs, identifying additional training resources and continued analysis to expand upon progress made.

Other regional efforts

Our regional efforts in healthcare continue with our MassHire Southeast Region 6 Workforce Board Partners. In March 2023, MH SE Region 6 was awarded \$468,907 through the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) and Human Services Workforce Development Grant Program from the Mass Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board is the lead in this regional initiative that has a goal of training up to 150 Certified Nursing Assistants through March 1, 2025. This EOHHS CNA grant is intended as an extension and expansion of the CNA portion of CommCorp HWH grant that is retiring in June 2023.

Currently, the MassHire Region 6 Boards are in the exploratory phase of the potential for a regional healthcare collaborative as a long-term goal. We have begun initial conversations among the executives at the Boards to identify the structure of such a collaborative. All agree that if pursued, this endeavor would need to focus on healthcare issues beyond grant training and have goals encompassing long standing industry issues related to curriculum development and stackable credentials, career paths, internships and apprenticeships, and medical reimbursements by insurance providers and Medicare. Our first goal in this is to identify champions in healthcare that include employers, community-based organizations and educational institutions to create an advisory group with the purpose of establishing the feasibility of a regional collaborative. We feel such an advisory group will assist in establishing a plan that identifies the structure, and working groups needed to sustain an effective and productive collaborative for the long run.

The MWB core and required partners collectively use the following goals to support our vision to align and integrate education, workforce and economic development strategies at the state, regional and local levels to improve the economic growth and competition of the state's employers and their workforce that includes all individuals according to WIOA Sec. 3 (Def.24-25).

We collaborate to foster improvement and expansion of employer-driven, regional sector partnerships to increase the focus on critical in-demand occupations in key sectors that are the engine of economic

growth for the state and its regions. Advisory committees of interested sector employers, for all priority sectors, will be formed to gather specific employment data that would be shared among the partners.

We continually discuss ways to expand career pathway opportunities through more accelerated and work-based training and align and integrate programs of study leading to industry-recognized credentials and improved employment and earnings with our Career Center Operator, Equus. Additionally, we continue to work with existing employer sector groups as well as vocational technical schools and community colleges to expand career pathway opportunities through more accelerated training and work-based learning, leading to industry recognized credentials, resulting in improved employment and earnings.

We also collaborate with our MOU partners to explore ways to expand career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and expansion of bridge programs. The workforce board will continue to expand career services and opportunities for special populations of all types, facing barriers to educational attainment and economic advancement will be achieved by:

- Our continued efforts to work closely with local community college partners in bridge programs;
- Collaborating with our MOU Partners with ongoing discussions on Career Pathways for their clients with disabilities that become our shared customers;
- Provide work-based training for those who qualify for Title V services;
- Co-enroll individuals with local partner programs, as needed to assist those with multiple barriers to become successful;
- Expand information for employers and job-seekers to access services by improving the MassHire Greater New Bedford public-private data infrastructure to support the alignment and integration of economic development, workforce development and education initiatives for supporting sector partnerships and career pathways.

Our goals are supported by:

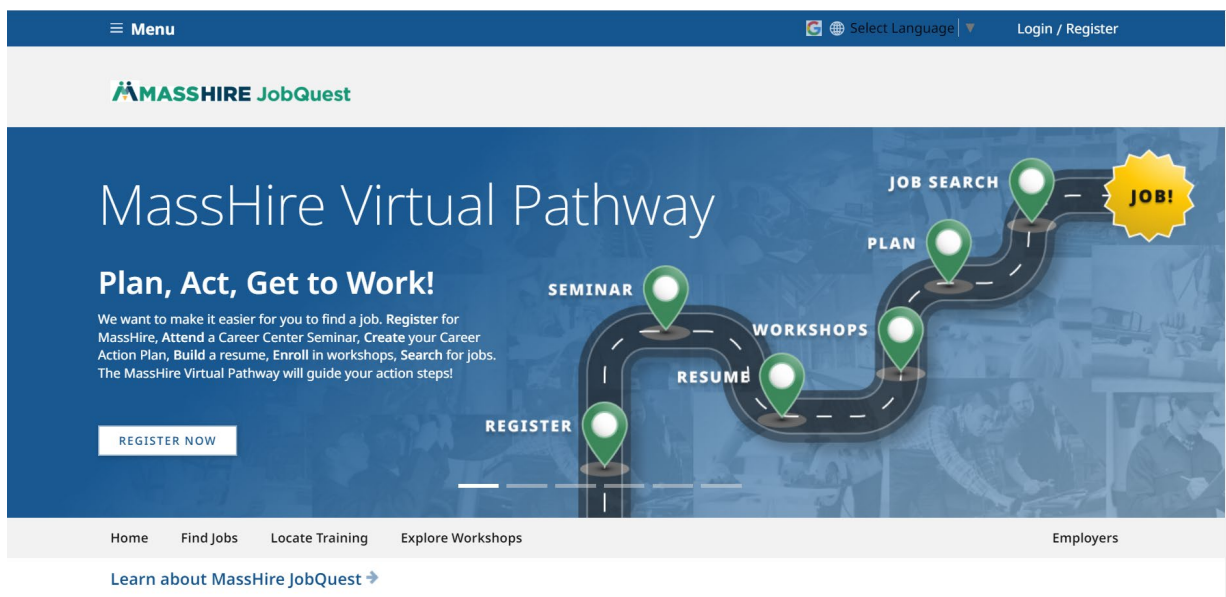
- Participation in the region's several workforce development initiatives of regional Chambers of Commerce and United Way organizations
- Supporting our Economic Development Council (EDC) through membership
- Serving as Commissioner to Port Authority of New Bedford to represent our Board in providing workforce solutions to its harbor industry
- Serving on the University of Massachusetts – Dartmouth South Coast Development Partnership Executive Committee to provide workforce insights; influence legislation in the areas of commuter rail development; increasing additional offshore wind energy capacity; working among educator and regional business leaders
- Creating public – private partnerships or alignments with businesses and not-for-profit agencies that serve minorities, seniors, veterans and economically and developmentally disadvantaged populations.
- Improving public / private data infrastructure by collecting regional data and investigating methods to make the data accessible
- Looking for opportunities to make presentations to economic development practitioners and professionals, through chambers of commerce and economic development association
- Connecting with entrepreneurs and those starting businesses, to assist with workforce needs

The goal of the MWB is to be the primary provider of human capital to employers in our service delivery area as well as regionally. The Region 6 workforce systems serve as a central point of contact for employers and promote knowledge and continuing use of workforce services. The Board established an employer-driven system dedicated to sustaining and promoting business development in the region. Providing quality, value-added services to local employers allows us to propagate the relationship between employers and job seekers. The Board leads in the effort to ensure we engage a diverse range of employers.

Our service delivery model for employer engagement is focused around the workforce board’s key contacts with employers and board membership as well as our contacts within the New Bedford Business Park under the directorship of the Greater New Bedford Economic Development Council and the Business Directory of our local Chamber, the One SouthCoast Chamber.

The second level is our Business Development Committee (BDC). This committee provides us with keen insight and the time to delve into how we interact with businesses and is notably chaired by the Director of the One SouthCoast Chamber and members from the business sector. Guidance offered allows us to think outside of the box as solutions are offered from those with an employer prospective.

The MWB and BDC direct the Business Services Unit (BSU) at the MCC. In addition, the BSU works with area employers by posting openings in the MOSES and Job Quest systems. An enhancement to the site includes a section just for employers. Employers can independently post jobs to get their openings in front of thousands of candidates for free (FY22 total candidates is 24, 884), search job fairs and other events, inquire about hiring foreign workers. Employers can get help with their recruitment needs and get a competitive edge with MassBizWorks that can connect businesses to State and Federal resources.¹⁶



¹⁶ <https://jobquest.dcs.col.mass.gov/jobquest/Employers/Candidates.aspx>

BSRs can screen and refer qualified applicants and provide local intelligence such as labor market information to employers in need. The team uses the BizWorks portfolio of services to inform employers i.e. layoff aversion, MOBD and other programs offered by the State.

(5) Please describe the MassHire Board’s strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency that includes goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in §677.155(a) (1).

As the local board, we are the catalyst for bringing together the resources of our community, working together with our partners to leverage resources and create a comprehensive service delivery system more responsive to the needs of our priority and targeted industry sectors and individuals looking for work. We aim to prioritize employment and training resources to create a comprehensive Workforce Development System that will prepare a skilled labor force that supports the development and expansion of the targeted industry sectors by:

1. Focusing on Youth. Our youth are our future employees thus everything in youth development is critical. As recently as 2021, we purposefully upgraded our Youth Committee back to a Youth Council consisting of 34 members from every spectrum of the workforce system. Our efforts are focused on youth engagement, education, and upskilling and ultimately on a career track to unsubsidized employment. We strongly believe that youth and apprenticeships go hand in hand thus we have created a Youth Pre-apprentice Working Group.
2. Our Performance and Oversight Committee (POC) plays a vital role in how we stay accountable. Performance goals are highly scrutinized in order to fully understand what it is the MCC does to reach these goals. Charts are reviewed and suggestions are made for revisions that show where we need to focus for continuous improvements.
3. Through local and regional studies, we determine the skill gaps, gaps in training activities, and the critical demand for labor, now and in the future.
4. Working in partnership with local strategic partners in education, will assist us in the facilitation and development of critical training and credential programs to increase the skills sets of potential job candidates and support local target industry and prepare job seekers to meet the needs of targeted growth and emerging industries.
5. Working in partnership with Industry Sector leaders, stakeholders, and strategic partners, we engage targeted businesses through sector strategies that serve to develop local and regional workforce development systems to addresses the needs of industry sectors using data from studies.

6. Working in partnership with local industries and partners in education, the MWB develops, earn and learn activities combined with On-the-Job Training and classroom training to facilitate the development of a skilled labor force (including Incumbent Worker Training).
7. Working with both, required and strategic partners, we convene and support advocacy groups like the Chamber of Commerce, the Massachusetts Workforce Association and other business Associations that support changes in policies and find legislative solutions to eliminate barriers that impede business growth and development.
8. Working with strategic partners, we maintain ongoing communication with the targeted industries, monitor their growth and success, and address their needs for services and critical resources.
9. Working with strategic partners and business service providers, the MWB is diligent in our focus to search for opportunities to expand the delivery of services and access to available business resources and services that support growth and development. Our two key websites are evidence of our work <https://masshiregreaternewbedford.com/> and <https://www.samcnetwork.org/>.
10. We continue to work with our required and strategic partners and local service providers to create a service delivery system that addresses critical needs and strives to eliminate barriers to employment for job seekers entering the labor market.
11. We engage in Regional Partnerships across MA to facilitate the development of a Regional Local Workforce Development System responsive to the local and regional targeted industries. We work in partnership with our regional partners to secure competitive grant funding that will further support local and regional economic and workforce development.

Some of these Partnerships include:

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Commonwealth Corporation, Southeast Regional MassHire Workforce Boards, Hampden County Workforce Board, Merrimack Valley Workforce Board, North Central Workforce Board, Massachusetts Workforce Association, Southeast Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative, Advanced Manufacturing Collaborative, Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership, Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, Mass Tech Collaborative, Center for Advanced Manufacturing, Bristol Community College, Cape Cod Community College, Bridgewater State College, Mass Institute of Technology, Division of Apprenticeship Standards.

Our mission is to enable area residents to gain the skills to maximize their economic self-sufficiency and provide employers with the workforce they need to effectively compete in the changing world economy. We continue to convene and leverage our partnerships in an attempt to satisfy labor

demand needs of the Greater New Bedford Region. Our vision and that of our Board is to reduce poverty by increasing education levels and credentialing and employment opportunities in the region in sectors that provide sustainable wages for residents. Our FY17 - 20 Local Area Strategic Plan identifies four overarching goals that align with the Governor's goals in order to meet our mission and vision:

1. Align economic, workforce and education partners to coordinate activities based on business and skill needs in the region.
2. Increase talent recruitment and hiring for business partners through outreach efforts, candidate referrals and education and training activities that match the needs of business.
3. Increase credentialing and job placement outcomes for individual, including individuals with barriers to employment.
4. Increase credentialing and job placement outcomes for youth including youth with barriers to employment.

More detailed information on our vision for supporting regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency, including specific goals for each priority industry and target populations can be found in our FY 17-20 Local Area Strategic Plan-Board Approved.¹⁷

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

Our main focus and objective is to fulfill our mission, vision, and goals of our Strategic Plan using a wide range of partners, including, Equus, MCC, our MOU Partners, employers, business associations, higher education institutions, community-based organizations, vocational schools, comprehensive schools and labor unions. Although we have footnoted our FY17-20 Strategic Plan we are currently working FY21-24 Plan. We continue our role as convener and facilitator, broker to develop more and stronger partnerships in order to achieve the goals described in our Strategic Plan. We feel our Executive and several standing committees made up of our Board members provide critical leadership and direction as we move forward. We do however have many challenges ahead of us that we need to include in our plans e.g. population behavioral trends, a growing increase in the diversity of people in the workforce that includes gender, ethnicity, age, and race. Diversity and inclusion is an area that we intend to incorporate at all levels of how we provide services to our clients.

Our MOU further defines roles and responsibilities of partners and is designed to meet the strategic vision and goals to exact the best possible outcomes for job seekers to include youth and employer of our region. Since 2017 we have worked with our MOU Partners to define shared customers, customer flow, align resources to ensure non-duplicity and develop procedures to effectively track activities and outcomes.

¹⁷ <https://masshiregreaternewbedford.com/wp-content/uploads/StrategicGoalSheetFY17-20BoardApproved.pdf>

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

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

- a) Programs that are included in your local workforce system (please list programs)
- b) How your Board will support the strategy identified in the State Plan and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) serves as a vehicle for ensuring Governor Baker’s vision that all Massachusetts residents benefit from a seamless system of education and workforce services that leads to a more informed, educated, and skilled workforce, which meets the Commonwealth’s businesses’ demands and sustains a thriving economy. We enforce this with these three mainstays;

First and foremost, the workforce board established goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in WIOA section § 677.155(a).

Furthermore, on the youth front, the MWB utilizes the Commonwealth Corporation’s Youth Works program that operates all year round to braid funds and align resources and services as a means to complement the core WIOA Title I Youth Program. A strong emphasis on establishing parameters and strategies to complement and create accessibility to wrap-around services, support services, work experiences, job readiness and occupational skills to as many eligible youths as possible and meet local performance goals as detailed in the local plan listed in the Local Performance Goals section of this document.

Our all encompassed performance goals for all Title I programs remain on the forefront when implementing and determining regional strategies to carry out core programs in accordance with state and federal guidelines. The regional strategy to work with entities including businesses and educational partners to align resources available are listed in the goals at the beginning of the documents. These include for each of the priority industries to identify business demand, to convene all partners and to align WIOA and other funding to meet the needs of employers in the region. By strategically aligning resources and convening related and interested parties, a concise strategy will occur to support regional growth.

Secondly and to reiterate, our strategic vision to support economic growth and self-sufficiency can be broken down into the four main goals noted in (5) above.

Tertiary, is the formation of the strategy, action, metrics and key partners to include all MOU Partners that work together to fulfill the aforementioned goals. This takes a coordinated effort of the key partners convened by the workforce board staff and is a continual process requiring ongoing logistics and communication efforts of the board of directors and stakeholders throughout our SDA.

We recognize wholeheartedly that the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act is to develop

the academic knowledge and technical and employability skills of secondary education students and postsecondary education students who elect to enroll in career and technical education programs and programs of study so we will continue to structure all our programs keeping these strategies in mind and by working with our MOU Partner, Equus, and the MCC staff as well as the all entities of our workforce system to:

- a. Continually build on efforts with our academia partners to develop challenging academic and technical standards and to assist a student/job seeker that includes preparation for high skill, high wage, or in-demand occupations in current or emerging professions. We see much of this work being done through our MOU Partners and point out why it is so highly important that educational institutes are part of our MOUs.
- b. Promote the development of services and activities that integrate rigorous and challenging academic and career and technical instruction that link secondary education and postsecondary education for participating career and technical education students. Much of this work is done through our youth vendors and shared partners.
- c. Provide services and activities designed to develop, implement, and improve career and technical education. Our involvement in the CTE. ¹⁸ CTE is leading positive change in secondary, postsecondary and adult education, with innovative programs that are making a difference in Massachusetts.
- d. Focus on increasing the employment opportunities for populations who are chronically unemployed or underemployed, including individuals with disabilities, individuals from economically disadvantaged families, out-of-workforce individuals, youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system, and homeless individuals.
- e. Promote the Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) through TrainingPro. We take great pride in speaking with training groups and organizations every chance we get so that they know that they can register to become certified providers to assist job seekers with more training options.¹⁹

High on our list of priorities is to provide superior service to each and every customer. WIOA offers a comprehensive list of core programs for job seekers in the Southeast region. Programs are provided at the MCC and include:

- Services or refer services related to the six core AJC network programs: Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs; Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program; Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services programs as amended by Title III of WIOA; Vocational Rehabilitation program as authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and as amended by Title IV of WIOA, and other programs as designed by WIOA through Partners;
- Provide job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance employment with wages that sustain themselves and their families;
- Provide access and opportunities to job seekers, including individuals with barriers to

¹⁸ <https://www.doe.mass.edu/cte/cvte/>

¹⁹ <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/requirements-to-qualify-on-mass-etpl>

employment as defined in WIOA § 3(24);

- Enable businesses and employers to easily identify and hire skilled workers and access other human resource assistance including education and training for incumbent workers, assistance with pre-screening applicants, and other forms of business-related assistance;
- Participate in monitoring and evaluation that support continuous improvement of the MCC;
- Ensure that high-quality integrated data informs decisions made by policy makers, employers, and job seekers;
- Disclose any potential conflicts of interest arising from the relationships of the lead operators with particular training service providers or other service providers;
- In coordinating services and serving as the Lead Operator, refrain from establishing practices that create disincentives to providing services to individuals with barriers to employment who may require longer-term services, such as intensive employment, training, and education services;
- Comply with Federal, State, and WDB regulations, and procurement policies relating to the calculation and use of profits and reporting and submission of its fiscal activities.

Additionally, the Lead Operator shall:

1. Facilitate integrated partnerships that seamlessly incorporate services for common customers;
2. Develop and implement operational policies that reflect an integrated system of performance, communication, and case management, and uses technology to achieve integration and expanded service offerings;
3. Organize and integrate services by function (rather than program) where permitted by a program's authorizing statute.

The Lead Operator will ensure that and submit evidence through monitoring of:

1. MCC staff are trained and equipped in an ongoing learning environment with the skills and knowledge needed to provide superior service to job seekers;
2. MCC staff are cross-trained as appropriate to increase staff capacity, expertise and efficiency;
3. MCC staff is routinely trained on their duties, and cross-trained as appropriate, so they are keenly aware as to how their particular work function supports and contributes to the overall vision of the local workforce development board area and the broader AJC network.

Basic Career Services

At a minimum, all of the basic career services described in WIOA §134 (c) (2) (A) (i-xi) and 20 CFR 678.430(a), 34 CFR §361.430(a), and 34 CFR §463.430(a) must be provided in each local area through the Career Center, including, but not limited to:

- Determination of program eligibility, such as adult, youth, or dislocated programs;
- Outreach, intake, and orientation on other services available in the workforce system;
- Initial assessment of skill levels;
- Labor exchange services including job search and placement assistance;
- Referrals to other relevant programs and services;
- Accurate workforce and labor market employment information;
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services;
- Provision of information in usable and understandable formats and languages related to performance accountability measures, supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals;

- Assistance in establishing eligibility for financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA;
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs.

Customers that require assistance of any services have trained staff members available to answer their questions and assist them.

Individualized Career Services

MCC staff provides individualized career services after a determination by assessment, including, but, not limited to:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments;
- Development of an individual employment plan;
- Group or individual counseling;
- Career planning;
- Short term pre-vocational services;
- Internships and work experiences linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation
- Financial literacy services
- Out of area job search assistance and relocation assistance;
- English language acquisition programs
- Follow-up services must be provided as appropriate for up to 12 months after exit.

We are very active and extremely cognizant of the daily activities at the MCC, that said, we take an active role in the coordination of activities with education and training providers in the local area to every extent possible including providers of workforce development activities, providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II, providers of career and technical education (as defined in section 3 of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2302) and local agencies administering plans under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.).

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

- a) Expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;
- b) Facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and
- c) Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

In partnership with Equus, we set the direction and priorities of the MCC and how they implement and follow through with core programs. The MWB has a recurring Monday morning meeting with the MCC management staff to discuss all training grants and recruiting needs to include outreach to our MOU Partners so that all those with barriers to employment have a means to connect with available training. Discussions include performance, placements, youth programs, virtual services, challenges, internal structure and consistent reviews of how we are meeting the needs of our customers.

The MCC follows our strategy for developing broader and more comprehensive and accessible services, as well as create new access points or locations for customers. A current barrier is transportation and location to the MCC and surrounding areas, this limits access to services for many people. The MWB is actively seeking a new, bigger, cost- effective, and service efficient location to deliver comprehensive career services for region.

For the current time, our approach for the transportation barrier is to plan for more satellites or locations for services within our region. One way we are doing this is to create and sustain satellite centers, at schools, at libraries, at community rooms and city or state location within our services region. The MCC provides limited staffing hours at the New Bedford Immigrants Assistance Center (IAC) and is exploring a similar tactic in the Wareham Public Library system, Wareham High School and Housing sites.

A second approach, for access to services, is using technology to communicate in multiple locations, in multiple ways, all at once. Utilizing technology and social media for providing services and information will allow customers to access some services 24/7. Further, in regards, to information services, technology can assist customers who have language barriers and language restrictions. We can provide “You Tube” video or online content via webpage in different languages. The MCC continues to explore and pilot using social Media, YouTube, “canned” learning modalities and other electronic communication platforms to facilitate English as a second- language customers. In that, information and service acquisition needs to be in people’s native language, if possible to include information, such as RESEA explanation/ preparation, unemployment insurance overview and navigation and MCC workshops. Our approach will move us physically and technologically throughout region and we must continually assess the quality of our approaches.

At the guidance of the MWB the MCC is working with and developing partners on a continuous basis to create pathways into training, jobs, education and careers. A Career Pathway Working Group was organized from one of our bi-weekly MOU Partner meetings pre-pandemic. Co-enrollments with partners are part of the plan in regards to access and delivery of services. The MCC will model itself after other career centers and the Perkins V Act in establishing high quality college and career pathways. The MCC recognizes that only 20% are connected to an academic or career pathway, meaning 80% of college students do not have a career or educational pathway to follow. It is our intent to continually monitor and ensure that the MCC staff works with partners to establish and strengthen vocational, technical and educational pathways. The MWB has extensive documentation that we share with the MCC on career pathways that include, healthcare, manufacturing, carpentry/construction, technology and many others. During our MOU Partner meetings, the MWB staff has presented a variety of career pathway materials and modalities to all members that included recommendations for them to register on Workforce GPS²⁰ that houses a plethora of information regarding career pathways as well as an introduction to ONET²¹ and the Competency Model Clearinghouse.²²

The MWB in partnership with the MCC uses several strategies for expanding access to post-secondary

²⁰ <https://www.workforcegps.org/>

²¹ <https://www.onetonline.org/>

²² <https://www.careeronestop.org/CompetencyModel/GetStarted/about-models-help.aspx>

and stackable credentials for both youth and adults. First, we have vibrant relationships with regional academic institutions in the region, including University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, Bristol Community College, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, and Northeast Maritime Institute. We also have a flourishing relationship with Bridgewater State University. We will seek to foster our relationships with all including with Bristol Community College and UMass Dartmouth by hosting both colleges and universities at our center on a weekly and monthly basis. We have individual, group and workshop meetings at the center. We will continue to work with BCC and UMass Dartmouth on new certificates and educational pathways and stackable programs that meet economic drivers in the community.

We continue to develop new business training partners, who can provide national and state certification, in the priority industries, business and professional fields as outlined by the MWB. In some instances, such as Information Technology, we have approved Education and Training Providers that can employ “distance learning” modules that match high quality programs with customers unable to make the trek to a brick and mortar destination.

We utilize current connections such as Connecting Activities (CA) to explore careers, career readiness, recruiting and youth services for both in school and out of school youth, to continue their pursuit of a certificate, certified training, stackable programs or certificates, as well as degrees and preparation for degree readiness. We encourage education and training to youths through WIOA and State funds to create meaningful career opportunities. Our vendors are highly encouraged to provide credentials that are industry-recognized in local high demand occupations in the local area which is inclusive of manufacturing, healthcare and information technology related professions. We however need to continually assess and make improvements to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential.

The MCC Youth team works on many levels to provide guidance to youth such as:

- If the Youth who do not meet the enrollment requirements of a particular program, or who cannot be served, are referred to appropriate programs to meet the basic skills and training needs of the applicant.
- Youth who meet enrollment requirements provided with information for appropriate services that are available by career counseling, written email, or social media are by paper flyer.
- Youth programs are designed to provide the following to the youth participants according to WIOA 129(c)(1), 20 CFR 681.420, WSD 16-01
- An Objective Assessment is always provided.
- Youth are provided development service strategies and goals directly linked to one or more of the performance indicators.
- Youth are guided to activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized postsecondary credential.
- Youth are guided into preparation for postsecondary educational and training opportunities.
- Youth are shown the links between academic instruction and occupational education leading to the attainment of recognized post-secondary credentials.
- Youth are encouraged to prepare for unsubsidized employment opportunities.
- Ensures that the fourteen required youth program elements to the youth served under WIOA available.
- Provides tutoring, study skills training, instruction and dropout prevention as well as recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma.
- Is engaged in alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services with NBPS.

- Offers Education offered concurrently with, and in the same context as, workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster
- Engages in paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience.
- Engages Occupational skill training.
- Participants are provided opportunities in Leadership development.
- Provide Adult Mentoring for duration of at least 12 months.
- Provide follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation.
- Provides financial literacy education.
- Provides Entrepreneurial skills training.
- Provides Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sector or occupations available in the local.
- Provides activities that help youth prepare for and transition of postsecondary education and training.
- Youth that are co-enrolled in adult and youth programs are tracked for the correct funding streams, to ensure appropriate cost distribution and avoid duplication of service.

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

- a. To facilitate engagement of businesses in workforce development programs, including small businesses and businesses in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
- b. To serve agricultural businesses in workforce development programs, including small businesses and businesses in high- demand industry sectors and occupations.
- c. To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in your area.
- d. To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development.
- e. To strengthen linkages between the MCC delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.
- f. Describe how you Board coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide Rapid Response activities.
- g. Please describe procedures to offer MassHire Career Center Business Services and MassHire BizWorks programs to local businesses.
- h. Describe implementation of any initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on the job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathway initiatives, utilization of effective intermediaries and other business service strategies designed to meet the needs of regional businesses. These initiatives must support the strategy described in paragraph (b) (3) of this section.

We lead the effort to identify and promote proven and promising strategies and initiatives for meeting the needs of employers, workers and jobseekers as well as to identify and disseminate information on proven and promising practices carried out in other local areas for meeting such needs. The MCC does an excellent job of providing our local employers with job fairs specific to their needs which can be individual or multiple employers. Virtual career fairs, or virtual job fairs, are events where graduates and job seekers can interact with recruiters or directly with potential employers. Because everything happens online, attendees can visit booths, ask questions, gather information, and build networks from the comfort of their homes. The MCC uses a virtual job fair platform called Premier. Premier allows the MCC to host the virtual career fair with unlimited booths. Each booth allows multiple recruiters to participate at the same

time, engage with candidates in one-on-one conversations via chat and video. The MCC can watch event stats in real time.

MWB staff works closely with the MCC staff by assisting the BSRs to develop, offer, and deliver quality business services that assist specific businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy. The use of Workforce GPS and MA BizWorks are just two programs that serve to educate BSRs on how to assist employers on many levels to offer support to area employers and industry sectors effectively, The MCC staff must have a clear understanding of industry skill needs using our Regional Blue Prints as a guide, identify appropriate strategies for assisting employers, and coordinate business services activities as appropriate. This includes a practice to integrate and align with business services among all workforce partners and organizations to present a unified voice for the MCC in its communications with employers.

Additionally, the MCC uses the WIOA performance measure(s) on effectiveness in serving employers to support continuous improvement of these services.

The MWB assures coordination of the use of Mass BizWorks. It is a key initiative of the Massachusetts Workforce Development System. The WDB and MCC staff have participated in Mass BizWorks training sessions and when feasible assist in the coordination of Mass BizWorks activities locally and some efforts regionally. Activities include the MWB staff participation in Mass BizWorks committees and regional operations teams as outlined in MassWorkforce Policy #15-05. (WIOA Sec 107(d) (4)

Employer Engagement - The MWB assures that it will lead efforts to engage with a diverse range of employers and with entities in the region that involve;

- a. Promote business representation with representatives who have optimal policymaking or hiring authority to employers whose employment opportunities reflect existing and emerging employment opportunities in the region that includes our board members.
- b. Develop effective linkages with employers in the region to support employer utilization of the local workforce development system and to support local workforce investment activities including the use of intermediaries.
- c. Ensure that workforce development activities meet the needs of employers and support economic growth in the region, by enhancing communication, coordination, and collaboration among employers, economic development entities, and service providers. Mentioned earlier in the plan are the vehicles we use to learn about employer needs i.e. surveys, deep dive demand vs. supply, sector partnerships and strategies.
- d. Develop and implement proven or promising strategies for meeting the employment and skill needs of workers and employers e.g. the establishment of industry and sector partnerships, that provide the skilled workforce needed by employers in the region, and that expand employment and career advancement opportunities for workforce development system participants in in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

Our MCC has a UI person onsite to facilitate linkages between UI services and CC services whether it be, to assist someone on-line or with questions about their claim. In addition to the UI services we also rely on the RESEA program for claimant's quick return back to the workforce.

WIOA underlines Employer Services as an integral part of a demand driven system that is a core component of the MCC. The BSU is a coordinated team that provides services and intelligence to all employers throughout New Bedford and its 9 neighboring towns.

The MWB has a Business Development Standing Committee that meets bi-monthly or as needed to discuss the level of employer engagement at the MCC BSU. Both State and local BSRs management staff attend this committee to share Crystal reports on the data of employer outreach. During these meetings the Mass BizWorks programs is discussed at length and shared with the business entities on that committee.

Another example is the MWB key role in establishing sector partnerships in the manufacturing and healthcare industries. This is a collaborative effort between community organizations, community colleges, and employers. MWB staff and partners continually recruit businesses and other important players to provide employers an opportunity to discuss their specific needs and then work toward training alignment to meet those needs. As mentioned in other sections, the MWB coordinates services to the business sector by assigning certain responsibilities to our Business Service Representatives (BSR) located in our MCC, while retaining other responsibilities at the MWB level.

The existing training programs for manufacturing in the Southeast Region are excellent at preparing job seekers to enter and retain employment with businesses. We have made it easier for job seekers in need of training to be able to choose and commute between five workforce areas in the region to maximize their training options.

We have developed strong capacity over several years through the receipt of manufacturing related training grants from an array of sources that included Mass Technology Collaborative, the Department of Defense and the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) to provide entry level industry recognized credentials necessary for success in a manufacturing environment. The training is based on employer need for machinists and welders. Welding training now includes virtual welding in classrooms right at the workforce board office from funds that were repurposed in 2020 due to the pandemic. This is still new territory for instructors and still requires some hands-on time back at the vocational school.

BSRs under the direction of MWB, Equus, and the MDCS focus on those services related to hiring, assessment, job matching, job referral, job requirements, job postings and assistance related to immediate needs of the business such as prevailing wage rates and screening. The MWB business service function encompasses industry sectors; economic development; connecting businesses with other businesses, education or economic development; labor market trends; business development; workforce intelligence; and projected skill needs. The MWB CEO and key staff meet regularly with Equus, and MCC Management staff to discuss any issues identified as a result of their interaction with employers and to provide information on emerging issues, events and activities resulting from the Board's interaction with economic development, business associations, businesses, and/or other community agencies and leaders. These meetings also incorporate a degree of accountability to ensure the BSRs are meeting the needs of local employers. Employer job fairs are organized at the request of employers with MCC staff pre-screening, accessing skills and testing job seekers.

In order to help current and future regional employers maintain existing jobs and create new ones, the MWB ensures that employers are aware of the Workforce Training Fund Programs (WTFP) through Commonwealth Corporation. The MWB holds semi-annual WTFP Informational Sessions partnering

with our Chamber, Economic Development Council and Community Colleges to cast a wide-net of interested employers from all sectors.

We continue to keep the collaboration of our WIOA partners ongoing and check in with how the implementation of our Customer Referral process is going. One area that we have been focused on is Career Pathways. Career Pathways in the priority industries were shared with the members of the partnership. It was suggested that all members register with Workforce GPS and join the Career Pathway Community. Within the DOL portal is everything needed to learn about Career Pathways. We have academia at the table so the Bristol Community College representation shared much information regarding the entry and exit points of possible Career pathways. Much discussion takes place regarding the Competency models²³ that are available and that go hand in hand with career pathways. Career Pathways is an ongoing strategy that requires the commitment of everyone to create and disseminate.

Our local plan to increase collaboration with our existing MOU Partners is to continue our bi-monthly meetings and to expand upon our co-location. Staff will continue to cross train and participate in each organizations staff meeting when appropriate. Continued communication between front line staff will enhance the knowledge of programmatic specifics in each partnering agency leading to more comfortable referral process. We consistently engage area service providers and are constantly reaching out to new providers in the area to assist in servicing our customer's needs. The MWB will continue to make this a priority going forward.

Under our leadership, the MCC continues to engage in conversations with partners to establish operational procedures and an integrated customer flow. During FY 17- 20 details of MOU's with WIOA mandated partners were completed. MWB and existing partners established procedures for addressing the needs of job seekers. These partners include the following:

- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)
- Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)
- Department of Unemployment (DUA)
- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCEP)
- Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
- MassHire Department of Career Services (MDCS)

We also engage with other non-mandatory local partners including:

- Bristol Community College;
- Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA) and have invited the Administrator to be part of the group starting in the first quarter of FY20;
- Job Corps and;
- YouthBuild, PACE
- Building Pathways
- New Bedford Foss Marine Terminal

²³ <https://www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel/home.aspx>

The MWB responds to a company notice of closure (WARN) within 48 hours following an event by partnering with our local Rapid Response Unit and our local Coordinator. The MWB releases a communication to all relevant partners with urgency regarding the designated person for the press. We ensure the delivery of services to enable dislocated workers to transition to new employment as quickly as possible. Our goal is to promote economic recovery by developing an ongoing and comprehensive approach to identify and prevent or minimize the impact on the workers as well as the businesses and the community. We will convene, broker and facilitate connections, networks and partners to ensure the ability of wrap-around assistance to dislocated workers and their families such as heating assistance, legal aid and financial advice.

The Coordinator provides the appropriate notification and organizes a response team, including MCC staff, to provide the following services, as applicable, to the employer and affected workers:

- Immediate and on-site contact with the employer to the extent practical or allowed by the employer as well as representatives of the affected workers, and the local community
- Guidance and/or financial assistance to establish a labor-management committee voluntarily agreed to by labor and management, or a workforce transition committee comprising representatives of the employer, the affected workers, and the local community that devises and oversees an implementation strategy to respond to the reemployment needs of affected workers
- Emergency assistance adapted to the particular closing, layoff, or disaster
- Development of a coordinated response to the dislocation event
- State economic development assistance, as needed
- An orientation on available workforce program services
- Information on and assistance with filing for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits
- Information on Trade services
- Surveys the affected workers' employment, knowledge, skills, and abilities
- Other services offered, such as workshops and seminars on tools that will assist with a rapid transition to new employment

More importantly, the MWB assists in the coordinated response to the dislocation event and when necessary obtain access to State and local economic development assistance to possibly include the development of an application for a National dislocated worker grant.

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

- a. Coordinates local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities.
- b. Promotes entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.

In any local area, access to a skilled workforce is the number one need for economic growth and sustainability. To support the needs of businesses in Greater New Bedford, our local workforce system regularly engages with the economic development organization in our area.

Additionally, through us, our local workforce development system maintains close coordination with regional economic development organizations such as the [Greater New Bedford Economic](#)

[Development Council](#) (EDC) and other local economic development agencies. By design, the MWB includes representatives of governmental and economic and community development entities serving the Greater New Bedford area.

We are and will remain actively engaged with EDC to work collaboratively to promote a transparent, business-friendly environment for sustainable job growth and increased private sector investment. EDC continues to actively market the gateway city of New Bedford worldwide, as a top location for business growth and expansion, while remaining committed to assisting local companies and entrepreneurs with their start-up, expansion, and other business concerns. To accomplish this mission, established a strategy in 2020 that is rooted in our balanced and aggressive approach to support existing business, attract emerging industries, communicate a positive message, develop strategic sites, prepare a ready workforce, and capture long-term catalytic opportunities for growth. As a certified CDFI, an SBA Intermediary Microlender and an EDA lender, EDC offers training, technical assistance, and loans to the city's disadvantaged small businesses and entrepreneurs

With regard to Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Microenterprise Services, MWB directs the use of its WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funds in order to supplement the training and services available through other one-stop partner programs. Our goal will be to supplement, support, and expand the availability of such training and services in Greater New Bedford and 9 neighboring towns.

Entrepreneurial Skills Training is notable that entrepreneurial skills training is listed as an allowable activity in several WIOA Title I programs.

- In Section 129 entrepreneurial skills training is one of the elements of the WIOA Youth program;
- In Section 134(a) (3) (A), the WIOA law provides that statewide funds may be used to carry out microenterprise and entrepreneurial training and support programs;
- In Section 134(c)(3)(D), entrepreneurial training is listed as a type of training services that may be supported with the MWB's local Adult / DLW funds.
- In Section 166 of WIOA ("Native American Programs"), training on entrepreneurial skills is included as one of the comprehensive workforce development activities that are authorized by the law.

Microenterprise Services - The term "Microenterprise" is defined in Title 15 of the U.S. Code (regulations for the Small Business Administration): Microenterprise – The term "Microenterprise" means a sole proprietorship, partnership, or corporation that;

- a. has fewer than 5 employees and;
- b. generally lacks access to conventional loans, equity, or other banking services.

Most micro-entrepreneurs are believed to be people with low-to-moderate incomes. According to Wikipedia, "Most of these entrepreneurs are minorities, recent immigrants, women, disabled or for other reasons have special challenges that reduce their ability to access traditional credit and other services."

Many of these populations excel in their talent, creativity, and capacity for hard work. With the right combination of technical assistance, training, and capitalization, we have many would-be entrepreneurs in Greater New Bedford who could become self-sufficient through the development or start-up of a small business.

For the duration of our plan, our goals for supporting microenterprise services are expected to include:

- Determine the scope and scale of microenterprise services available through our one-stop partners and others, including:
 - The TANF program
 - Small Business Training offered through the subdivisions of EDC;
 - Programs available through the Small Business Development Center;
 - The Professional Training and Education Center at Bristol Community College;
- We will ensure by quality monitoring that our MCC staff strive to develop appropriate linkages to provide microenterprise support for eligible participants in the MWBs Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs;
- At opportune times, we will enter into an appropriate MOU with providers of microenterprise services; and
- Ensure that micro-entrepreneurs are fairly represented in the delivery of entrepreneurial skills training in Greater New Bedford.

The MWB is widely recognized as a reliable partner in efforts to address skill shortages wherever they may exist and provide the Local Market Information to back up the need as well as rely on its local knowledge.

In order to better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development, MWB continues to support the following strategies and/or chairs an organization or committee or holds a public office to remain better informed and keeps us “in the know”:

- As required by WIOA Sec. 107(b) (2) (D), the membership of the MWD board of directors includes one or more representatives of economic and community development entities.
- All opportunities for appropriate coordination between workforce development programs and economic development efforts continue to be explored.
- The MWB CEO (or designee) attends EDC meetings on the subject of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Elected officials from our area also attend these meetings.
- MWB CEO (or designee) attends other meetings e.g. New Bedford SourceLink, The Regeneration Project.
- The MWB CEO is a member of the Mass Workforce Association and the New Bedford Port Authority.
- We are members of Commonwealth Corporation’s Manufacturing Community of Practice (COP).
- We are members of the Mass Clean Energy COP which the MWB suggested, created and established.
- Our Deputy Executive Director is the City Councilor of Ward 6 Councilor and is currently the City Council President.²⁴

²⁴ <https://www.newbedford-ma.gov/city-clerk/public-meeting-notices/>

- We are well connected within the MA manufacturing industry and hold the title of “Captainship” in this arena.
- We have a membership in the SouthCoast Human Resources Council.
- We sit on the Upper Cape Technical School Adult Learning Advisory Team.

The MWB continually researches and applies for grants that promote entrepreneurial growth for residents looking to start businesses in the Greater New Bedford area particularly women. The board also partners and collaborates with the several existing organizations to promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services e.g.

- The MWB partners actively with Entrepreneurship for All (EforAll) which is accelerating economic and social impact through entrepreneurship in mid-sized cities. EforAll believes that the best way to revitalize mid- sized U.S. cities that have fallen into decline, and suffer related high rates of poverty and unemployment, is to fuel the dreams and ambitions of entrepreneurs who live in and near these cities. As well, they believe the offering inclusive entrepreneurship could help creating the pathway out of poverty. EforAll has developed an innovative small business/nonprofit accelerator to foster entrepreneurial growth and celebrate entrepreneurship into the local culture using pitch contests and other public events. Prepare entrepreneurs for the many responsibilities they will face, using our year-long accelerator program that starts with a 12-week intensive session.
- The board actively supports the executive director of the Community Economic Development Center of Southeastern Massachusetts, Inc. (CEDC) sits on the board of directors. CEDC was founded in May of 1997 as a Community Development Corporation in the City of New Bedford. CDC’s are vital building blocks for community revitalization through innovative community-based economic development programs and affordable housing targeted to low to moderate income members of local communities. CEDC is no exception, as our efforts have served thousands of area residents left out of the economic mainstream. CEDC fosters economic justice in the local economy through people-centered development. We connect youth and adults to skill-building opportunities, and resources and we build community networks and collaborations to promote cooperative action for social change.

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

- a) How the Board ensures the continuous improvement of eligible providers and those providers will meet the employment needs of local businesses, workers and job seekers.
- b) How the Board facilitates access to services provided through the MassHire Career Center (s) including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.
- c) How entities within the MassHire Career Center system, including Career Center Operators and Partners, ensure compliance with WIOA sec. 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.
- d) The roles and resource contributions of your Partners – please describe how are these relationships are sustained and kept productive.

The MWB ensures continuous improvement of eligible providers by working closely with Equus, and the MCC as well as, to ensure that they have a full understanding of priority and emerging industries of our service delivery area. We continue to fulfill the functions of Policy and Oversight and monitoring of quality of our ITA training providers. We monitor the MCC quality, outcomes, and cost performance through the following measures; on-site visits and record review, third party evaluations and review, computerized customer flow and outcome records and monthly performance reports as established by us.

In an effort to look beyond the numbers and be more pro-active, our Performance & Oversight Committee has asked to receive the feedback from customers both job seekers and employers about their experience at the center for review & analysis.

The WDB continues oversight of youth service to ensure that resources, opportunities for training and job development for youth are timely and relevant. The MWB Youth Department and Connecting Activities staff meets regularly with the MCC Youth Services staff to ensure that we are working with all 12 High Schools in the region. Full cooperation and communication are necessary to insuring they receive the services needed for in-school youth.

We follow the State policy for eligible training providers (ETPL). When determining continued eligibility, the MWB reviews the performance of providers as it relates to ITAs and other training through different funding sources. Depending on the top priority needs of our area, we engage in discussion with training vendors to educate them about the ETPL and suggest that they apply so that our job seekers have a variety to choose from that are local or are on-line.

ITAs are monitored through the MWB where interviews are done for both participants and training vendors. Feedback is provided whenever necessary to ensure the proper curriculum and training is in fact provided to the participant.

Through discussions with Equus, and MCC, the MWB suggested they take several approaches to providing services to remote areas as well as ensuring populations from these areas are aware of all training programs that the MWB has secured funding grants to include all our Youth Programs;

- 1) Operate remote sites in Wareham (Housing and High School), the West End of New Bedford (Temple Landing) and Lakeville to offer:
 - a. Career counseling services
 - b. RESEA counseling
 - c. Career Center Service seminars
 - d. Workshops
 - e. Distribute all training program flyers
- 2) Implement the use of new technology
 - a. Distance learning for workshops and seminars
 - b. Show them how to use Skype and Zoom
 - c. Update them on the use of social media
 - d. Virtual Reality headsets to provide virtual simulations
- 3) Offer services and information in other languages using
 - a. Videos
 - b. YouTube
 - c. Printed and electronic forms

MCC established pick up and drop off locations for youth documentation also at Wareham Housing and High School and Temple Landing. They are working on adding these types of services at Greater New Bedford Vocational Technical High School and New Bedford High School.

Investments were made to ensure all the proper adaptive technology is in place for our customers with physical disabilities. The most recent was the incorporation of Job Access with Speech (JAWS) to assist sight disabled customers. The MWB ensures through monitoring that the MCC follows all federal, state and local laws and protocols as described in WIOA section 18 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990(42U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) Discrimination against people with disabilities would not be addressed until 1973 when Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 became law, and later still in 1990 when the ADA was passed. The procedures and protocols will be followed in all three areas

1. Environment/Space -The MCC is monitored for compliance according to ADA guidelines. The MCC reviews the environment and space to insure compliance as well as respond to any of the needs a customer might request regarding their disability.
2. Technology/Equipment - The MCC is checked for compliance according to ADA guidelines
3. The MCC continues to stay abreast of new technologies for people with disabilities. The center will insure and make a commitment to customers with disabilities by having the most current equipment available. Programs and Training; the center will be checked for compliance according to ADA guidelines

The MWB ensures that the MCC continues to stay abreast of new technologies for people with disabilities and make available to customers the most current equipment. Our MOU Partners make us aware of certain needs of their customers which keep us in the know and compliant. The MCC continues to update programs and training for staff twice a year to ensure that all of the staff is aware and are competent in the area of service people with disabilities.

The MWB, MCC and MOU Partners have worked together for over three years to agree upon a shared common vision and purpose that continues to build trust and openness and recognizes the value and contribution of all members also needs to exist. Additionally, shared and transparent decision-making processes extending the scope of influence over and involvement with other services and activities will prove essential to our partnership. Shared goals and aims, understood and accepted as being important by each partner, lead to improved coordination of policies, programs, and service delivery, and, ultimately, better outcomes.

Through our efforts we have worked out the WIOA Partners to be co-located at the MCC. These Partners include MRC, DUA, ACLS, DTA, Job Corps, SCSEP, New Bedford Public Schools, UMASS Dartmouth Workers Education Program, Coastline Elderly, Ser Jobs and Bristol Community College.

The WIOA Partners are involved in the integrated service delivery strategies at the MCC with roles such as these:

NBPHS - GED/ESLOA (English as a Second Language Oral Assessment)

DTA - enrollment/follow-up with services

UMass Education - ESLOA/ GED

MRC – Customer Assessments

Coastline Elderly - Workshops for 55+

Job Corps – stationed in house at the MCC

Customers have real time access to all WIOA Partner programs through our referral process, located in the MCC on a scheduled basis, and by their email connection sent out regularly. WIOA Partners visit the MCC office regularly.

WIOA Partners are involved in the MCC Professional Staff Development meetings on a regular basis to discuss service delivery improvements for a wide range of individuals seeking services at the career center. The core group of partners was meeting pre-pandemic monthly to discuss cross agency, professional development, ensure that job developers are working together. Discussions on the shared customer flow and tracking will continue to evolve as we meet quarterly in FY22.

MCC assists in the coordinate the MWB's Partner MOU and bi-monthly meetings to ensure seamless delivery of services. Co-location provides staff the ability to learn, understand, and refer to the partners seamlessly. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) communicates the agreement developed and executed between the (Local Workforce Development Board), with the agreement of (Chief Elected Official) and the (OSCC Required Partners), relating to the operation of the one-stop delivery of service in the local workforce area.

In our continued efforts to create better communication models, partners are invited into the center during staff professional development to talk about their programs and what services they offer. In return, MCC visits partners at their locations to talk about services.

- MCC staff attends DTA orientations
- MCC offers intake services at New Bedford Housing Authority and the Immigrants Assistants Center

We currently use a partner referral form that tracks our customers as they work with us and other agencies. All partners work together to offer wraparound services and mutual understanding role's responsibilities as we move toward a full collaboration of workforce development.

We have focused conversations regarding framework, culture, values, and the approach of partner organizations was the subject at hand. Collectively, we concur that partners need to be clear about and understand their roles and responsibilities, defining who does what regarding delivery of activities. It was equally important to acknowledge the existence of separate organizational goals and objectives and their connection to jointly agree upon goals and objectives.

The MWB holds Partner MOU bi-monthly meetings at the MCC pre-COVID and Zoom meetings for the past year. During these meetings we recognize and acknowledge the opportunity for learning experiences and sharing good practices. Our partnership is considered a work in progress, meaning that we agree to a range of success criteria regarding maintaining the partnerships. This is ensured through feedback that flows to and from the partners for consideration for revisions and partnership aims, objectives, and arrangements.

Several speakers have been invited to share their knowledge and expertise at MOU Partner meetings like updates on the homeless populations, experts from DUA with questions around training impacts for UI customers and our regional bus company SRTA representative that joined our MOU as a permanent member.

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

WIOA title I formula funds allocated to local areas for adults and dislocated workers are used to provide career and training services through the one-stop delivery system. We determine the most appropriate mix of these services, but both types are available for eligible adults and dislocated workers. Different eligibility criteria apply for each type of services. *See* §§ 680.120, 680.130, and 680.210.

WIOA title I funds may be used to provide the additional services described in WIOA sec. 134(d), including:

Job seeker services, such as:

- Customer support to enable individuals with barriers to employment (including individuals with disabilities) and veterans, to navigate among multiple services and activities;
- Training programs for displaced homemakers and for individuals training for nontraditional employment (as defined in WIOA sec. 3(37) as occupations or fields of work in which individuals of one gender comprise less than 25 percent of the individuals so employed), in conjunction with programs operated in the local area;
- Work support activities for low-wage workers, in coordination with one-stop partners, which will provide opportunities for these workers to retain or enhance employment. These activities may include any activities available under the WIOA adult and dislocated worker programs in coordination with activities and resources available through partner programs. These activities may be provided in a manner that enhances the worker's ability to participate, for example by providing them at nontraditional hours or providing on-site child care;
- Supportive services, including needs-related payments, as described in subpart G of this part; and
- Transitional jobs, as described in § 680.190, to individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history;

Coordination activities, such as:

- Employment and training activities in coordination with child support enforcement activities, as well as child support services and assistance activities, of the State and local agencies carrying out part D of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 651 *et seq.*);
- Employment and training activities in coordination with cooperative extension programs carried out by the Department of Agriculture;
- Employment and training activities in coordination with activities to facilitate remote access to services provided through a one-stop delivery system, including facilitating access through the use of technology;

- Improving coordination between workforce investment activities and economic development activities carried out within the local area involved, and to promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services;
- Improving services and linkages between the local workforce development system (including the local one-stop delivery system) and employers, including small employers, in the local area;
- Strengthening linkages between the one-stop delivery system and the unemployment insurance programs; and
- Technical assistance for one-stop centers, partners, and eligible training providers (ETPs) on the provision of service to individuals with disabilities in local areas, including staff training and development, provision of outreach and intake assessments, service delivery, service coordination across providers and programs, and development of performance accountability measures;
- Activities to adjust the economic self-sufficiency standards referred to in WIOA sec. 134(a)(3)(A)(xii) for local factors or activities to adopt, calculate or commission for approval, economic self-sufficiency standards for the local areas that specify the income needs of families, by family size, the number and ages of children in the family, and sub-State geographical considerations;
- Implementing promising service to workers and businesses, which may include support for education, training, skill upgrading, and statewide networking for employees to become workplace learning advisors and maintain proficiency in carrying out the activities associated with such advising.

To that end, the MCC provides services to both adults and dislocated workers. This includes job counseling, assistance with training or retraining, layoff support, and job placement assistance. For special populations, such as older adults, younger adults, ex-offenders, limited English Speakers, veterans or the homeless, additional support services are provided. These services are designed to provide additional support in overcoming barriers due to a lack of soft skills, literacy skills, education, transportation, and more. Individuals are able to access information on jobs, training, and community resources, as well as access to trained staff members who are able to provide individualized assistance and training funds for those that qualify.

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

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

Youth populations represent the future workforce and a key element of a thriving local economy. Through the youth program administered by us through the MCC, customers are able to take advantage of an array of different activities designed to prepare them for the world of work. Youth can take advantage of many of the same offerings available to other populations such as staff assisted job

search, workshops, assessment, short-term educational training, work readiness skills training, on-the-job training and secondary education equivalency services.

One of the main components of the youth program is work experience, which allows youth, many of whom have never been exposed to employment, the opportunity to get practical hands on work experience while gaining valuable skills. For youth who are basic skills deficient, MCC staff work with them to improve literacy and numeracy skills through a variety of computer-based remediation exercises designed to refresh and improve reading comprehension and mathematical computation.

We have many career related assessments for our youth population that includes youth with disabilities. We feel that all youth benefit in participation in assessments of their prior work experience, employability, aptitudes and other interests. We offer multiple assessment tools depending on the youth's preferences, motivations and skills since all factors tend to affect their potential success and interest of different career options.

In order for youth to properly evaluate their employment options we educate them by providing reliable information about local and regional labor market on jobs that will provide living wages. The labor market information shared with them also includes the education and entry requirements. For youth with disabilities we provide information on workplace supports e.g. assistive technology and other accommodations.

These types of assessments are typically provided directly through WIOA youth program staff and many times through referrals from our MOU partners e.g. Department of Transitional Assistance, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind as well as other community-based partners and resources.

Youth that are between the ages of 18 to 24 however, could be assessed differently since they could participate in both WIOA Title 1 adult and youth programs concurrently. The best mix of services under youth and adult programs must be determined by our local program operators for these individuals. The school status at the time of enrollment will determine which program options will be appropriate for this population since young adults who are in school of course are only eligible for the Title 1 youth program if 21 or younger at the time of enrollment. During an assessment, if it is concluded that the young adult's needs can be met by co-enrollment in WIOA Title 1 youth and adult programs the program operator needs to track the funding streams that pay for the cost and ensure that there will be no duplication of services.

All Partners have agreed to prioritize services as outlined under WIOA. Under WIOA, the term "individual with a barrier to employment" is defined, but not limited to, a member of one or more of the following populations:

- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or homeless children and youth

- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system
- Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers
- Individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility (for TANF)
- Single parents (including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed individuals
- Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service among all eligible individuals; however, they must meet the WIOA Adult program eligibility criteria and meet the criteria under WIOA § 134(c)(3)(E)

Partners commit to offering priority for services within the parameters of their operations to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic-skills deficient, when providing individualized career services and training services with WIOA Adult funds. Priority of service status is established at the time of eligibility determination and does not change during the period of participation. Priority does not apply to the Dislocated Worker population.

We collaborate on and manage a number of different youth programs and activities throughout the year to help youth populations to find jobs/ learn about jobs, get remedial training, stay active in the summer and so much more. The following is a partial list of such programs and modalities:

Connecting Activities (CA)

Although previously operated out of the Chamber of Commerce, funds have allowed for a Connecting Activities position to become housed within the Workforce Board as of FY22. The CA grant has specifically been used to promote our entire brand as MassHire has programming and resources available to a significantly broad spectrum of youth in and out of school. In many cases, collaborative efforts between both the Career Center and WB team have proven to be effective in youth engagement, raising awareness and recruitment efforts for all programming.

Recent Connecting Activities Student Engagements

- Introductions, Soft Skills Seminars, Career fairs events with youth in schools and their Administration
- NBHS- 2000 (3 Job fairs, 6 Friday Morning Program information Sessions to Juniors and Seniors)
- GNBVT- 2400 (2 Job fairs, Resumes and Interviews Seminars)
- Old Colony - 900 (Program Information Sessions and paid Internships and Co-op Placements braided with STEM grant)
- Old Rochester - 175 (CA Information Session and Soft Skills Seminars)
- Global Learning Charter School 300 (Career Readiness Presanctions, Softs Skills Seminars)
- Apponequet - 518 (Job Fair with all grades)
- Trinity Day Academy - 200 (CA information Sessions, Leadership, Teamwork Skills and Career Readiness Seminars)
- Wareham Co-Op+ 20 (Career Readiness Seminars)

- Meeting with School Administrators - 100 (Discussed Funding Opportunities and Possible Events)

YouthWorks Summer & Year-Round

The Greater New Bedford Area YouthWorks Summer Jobs Program - YouthWorks is a Commonwealth-wide employment program that helps teens and young adults get the skills and experience needed to find and keep jobs.

The Youth Works Year-Round program includes three components designed to lead out-of-school youth ages 16-25 to occupational certification, unsubsidized employment or acceptance to a post-secondary institution. Youth participants may be those who are currently enrolled or new enrollees who are seeking occupational certification and private sector employment. Eligible youth will first complete a one week, 20-hour pre-employment training. After successful the youth then participate in formal training and transition to a pre-selected training program funded and approved by the Board.

We are responsible for overseeing summer employment opportunities to our youth through a New Bedford summer program. We work to ensure that youth gain valuable workforce experience and have a safe, productive way to spend their time throughout the duration of the summer. Per the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the following 14 program elements are to be provided to youth:

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary
- Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate
- Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include: Summer and other employment opportunities available throughout the year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing and on-the-job training opportunities
- Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved
- Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
- Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate
- Supportive services
- Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug & alcohol abuse counseling and referral

- Financial literacy education
- Entrepreneurial skills training
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

Partners agree and assurances are incorporated into our local Umbrella MOU with the above entities that the workforce board and the career center will conduct activities relating to youth to share customers between partners with a clear understanding of how we as multiple providers of services and resources will support youth.

We have re-designed the MCC customer flow and service practices across partner agencies, including ensuring the accessibility and availability of services to our shared youth customers in an effort to streamline duplicity. We all agree to utilize robust technology tools to scale-up practices and provide more significant supports for youth individuals with barriers to employment, including basic skills assessment, remediation, and career development tools; and to track and evaluate outcomes for the youth population. Together we have developed career pathways processes and systems for Youth 16-24 as well as youth with disabilities who qualify as a shared customer.

All Partners agree to prioritize services as outlined under WIOA. Under WIOA, the term “individual with a barrier to employment” is defined, but not limited to, a member of one or more of the following populations:

- Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities
- Homeless individuals or homeless children and youth
 - We will be making a connection and partnering with www.w-4u.org a homeless organization in an effort to better lives and connect the homeless to jobs
- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system

For youth who are basic skills deficient, staff members work with the youth to improve literacy and numeracy skills through a variety of computer- based remediation exercises designed to refresh and improve reading comprehension and mathematical computation. The MassHire Career Center host specialized workshops, specifically for youth to address issues unique to the population, such as financial preparedness and planning for the future based on desired outcomes and realistic expectations. The Board is a proponent of inclusion; youth with disabilities can participate in all of the activities available to all youth.

When necessary, MA Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) may be consulted for assistance if accommodations are needed, but it is of great importance that all youth are included, regardless of their disability status. Occupational and vocational training services are also available to youth. Youth may choose the same trainings available to Adults and Dislocated Workers.

Partners commit to offering priority for services within the parameters of their operations to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, youth with disabilities or individuals who are basic-skills deficient, when providing individualized career services and training services with WIOA Adult funds. Priority of service status is established at the time of eligibility determination and does not change during the period of participation.

Partners also agree to maintain regular communication and interaction via face to face meetings at the career centers and via email and/or telephone to ensure collaboration in the development of strategies to support career pathways for individuals with disabilities, including students and youth with disabilities, to enter and retain employment and to support appropriate cross agency referrals. We work collaboratively to identify consumers with disabilities who are appropriate for job driven training and employment opportunities offered by workforce development/career centers. The workforce board ensures access to career center space for informational sessions, meetings with potential or shared consumers and “job driven” training initiatives, as appropriate. As part of our on-going strategy, we provide annual input and feedback as part of the process of the required assessment of physical and programmatic access of MCC for people with disabilities.

The central focus of these initiatives is to:

- Educate youth about the career pathway opportunities available to them, and the training and education that will help them to successfully meet the workforce needs of local industry in growing sectors.
- Provide opportunities for youth to interact with local industry, and within different occupations. This may be through job shadowing, temporary work experience, or other hands on activities that provide youth the opportunity to learn about possible careers.
- Ensure all youth have basic literacy and numeracy skills, high school diplomas, English language skills, and appropriate job training to be able to earn a living wage.
- Reduce or eliminate barriers to accessing information or services, by developing smoother intake and referral processes, eliminating cumbersome or unnecessary steps to access services, and integrating youth feedback into program design.
- Provide supportive services for youth who have additional needs such as housing, childcare, or are struggling with a learning, mental or physical disability that is interfering with their ability to obtain or retain employment.
- Develop life and soft skills such as time management, conflict management, financial literacy and anger management.
- Promote and assist youth with receiving post-secondary training or education, including apprenticeships, vocational certificates or traditional two-and-four year degree programs.
- Align education programs with the needs of industry.
- Provide opportunities for youth to ‘earn and learn’, where they can receive wages while learning a new skill and training in a job.
- Engage with employers to who offer youth friendly employment opportunities.
- Expand opportunities for youth to network with local business and education and training providers.
- Expand access for teachers to interact more with industry.
- Provide training on entrepreneurship and small business in order to help their own businesses.

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

The MWB actively coordinates activities with education and training providers in the local area to develop and implement career pathways within the local area by aligning the employment, training, education, and supportive services that are needed by adults and youth, particularly individuals with barriers to employment. The MWB ensures that all necessary staff members from within our region are in collaboration with MCC staff for seamless referral process for both secondary and post-secondary education opportunities.

The MWB has an ongoing relationship with New Bedford High School, UMASS Dartmouth, and Bristol Community College programs to refer incoming customers in need of secondary education services to pursue further career opportunities. These education programs and partners are co-located at the career center for unified services and meaningful access to all WIOA partner programs. These partners also serve as mandated MOU partners and are engaged in the career center customer flow and connected through a referral system where customers are shared/co-enrolled participants. These partners are strategically involved in staff and Workforce Board Committee meetings on a regular basis to discuss service delivery improvements for a wide range of individuals seeking services at the MCC.

Coordinating services through Connecting Activities allows us to leverage resources to collaborate with current programming offered at the Secondary level such as Co-Op and internships, providing a holistic approach to career identification and work readiness. Our current work in developing a blueprint for regional collaboration, funded also under the Connecting Activities programming, has identified pathways in priority industries along with support systems that will enhance opportunities for success.

The MWB also ensures there is a selection of Youth RFP Bidders that offer internal HISET programs which offer not only a secondary education and/or high school equivalency certificate, but additionally a nationally recognized credential. All youth are encouraged to take advantage of post-secondary opportunities available to them following the obtainment of their secondary education.

The Southeast region is served by two community colleges; Bristol and Massasoit Community College and nine 4-year colleges and universities, Bridgewater State, Curry College, Eastern Nazarene, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Stonehill College, UMass Dartmouth, Wheaton College and Lesley College. The partnerships with the institutions are vital in providing specific post-secondary opportunities for customers. Working closely with each group ensures enhancement of services and that any duplication of services is kept to a minimum.

The community colleges offer workforce education certificate programs designed to provide specific skills for students so they may seek immediate employment. Students who complete certificate programs may also have the option to continue their career pathway by working towards an associate degree and receiving credit for studies they have completed. The university offers career pathway programs through articulation agreements with the region's community colleges.

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

We coordinate WIOA Title I services related to transportation issues with cooperation from the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SRTA) and Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD). The Director of SRTA is a member of our MOU Partner attending most meetings with all local and regional updates. We also rely on SRPEDD to help us understand traffic patterns for incoming businesses and capital improvement recommendations. The coordination with SRTA includes streamlining student bus pass purchases for internships and summer jobs along with promoting programs that will enable adults to better their employment options. MWB staff have had the opportunity to work with SRPEDD during the review one of their transportation reports to include the challenges that our job seekers were having getting to work destinations i.e. the business park, second and third shifts. These relationships provide us with the most up-to-date changes to the bus lines and the purchase of bus passes for those attending training or new hires to help with discounted prices during their first week of employment.

We contract with Equus, to administer workforce programs, including WIOA Title I workforce development activities that provide support services to their customers. These programs are governed by federal and state guidance. In addition, the MWB maintains local policies that provide minimum standards and promote safeguards against the misuse of funds. The MWB policy contains provisions that set documentation requirements and other parameters in the provision of support services for all workforce programs. It also sets parameters for the provision of specific types of support services, including:

- Transportation
 - Gas Money
 - Public Transit
 - Vehicular (including repairs)
- Basic Needs Assistance
- Child Care
- Work-Related Expense Assistance
- Other types of assistance as applicable to the various funding streams

We continue to work with our WIOA vendors as well as multiple MOU partners in the community to provide support as needed to ensure a youth's success.

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

The strategic plan implemented by our board and carried out by Equus, includes an approach for implementing a customer-centric service delivery model, which will assess current customer flow and identifies opportunities for improvement. Monthly partner meetings are conducted for staff to discuss

team-based service delivery, best practices, and challenges. Wagner-Peyser staff is typically made up of career counselors located in the MCC where our collaborative working environment provides the opportunity to coordinate activities and avoid duplication.

Labor market information that includes all quantitative or qualitative data and analysis related to employment and the workforce is provided by the career counselors that have been trained on the priority industries of the MWB including critical and emerging industries. The goal of LMI is to help both job seekers and employers make informed plans, choices, and decisions for a variety of employment needs.

We re-evaluate local MOUs to ensure our methods of integrated service delivery for shared customers and colocation agreements are up-to-date. We continually meet with our MOU partners to ensure staff development and cross training agreements. Our bi-monthly MOU Partner meetings have resulted in a successful referral system between agencies and a process for delivering services. In order to assist with ongoing coordination and communication, regular meetings are held between frontline staff and supervisors from both WIOA and Wagner-Peyser programs to discuss and coordinate service delivery on an ongoing basis, and to prevent unintended duplication of services. Partner agencies attend each other's staff meeting for program and service updates and continual communications.

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

We assure that the MCC under the operation of Equus, ensures (in accordance with all relevant state policies and procedures and as required under 20 CFR Part 651, Definitions; Part 652, Subpart C; Part 653, Subpart B and F; Part 654, Subpart E; Part 658, Subpart E and Subpart F; Part 678, Subpart B and Part 685, Subpart B that Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs) receive the full array of workforce development services, benefits and protections on a non-discriminatory manner and that the services provided to MSFWs will be "qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate" to the services provided to other jobseekers and that all workforce development services, benefits and protections are received on an equitable and non-discriminatory basis.

MCC identifies and registers Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs); provide such customers including those English Language Learners (ELLs) with services and information to include assessment of skill levels and abilities, career guidance, job search workshops, referral to jobs or training as appropriate, workers' rights and complaint system information.

The services offered to employers, in addition to referral of job seekers in response job openings, include matching job requirements with job seeker experience, skills and other characteristics, assisting employers with hard-to-fill job orders and other workforce development services as needed. Conduct appropriate follow-up with employers, applicants and other service providers; and report all relevant activities through MOSES and any other ad-hoc required reports. MWB / MCC continue to integrate, coordinate, develop, and implement systems and strategies to better serve the agricultural community.

MCC staff is trained to provide adequate staff assistance to each MSFW to use the Resource Room and for the use job order information and services effectively.

Local MCC front desk staff is required to determine whether an applicant is a MSFW at the time of the first interview, as defined by 20 CFR 651.10 using the MSFW Desk Aid.

- Applicant completes application/registration (membership) Job specialist reviews information with the applicant for completeness/accuracy
- Asks pertinent questions regarding demographics, employment history, education, skills and employment goals
- Completes registration process onto MOSES

In addition, all business services should be extended to agricultural employers since agricultural employers can benefit from WOTC, trade, veterans, bonding programs, job order, and recruitment services. Agriculture outreach must be conducted with BSR staff members serving as a “portable OSCC” for employers as well as for workers. Relevant assistance and information are always available to agricultural employers about labor laws and regulations affecting them.

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

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

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

In compliance with the state requirement to include workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA Title II, Equus provides a dedicated space for the ABE/GED provider in the MCC. The strategic plan includes action steps that will engage both

employers and education partners in the development of a "life skills" curriculum to create a seamless connection to training programs. The ABE/GED provider addresses both the adult education and literacy activities of WIOA Title II and is part of a pathway to training and career development.

The MWB and MCC have a long history of working with adults with ABE and ESOL needs through two main resources, UMass Dartmouth Workers' Education Program and the New Bedford Public Schools and Adult Basic Education & English for Speakers of Other Language Classes. These programs were created to help non-native English speakers develop the practical language skills needed to search for employment. Over the years, it has taught New Bedford area adults how to prepare a compelling resume, interview confidently, and use the computer for job search opportunities.

Workforce Boards in region #6 will continue to work together to catalogue available ABE/ESOL course offerings within the region and share relevant workforce reports, LMI, events and industry contacts.

The MWB and MCC staff works with state funded adult education programs both of which are our MOU Partners to fulfill a number of activities:

- Guidance and support to the adult education programs in serving shared customers
- Support to adult education programs related to the development of career pathways
- Participation in program quality reviews and monitoring for selected site visits
- Review of proposals for funding consistency and compliance
- Assist in employer partnerships in the placement of the graduates

For several years the MWB plays a role in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Program Quality Review (PQR) Team. Last year we participated in the review of the New Bedford Public Schools and Adult Basic Education & English for Speakers of Other Language PQR. Most recently in March 2021 we were part of the PQR Team for the Leadership interviews for the Director of Workforce Education and the Education and Career Advisor/Instructor.

It was comforting for the Director to know that we were at the review and could substantiate her answers and attest to how we work together to achieve like outcomes for our customers that sometimes become our shared customers. We are happy to report that they had fantastic reviews and the DESE review team was very impressed with how they run the program.

The MWB took part in the following segments of the program:

- Team gathering before the remote activities began
- Leadership Interview
- Advisor Interview
- Report Out to Program Leadership

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

Abigail Despres, Director of Finance located at The Quest Center for Innovation, 1213 Purchase Street, New Bedford, MA 02740. 508.979.1504 ext. 122 or abbey@masshiredgreaternewbedford.com

(14) Please describe the competitive process that is used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA title I activities.

The MWB adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local requirements for procurement of goods and services including, but not limited to 2 CFR 200 and 100 DCS 01.102. Youth and Career Center Operators are selected through a Request for Proposal process (RFP). RFPs are publicized and include all relevant information. Proposals are solicited from a number of qualified sources. We develop impartial review teams that are selected on a volunteer basis from our Youth Council members. Awards are made to those that offer the needs of our area, youth and other populations.

We follow approved Procurement and Contracting Policies and Procedures pursuant to MA Issuance 100DCS 01.102 as a 501 3C non-profit organization, 2 CFR Part 200.317-200.326 for the competitive procurement to any subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I activities. We procure WIOA Youth Providers every two years and the MCC Career Center Operator every four years.

The MWB promotes and maximizes the competitive procurement process. All of our procurements target resources based on approved training plans and demonstrated performance that includes cost determination and comply with Federal and State laws. For Youth and Operator, a Request for Proposals (RFP) process is used. Individual Training Accounts (ITA) initiate through the Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) that follow more of a state driven process outlined in a different section of the Plan.

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

The MWB adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local requirements for procurement of goods and services including, but not limited to 2 CFR 200 and 100 DCS 01.102. In addition, these local levels are negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official consistent with WIOA sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of our local area and to be used by the Local Board for measuring the performance of our local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA title I subtitle B, and the Career Center system in the local area.

The local board, in partnership with the chief elected official for the local area, shall:

(A) (i) conduct oversight for local youth workforce investment activities authorized under section 129(c), local employment and training activities authorized under sub-sections (c) and (d) of section 134, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area; and

(ii) Ensure the appropriate use and management of the funds provided under subtitle B for the activities and system described in clause (i); and

(B) For workforce development activities, ensure the appropriate use, management, and investment of funds to maximize performance outcomes under section 116.

FY 21 Approved Performance Goals by MassHire Department of Career Services

MASSHIRE WORKFORCE AREA: GREATER NEW BEDFORD			
WIOA PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 2021 STATE GOALS	FY 2021 PROPOSED	FY 2021 APPROVED
<u>WIOA Adult Measures</u>			
Employment Q2	86.5%	85.0%	86.5%
Employment Q4	78.0%	78.0%	78.0%
Median Earnings Q2	\$5,800	\$5,800	\$5,800
Credential Rate	73.0%	73.0%	73.0%
Measurable Skill Gain	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%
<u>WIOA Dislocated Worker Measures</u>			
Employment Q2	86.0%	86.0%	86.0%
Employment Q4	85.0%	85.0%	85.0%
Median Earnings Q2	\$8,300	\$8,300	\$8,300
Credential Rate	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%
Measurable Skill Gain	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%
<u>WIOA Youth Measures</u>			
Employment/Education Q2	81.0%	77.0%	78.0%
Employment/Education Q4	74.0%	72.0%	72.5%
Median Earnings Q2	\$3,500	\$3,500	\$3,500
Credential Rate	70.5%	67.0%	68.0%
Measurable Skill Gain	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%

FY 23 Approved Performance Goals by MassHire Department of Career Services

MASSHIRE WORKFORCE AREA: GREATER NEW BEDFORD			
WIOA PERFORMANCE MEASURES	FY 2023 STATE GOALS	FY 2023 PROPOSED	FY 2023 APPROVED
<u>WIOA Adult Measures</u>			
Employment Q2	79.0%	79.0%	79.0%
Employment Q4	78.0%	78.0%	78.0%
Median Earnings Q2	\$6,300	\$6,300	\$6,300
Credential Rate	73.5%	73.5%	73.5%
Measurable Skill Gain	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%
<u>WIOA Dislocated Worker Measures</u>			
Employment Q2	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%
Employment Q4	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%
Median Earnings Q2	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Credential Rate	71.0%	71.0%	71.0%
Measurable Skill Gain	45.0%	45.0%	45.0%
<u>WIOA Youth Measures</u>			
Employment/Education Q2	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%
Employment/Education Q4	72.0%	72.0%	72.0%
Median Earnings Q2	\$3,600	\$3,600	\$3,600
Credential Rate	65.0%	65.0%	65.0%
Measurable Skill Gain	45.0%	45.0%	45.0%

Further explanation of measures is defined in Attachment B at the end of this Plan

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

- a). what trainings are applicable to Board members?
- b). How do business Board members contribute to workforce development in your region?
- c). How does your Board support the business services in the career center
- d). to what extent does inter-/intra-Board collaboration result in positive outcomes for job-seekers and businesses?

First and foremost, we are workforce analysts developing, disseminating and understanding our current labor market and economic information and trends. Information about jobs and career pathways, described in accessible ways, is a critical function of our board. These are other ways and roles we play.

- A key role in collecting and analyzing labor market data for their region. This entails not only finding and using statistical data to paint a picture of the local economy, but turning that data into useful information for educators, policy makers and the business community. Often, statistical information is several years old, so we take a proactive role in using its convening role to bring together employers through focus groups and other mechanisms to understand the current and future skill requirements and hiring needs of key industries. Understanding and disseminating information about trends in employment is valuable to the MCC, community colleges, and schools.
- Mapping the gaps between the needs of the economy and the current delivery system is also one of our key functions. We try to scan our region to learn about the potential mismatches between the skills required and the current workforce, or the education and training needed by residents and the actual offerings.
- Another one of our critical functions is to collaborate with our MOU Partners, colleges and Universities and the MCC to create, collect and share information about jobs and career pathways, described in accessible ways for students and job seekers. Often, employers can't see the career pathways within their industry. It's easier for us to work with the tools we have on hand to map occupations and skill requirements in ways that can be used by both the job seekers who want to enter a field, and incumbent workers who want to progress in their careers and this also indirectly helps the employers.
- As brokers, we bring together systems to solve common problems, or broker new relationships with businesses and workers to create improvements to the system.
- It is not always enough to get everyone in the same room therefore we must play an important role in bringing people and groups together, providing them with access to the information that they need to make informed decisions, and brokering agreements between employers, government agencies, and various programs. By us functioning as an intermediary, we provide a mechanism to connect organizations, institutions, businesses and people to each other and to the services and information they need.
- We serve an important role in bringing together the business community in a particular industry sector and educational agencies to help "translate" from one system to the other, and to help develop services that meet the needs of business. We also broker training programs and services between employers and training providers.

- We have a very prominent community voice, one that advocates for the importance of workforce policy and providing perspective about the need for skilled workers hence we are an important nexus of communication, facilitating dialogue between employers, policymakers, and the public. We can and have helped regions articulate their needs to policymakers at all levels of government. The information we gather is used as part of our workforce intelligence activities to communicate key skill shortages, skill gaps, and the need for labor and/or job opportunities. We serve as the voice of the community, by articulating the needs of individuals looking for training and jobs as well as returning Veterans, people being released from the correctional system and individuals with disabilities that may have special needs or more intensive services. With our diverse membership we are uniquely positioned to tell the whole story not from the point of view of business, government, and labor or community group but from the whole. This voice can provide powerful messages to the Legislature, the Administration and other policy leaders.
- As capacity builders we serve to enhance the region's ability to meet the workforce needs of local employers. For many of our programs, success is measured by the dozen, when actual demand is in the hundreds or thousands. As capacity builders, we have a responsibility to scan the performance and effectiveness of MCC, training programs and other community resources, and ensure that services are high quality. We provide critical guidance to agencies in the form of technical assistance, well-articulated goals and performance measures, and insistence on excellence and continued quality performance levels. Using our role as convener, we bring together service providers and educators to inform them of current and future workforce needs, and to learn about best practices on the ground, and facilitate dialogue about the most effective way to serve businesses and job seekers. None of this is easy work and it takes due diligence and persistence on the part of the entire workforce board staff and its board of directors.

We take the following actions very seriously to maintain our status as a high performing board. These steps and actions support and align with our goals, strategies, and actions of our Strategic Plan.

- Focus on implementing, monitoring, and updating our Strategic Plan
- Frame our standing committee and staff meetings around strategic initiatives and utilize consent agendas
- Continue and maintain development of comprehensive talent attraction, development, and retention strategy for the region and prepare a pipeline of work-ready individuals based upon the needs of employers
- Continue to encourage innovation and technological advances
- Maintain and establish ourselves as the central hub for workforce development activities and be positioned as the “go to” source for labor market information and use that intelligence for decision making
- Continue to be business-driven and use a sector-based approach to engaging regional employers
- Be diverse and a reflection of the community
- Progressively track the effectiveness of initiatives and customer satisfaction and adjust accordingly
- Continue to include community members on committees in the planning and implementation of our strategic plans
- Continue to learn and understand how to build on partner strengths to align services and leverage resources for a common regional agenda

All Board Directors receive their initial training from the MWB CEO. This training usually takes place at the MCC with MCC management present so that members get a good sense of the environment first hand and are able to ask questions. A tour of the MCC is made available to the new directors. New director board orientation is provided using a power point which includes key contents of knowledge that is expounded upon by a robust conversation. WIOA is legislation that provides the framework for a coordinated system at the Federal, State and Local levels.

Conversations around these main topics occur during this initiation; our mission, vision and values, WIOA and the three pillars of WIOA, WIOA core programs, what boards do, how they as boards directors are able to help, all about board composition, what the staff does, all about the MCC and our operator, Equus, current board/ committees and structure and staff contacts.

A board director's main role is to serve as a voting director who is vested responsibility for strategic planning, governance, policy-making and performance evaluation.

As active board members their responsibilities include that they:

- Attend and participate constructively in all full meetings (not less than 3 meetings per year).
- Attend and participate in board retreats, working groups, planning meetings, workshops and other board development activities.
- Stay informed about our mission, policies, programs, and stay informed about our legal responsibilities, such as conflict of interest laws and duties as members of the Board, i.e. if a chair of any standing communities, pre-review agenda and approves minutes before posted on website.
- Avoid any conflict of interest or appearance of conflict and immediately disclose any potential or actual conflict of interest to the Chair or Executive Director/CEO.
- Serve as a year-round representative in the on-going task of member retention and membership growth.
- Assist in the development and monitoring of short and long-term strategic plans offering approval or change when necessary.

Board members are encouraged to register with the MCC and utilize all available resources i.e. MA BizWorks, Job Quest, request individual career day fairs, contribute to placement of trained job seekers and be active supporters of speed interview programs. Board directors learn first-hand the challenges of employers to remain competitive and job seekers to obtain meaningful employment throughout all ten communities.

As a business representative a board director must:

- Be an owner, CEO, COO or other individual with optimum policymaking or hiring authority
- Provide employment opportunities for in-demand industry sectors or occupations, as defined in WIOA Section 3(23)
- Provide high-quality, work-relevant training and development opportunities to its workforce or the workforce of others (in the case of organizations representing business as per WIOA Section 107(b)(2)(A)(ii)
- Be appointed from among individuals nominated by local business organizations and business trade associations

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

- a. How does the Board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are provided?

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are Federal funds for job seekers requesting individualized career services through a Career Specialist. These job seekers comprise the Adult and Dislocated Worker population of Title I of WIOA who need to increase their employability and marketability skills. These training services are made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers:

1. Who, after an interview, evaluation, or assessment, and career planning, have been determined by a MCC Counselor or MOU Partner, as appropriate?
 - a. Are unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment, that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, through the career services described above;
 - b. Need training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment; and
 - c. Have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services;
2. Who select programs of training services that are directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or the planning region, or in another area to which the adults or dislocated workers are willing to commute or relocate?
3. Who are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the cost of such training, including such sources as state-funded training funds, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Federal Pell Grants established under title IV of the Higher education 5 Act of 1965, or require WIOA assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance, including Federal Pell Grants; and
4. If training services are provided through the adult funding stream, are determined eligible in accordance with the state and local priority system in effect for adults under WIOA.

The MCC conducts comprehensive assessments to determine job seeker needs and assist job seekers in researching the best training option for them. The Career Center is able to provide these job seekers with the following services:

- Comprehensive assessments, development of an Individual Employment Plan
- Group and individual counseling
- Career planning
- Short-term pre-vocational services including development of learning both new and transferable skills
- Communication skills
- Interviewing skills

- Workforce preparation activities
- Financial literacy services
- English language acquisition

Training services can also be provided whether or not the job seeker has received basic or individualized career services first. When basic or individualized career services are not provided before training, the MCC staff and partner program staff must adhere to the Local Board's policy that provides justification of the circumstances in which to provide services without first providing career services. In accordance with WIOA §680.220, job seekers must at a minimum receive either an interview, evaluation, or assessment, and career planning or any other method through which the career center staff or partner program can obtain enough information to determine appropriate for training services.

At the local board level, we must ensure that training services are provided in a manner that maximizes informed consumer choice in selecting an eligible provider. We through the MCC must make available to the job seeker the Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL). In consultation with the staff responsible for career planning, the job seeker may select a training provider from the ETPL.

Contingent upon the availability of funds the job seekers will be referred to the selected ETPL provider and an Individual Training Account will be established. Staff must adhere to their local process when selecting job seekers for enrollment into training. The process includes a review of training justification that is linked to employment opportunities in the local area, region, or on another area in which the jobs seeker is willing to commute or relocate.

The MCC and Equus work under the direction of the MWB to assist individuals with an individual training plan. Individuals complete an assessment to determine program eligibility, are provided a demand occupation list, a list of approved training providers, and information to guide them to the state website for additional useful information. The Counselor makes recommendations and ensures the appropriateness of the customer for the desired training that the customer states they are seeking. All customers are referred to Massachusetts's state system, Job Quest, for list of approved individual training options and additional useful information needed to determine a suitable career trajectory and/or certification program.

MassHire Career Specialists provide a training packet for each customer and assists them in determining if their desired career path has a sustainable labor market that will provide them with eventual self-sufficiency and maintainable employment. Each customer is mandated to research at least 3 approved training schools and provide labor market information prior to the Counselor presenting the customer's case to the Training Selection Board.

Our current Cap is set at \$5,000 that has been voted on by our Executive Committee and ratified by our Board of Directors. The cap may be exceeded with written approval of the workforce boards 'Executive Director after a full review of the training package and all appropriate and signed documentation from the MCC staff.

The ETPL is a critical component of evaluating the quality and quantity of local training resources for in demand occupations. This list has a stringent set of requirements designed to ensure students of the

programs will be more likely to succeed. This list is monitored annually, and maintained internally by MWB staff who regularly research local training programs and evaluate them against both outcome and industry standards.

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

- a. On-the-Job Training, including use of the Commonwealth's waiver to provide up to 90% employee wage reimbursement to businesses with fewer than 50 employees
- b. Apprenticeship
- c. Incumbent Worker Training
- d. Work Experiences (paid or unpaid)
- e. Transitional jobs (§ 680.190 – *one that provides a time-limited work experience, that is wage-paid and subsidized, and is in the public, private, or non-profit sectors for those individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have inconsistent work history, as determined by the Local Board. These jobs are designed to enable an individual to establish a work history, demonstrate work success in an employee-employer relationship, and develop the skills that lead to unsubsidized employment*).
- f. Online remediation tools (such as WorkKeys Curriculum) for OJT/apprenticeship screening in support of cultivating and demonstrating workplace competencies.

On the Job Training (OJT)

The MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Board focuses on On-the-Job Training contracts when promoting as part of a specific program outside of the normal WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker i.e. Traditional OJT is always available and an option for both employer and job seeker. OJTs can be used to off-set Apprenticeships. When the traditional training (usually ITAs) option is used, the Operator, Equus, must follow the procedures established for the OJT/NEG local policy. When using an OJT model instituted by the State of Feds, the MWB's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and MCC staff work in concert with the Primary Operator in charge of a particular program.

MWB at times has an executed Master Agreement with MassHire Hampden County Workforce Board for the statewide Workforce Training Fund Program- on the Job Training (WTFP-OJT). MCC staff is made aware of this program and it is included as one of many "tools" in the employer engagement tool box when staff engages employers.

Traditional OJTs are also always an option. Reimbursement is set by the MWB. The MCC has a local OJT policy to follow if the opportunity arises.

Apprenticeships:

OJTs are also available via the Apprenticeship program. As of September 29, 2021, the Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS) approved MWB as a Sponsor. We cover all of Region 6 of MA, including the Workforce Development Areas in the Southeastern portion of MA. This includes the Bristol, Greater New Bedford, Southshore and Greater Brockton areas.

The workforce board recognizes apprenticeships as a necessary and viable mechanism for career pathways in priority industry sectors. In March 2020, we were able to secure an Apprenticeship Integration Manager (AIM) whose primary responsibility is to sell the apprenticeship program to local employers and match apprentices. The department has now expanded since receiving funding for a second staff member of the MWB as part of the Apprenticeship team. The Apprenticeship Integration Sector Specialist (AISS) is responsible for developing and implementing program strategies for employer outreach to create viable apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships within the SE region. In addition, the AISS will support employer sponsors and apprentices alike throughout the entire process. The AISS will be responsible for creating individualized apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships relationships with employers within Region 6; with the intent to create apprenticeships and pre-Apprenticeships opportunities for students and adults in the following industry segments; Manufacturing, Healthcare, Maritime Industries, or other businesses operating within Region 6. This position will work collaboratively with the MassHire Greater New Bedford Workforce Boards Apprenticeship Documentation Coordinator, the MassHire Career Center, and Equus to accomplish the goals outlined in the Apprenticeship Expansion Grant Scope of Work.

Incumbent Worker Training

Incumbent Worker Training is designed to meet the specific requirements of an employer or group of employers to upskill and backfill the entry-level positions or avert the need to lay off employees. Ideally incumbent worker training allows the employee to move into a higher skilled and higher paid job with the company, thus allowing the company to hire a job seeker to backfill the incumbent worker's position. Training generally increases both the participant's and the company's competitiveness.

An incumbent worker does not necessarily have to meet the eligibility requirement for career and training services for adults and dislocated workers under WIOA (CFR 20 680.780). The Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund Program (the WTFP), provides cash grants to employers to support skills upgrading training programs for their employees. This resource is discussed with every employer when visited by either the MWB or MCC staff. It is part of the discussion when covering all resources MA offers through MA BizWorks.

Work Experiences

The MWB & the MCC collaborate and strategize the use of paid and unpaid work experiences in both the youth and adult capacities of the MCC. The MCC's youth department engages in paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience. We acknowledge the four categories of work experience depicted in WIOA Section 100 DCS 19.106.1 in which youth must participate in summer or other employment opportunities, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, or on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities as defined in WIOA Section 3(44) and in 20 CFR § 680.700.

Transitional / Customized Training

Customized Training (WIOA Sec. 3(14)) is another form of a training plan for job seekers that is designed to meet the specific requirements of an employer (or group of employers). The training is conducted with a commitment by the employer to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training for which the employer pays a significant portion of the cost of training, as determined by the local board, with consideration to the size of the employer and other factors determined by the board and further defined in this part.

Online Remediations Tools

The WorkKeys ACT curriculum is used to verify attainment of foundational skills in combination with other services for career pathways, apprenticeships, or additional credentials. The curriculum is used for remediation for numeracy/literacy, as a screening tool for program/training placement, as a baseline skills assessment of basic workplace competencies mainly in these the competencies of Graphic Literacy, Workplace Documents, and Applied Math.

The MCC utilizes the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) knowing that these credentials/remediation tools can build customers' skills and fund career credentialing services for Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) participants. More specifically, we know that the effort helps to increase the educational attainment of job seekers and provides them with the opportunity to secure fulfilling careers in sustainable industries. Typically, the three tools used are the Career Ready 101/WorkKeys Curriculum, WorkKeys 2.0, and the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) which are all part of the ACT Workforce Solutions System.

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

In accordance with WIOA regulations, the MWB will provide for an up to 30-day public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of our local plan by representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations. Notices of the posting will be sent via email to our City Elected Official, Board members and MOU Partners advising where to locate the Four-Year Plan online noting the thirty-day review period from the date posted in the local newspaper. The MWB will make available copies of the proposed plan by placing a public notice in the local newspaper and through electronic means by posting at <https://masshiregreaternewbedford.com/>.

We will include with the local plan submitted to the Governor any such comments that represent disagreement with the plan.

(20) Describe progress made implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake, referral and case management information system for WIOA Partner Shared Customers.

The MWB, MCC and required MOU Partners have been discussing the intake and case management system for shared customers across agencies for the past four years. WIOA emphasizes technology as a critical tool for making information exchange possible, including customer tracking, common case management, reporting, and data collection.

To begin tracking our shared customers MDCS created an excel document for all partners to use. At current only DTA can actually access the MOSES data base for this reason. All other partners are using the shared customer form. Please see attachment form A. Partner Referral Form

The Partners engaged in this local MOU advocate for the development of a shared technology portal and to explore the use of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue Wage Reporting System and its data as a technology tool to provide some of the required data to meet performance metrics established under WIOA.

To support the use of these tools, each Partner agrees to the following:

- Comply with the applicable provisions of WIOA and any other appropriate statutes or requirements;
- Comply with the principles of common reporting and shared information through electronic mechanisms, including shared technology;
- Share information to the greatest extent allowable under their governing legislation and confidentiality requirements;
- Maintain all records of the relevant customers or Partners (e.g. applications, eligibility and referral records, or any other individual records related to services provided under this MOU) in the strictest confidence, and use them solely for purposes directly related to such services;
- Develop technological enhancements that allow interfaces of common information needs as appropriate;
- Understand that system security provisions shall be agreed upon by all Partners.

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

- a. How will the Virtual Tool be used once total public access is restored?
- b. How will staff be assigned / deployed?
- c. How will MassHire Board and Career Center leadership ensure that all staff is crossed trained to be part of the process and ensure seamless customer service?

The MCC management team designed and implemented a model that ensured compliance with MDSC Policy Issuance 100.082 to provide job seeker and employer a full array of career center services. Regardless of the point of entry or employment track, job seekers progress towards desired services either

in-person (when allowable) or virtually. MCC staff is fully outfitted to provide all career center services such as intake, eligibility, and case management, access to training, placement assistance, and follow-up.

MCC continues to increase capacity to deliver services to job seekers and businesses virtually. All our core services are online. Customers reported that our online services allow them to meet their RESEA requirements from home as well as attended CCS from their phone. MCC core set of virtual services are available to individuals during the initial intake process. Goals are established to ensure the delivery of high-quality virtual services and consider how these services are made accessible for target populations. The MCC has best practice committee in place regarding virtual services to customers. The “Best Practice” committee meets weekly to discuss barriers and solutions for our customer and the MCC.

MCC integrated the Business Services team into the delivery of their services. They streamlined the BSU access to case managers to increase placement to provide employers with the best possible talent. To this effort, the job matching is done through the Business Services unit sharing of prioritized jobs with MCC staff, and likewise qualified candidates are shared with the Business Services unit to inform them of the available talent pool.

To meet the changing demand, MCC coordinated virtual job fairs in two different sectors. MCC’s first virtual recruitment was with three transportation businesses. Their second was using the new virtual job fair platform, Premier Virtual Platforms, purchased by MDSC and provided to the 16 Workforce Areas.

To ensure they are consistently adapting to the changing needs of the MCC, the Management team meets weekly with staff to share updates on new policies or procedures, discuss performance goals, program updates, and potential job leads.

The MCC demonstrates virtual service customer flow aligned with requirements outlined in MWI 100 DCS 08.121: MassHire Virtual Services Delivery policy. The customer flow for all whether in person or virtually, that includes triage initial assessment, and all career services follow the shared customer flow model: Career Center Seminar/ RESEA services, Assessment services (TORQ, TAB, WKC), Career Counselor; Career Action Plan (CAP), LMI Research, LMI Assessment, Job Search, Job Development, Career Workshops, WIOA Training and Referral to employment, as well as Veterans Services if needed.

The MCC management team reviews and follows the DCS issuance 100.821 to ensure alignment between the State, and the Career Center services and flow of customers. This model is reviewed frequently by the management team. Most services are offered to customers in person or in a virtual environment.

Once public access is restored, MCC will continue to offer hybrid services for both virtual and in person services. The Board and MCC will continue to consider the most effective way to service and interact with customers both one on one and group settings. MWB and MCC will ensure all staff are receive all up to date and attend ongoing trainings on virtual services and this will also be a part of orientation for newly hired staff to ensure seamless customer service.

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

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

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

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

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

We continue to utilize the adopted local policy and process that ensures priority of service for recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with Under WIOA 2134(c)(3)(E), American Job Center (AJC) staff, when using WIOA Adult program funds to provide individualized career services and training services, must give priority of service to recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient (including English language learners).

MCC staff must prioritize services to these populations at all times, regardless of the amount of funds available to provide services in the local area. WIOA requires states to develop criteria, policies, and procedures for applying this priority, including monitoring local areas' compliance with this priority provision (see 20 CFR 680.600 and TEGL 19-16). These priorities are in addition to the requirements in the WIOA regulations at 20 CFR 680.650 that veterans and their eligible spouses receive priority of service for all Department of Labor (DOL)-funded job training programs, including the WIOA Adult program.

WIOA emphasizes providing services to individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA sec. 3(24), including some of the same populations that are to receive priority in the WIOA Adult program. Recipients of public assistance, individuals who are basic skills deficient, or those identified as being low-income represent some of the workforce system's most in need participants, and are the three priority groups that WIOA specifically mandates are entitled to receive priority of service (in addition to veterans and eligible spouses) for individualized career or training services under the WIOA Adult program.²⁵

We assure that Equus and MCC provide Career Planning services for targeted customers consistent with state policy. Customers targeted for career planning services include: WIOA Title I enrollees (priority shall be given to: recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are

basic skills deficient); military “eligible covered persons” (Veterans and certain spouses of Veterans) Veterans who are between the ages of 18-24, service connected disabled Veterans and any Veteran with a significant barrier to employment in compliance with Guidance from DOL/VETS; National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) participants; and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) participants.

(23). Attachments

Attachment A – WIOA Partner MOU Referral Form



618 Acushnet Avenue, New Bedford, MA 02740
Tel: 508-990-4000

Monday – Wednesday 8:30AM to 4:30PM
Thursday 8:30AM to 6:00PM
Friday 9:30AM to 4:30PM

Community Partner Referral

Instructions:

1. Email referral to Marie Franqui, mfranqui@masshiregnbcc.com
2. Provide Customer with a copy of the referral to bring with them to the Career Center

Select Agency Affiliation:

- Bristol Community College
- Bristol County Sheriff Department
- Bristol County Probate Court
- Coastline Elderly Services SCSEP
- Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)
- Educational Opportunity Center
- Homeless Service Provider Network Member:

- Job Corps
- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)

Date: _____

- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)
- NB Housing Authority
- NB Public Schools Adult/Continuing Education
- People Acting in Community Endeavors (PACE)
- UMass Dartmouth Workers' Education Program
- Veteran Services
- YouthBuild
- Other: _____

Contact Information:

Customer's Name : _____

E-Mail: _____

Mobile Number : _____

Job Seeker ID (optional) : _____

Whenever possible, please have customer enroll as a Career Center Member at: <https://jobquest.detma.org>

For the Following Services:



- Career Center Seminar
- Education
- Job Search
- Training
- Veteran Services
- Workshops

Comments

Career Center Staff Use Only:



Appointment Date : _____ Time : _____

Reasonable Accommodations are available upon request. Please contact the Career Center at 508-990-4040.
Request should be made as soon as possible, but at least 24 hours in advance of a scheduled meeting.

Attachment B - Operational Definitions of Performance Indicators

WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance

- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program (for Title I Youth, the indicator is participants in education, or training activities or employment in the 2nd quarter after exit).
- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program (for Title I Youth, the indicator is participants in education, or training activities or employment in the 4th quarter after exit).
- The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.
- The percentage of program participants enrolled in education or training (excluding those in OJT and customized training) who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program.
- The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measureable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.
- Effectiveness of the core programs in serving employers. Definition of this indicator has not been finalized but will involve a combination of two outputs such as retention of the same employer in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit, employer penetration rate, and repeat business customer rate.

Local Performance Goal Proposals

Local workforce areas must propose goals for WIOA Title I programs. Local areas will have the State Wagner-Peyser (Labor Exchange) goals. For FY2021 and FY2022, local areas may accept the State Title I goals on any or all the measures, or local areas may propose a different goal from the State Title I goal. If requesting a goal other than the State goal, local areas must provide a justification with evidential data.