



MERRIMACK VALLEY WORKFORCE BOARD

Planning/Career Center Committee

Remote Meeting via ZOOM

Meeting ID: 846 211 6073

Passcode: 082661

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

9:00am

Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS IN PARTICIPATION:

Ann Marie Borgesi, Andrew Herlihy, Carol Riemer, Bob Wescott

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ron Contrado

STAFF IN PARTICIPATION:

Brian Norris, Corina Ruiz, Varsha Gandhi, Tracy Myszkowski

GUESTS IN PARTICIPATION:

Linda Rohrer, Dawn Beati

I. Approval of Minutes of the September 27, 2021, meeting (vote required)

A quorum being present, Chairwoman Ann Marie Borgesi called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and then called for a motion on the minutes of the September 27, 2021, meeting.

Motion by Carol Reimer, seconded by Bob Wescott, to approve the minutes of the September 27, meeting as submitted. Motion passed.

II. Performance Update

Brian Norris presented the FY 2022 Labor Exchange Program and WIOA Performance Summary for the MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center Lower Merrimack Valley Workforce Development Area through October 31, 2021.

**FY 2022 LABOR EXCHANGE PROGRAM and WIOA PERFORMANCE SUMMARY
for the MASSHIRE MERRIMACK VALLEY CAREER CENTER**

**LOWER MERRIMACK VALLEY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA
FISCAL YEAR 2022**

| PROGRAM ACTIVITY | ANNUAL PLAN | ACTUAL TO DATE as of 10.31.2021 | PERCENTAGE OF PLAN |
|---|--------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Job Seekers Served | | | |
| 1. Total Job Seekers Served | 6,300 | 2,328 | 37% |
| a. Job Seekers Unemployed | 5,800 | 2,091 | 36% |
| b. Persons with Disabilities | 250 | 103 | 41% |
| c. UI Claimants Served | 4,900 | 1,294 | 26% |
| d. Veterans Served | 230 | 71 | 31% |
| 2. Total Entered Employments | 1,400 | 339 | 24% |
| Employer Services | | | |
| 1. Total Employers Served | 1,100 | 746 | 68% |
| a. New to Career Center | 450 | 390 | 87% |
| b. Repeat | 650 | 356 | 55% |
| 2. Employers Receiving Job Seeker Referrals | 250 | 84 | 34% |
| 3. Employers Hiring from Referrals | 60 | 22 | 37% |
| 4. Employers Receiving Enhanced Services | | 162 | |
| WIOA Adults | | | |
| 1. Total Participants | 94 | 29 | 31% |
| a. Carry-in Participants | 20 | 21 | 105% |
| b. New Participants | 74 | 8 | 11% |
| 2. Total Participants in Training (single count) | 85 | 19 | 22% |
| a. Carry-in Participants | 11 | | |
| a. New Participants | 74 | 8 | 11% |
| 3. Program Exiters | 47 | 3 | 6% |
| a. Enter Employment | 36 | 1 | 3% |
| i. Average Hourly Wage at Placement | \$16.00 | \$19.00 | 119% |
| b. Negative Exits | 11 | 2 | 18% |
| WIOA Dislocated Workers | | | |
| 1. Total Participants | 119 | 75 | 63% |
| a. Carry-in Participants | 61 | 67 | 110% |
| b. New Participants | 58 | 8 | 14% |
| 2. Total Participants in Training (single count) | 106 | 56 | 53% |
| a. Carry-in Participants | 48 | | |
| a. New Participants | 58 | 8 | 14% |
| 3. Program Exiters | 70 | 8 | 11% |
| a. Enter Employment | 57 | 1 | 2% |
| i. Average Hourly Wage at Placement | \$18.00 | \$21.00 | 117% |
| b. Negative Exits | 13 | 7 | 54% |
| WIOA Youth (Younger & Older) | | | |
| 1. Total Participants | 75 | 11 | 15% |
| a. Carry-in Participants | 10 | 9 | 90% |
| b. New Participants | 65 | 2 | 3% |
| 2. Enrollments by Program Element | | | |
| a. Occupational Skills Training (ITA's) | 65 | 3 | 5% |
| b. Work Experience | 22 | 1 | 5% |
| 3. Program Exiters | 33 | 3 | 9% |
| a. Enter Employment | 21 | 1 | 5% |
| b. Average Hourly Wage at Placement | | \$0.00 | |
| c. Entered Post Secondary/Advanced Trng (double count possible) | 2 | 0 | 0% |
| d. Negative Exits | 10 | 2 | 20% |

References: FY22 MMVWB annual plan; MOSES & Crystal reports

MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board
FY 2022 Performance Dashboard Ending October 31, 2021

| | | | |
|--|---|---|------------------|
| FY'22 Annual Budget: \$10,298,416 (as of 10/31/21) | | LMVWDA | 6.1% |
| Job Seekers Served | Employers Served | Unemployment: | Sept. '21 |
| 2,328 | 746 | Employers Who Hired a Job Seeker Referrals | |
| 2,328 | 746 | 22 | |
| % of plan: 37 | % of plan: 68 | % of plan: 37 | |
| WIOA Youth | Customer Demographics | WIOA Participants | |
| New participants: 2 | White 1,168 | Dislocated Worker: 75 | |
| Carry-in: 9 | Hispanic 998 | % of plan: 63 | |
| Total Youth Served: 11 | Other 162 | Adult: 29 | |
| % of plan: 15 | Age: | % of plan: 31 | |
| | 18 and under 16 | | |
| | 19-21 114 | | |
| | 22-45 1009 | | |
| | 46-54 408 | | |
| | 55 and over 781 | | |
| | Less than HS 177 | | |
| | HS Diploma/GED 850 | | |
| | Some College 353 | | |
| | Associate Degree 230 | | |
| | Bachelor's Degree 469 | | |
| | Advanced Degree 208 | | |
| | Unknown 41 | | |
| Labor Exchange Jobs | FY22 WIOA Funds Invested in Training | FY22 Non-WIOA Funds Invested in Training | |
| 339 | \$83,783 | \$160,136 | |
| % of Plan: 24 | | | |
| Average Hourly Wage: \$26.15 | | | |

The group reviewed the performance summary with focus on Job Seekers Served, UI Claimants Served, Employers Served, and WIOA Services. Discussion included challenges regarding the number of people looking for work and the high number of employers looking for workers.

Linda Rohrer said that people are thinking about what they want to do. Dawn Beati added that the Career Center BSU team is re-engaging with employers and Recruiters are working to attract new employees.

Brian asked what the category 'Employers Hiring from Referrals' represents, and Dawn said this number reflects the work on Recruitment Solutions Initiative (RSI) projects. These are hiring projects sent out to the field from the Governor's Office. The current MBTA recruitment for drivers is an RSI project.

Linda clarified that the WIOA Adult/DW/Youth reporting is primarily customers going into training programs.

Linda also clarified that a negative exit is generally the result of people who we have not been able to contact after 90 days, those who have moved, died, or who are not working with us any longer.

Linda said she is concerned as we move forward with the influx of ARPA funds. We have potentially 10 times the number of resources coming into the region, and we have to find a way to get people interested and back into the Career Center. Linda said she has some thoughts on this and is thrilled that MMVWB is moving forward with WIOA Youth and Adult RFPs to solicit group training programs. We seem to attract people when we're recruiting for a particular program for a targeted occupation.

Brian asked if the low number of youth participants is cyclical, and Linda said no that it's the same trend.

Brian asked the committee members if the discussion format was useful, and they said yes. Bob said he's not sure what they can do about the low numbers as it to be consistent across the state and country, "The Great Resignation". Bob added that people who resigned have found another job without

assistance. He added that some employers are prepared to provide their own education. They can't wait for the schools to modify what they're doing.

Brian is happy with the total job seekers served numbers over 4 months and the new customers that are coming in. It's a great sign and if we can find more unemployed people that are ready to go back to work, we'll be looking at some good performance numbers.

III. Budget Update

Tracy presented the Budget update as of October 31, 2021:

MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board Budget Report for FY 2022
As of **10/31/2021**

| | Budget | Expenditure | Accrual | Balance | % Used |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| MVWB Total | \$2,088,167 | \$433,007 | \$0.00 | \$1,655,160 | 20.74% |
| MVWIB 501c3 Total (Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium) | \$142,846 | \$43,963 | | \$98,884 | 30.78% |
| NECC Total | \$3,739,282 | \$0 | \$587,546 | \$3,739,282 | 15.71% |
| DCS Total | \$1,595,112 | \$309,844 | | \$1,285,268 | 19.42% |
| Customer Training Total | \$2,733,009 | \$558,404 | \$132,423 | \$2,174,605 | 25.28% |
| Youth Wages & Stipends | | \$425,454 | | | |
| Non-Youth Wages & Stipends | | \$3,787 | | | |
| Individual Training Account | | \$49,079 | \$34,704 | | |
| Group Training | | \$62,417 | \$97,719 | | |
| On the Job Training | | | | | |
| Needs Related Payments | | | | | |
| Support Services | | \$17,667 | | | |
| Total | \$10,298,416 | \$1,345,218 | \$719,969 | \$8,953,198 | 20.05% |
| | | \$1,345,218 | | \$8,953,198 | |

\$0

WIOA Training Total is \$83,783
NON WIOA Training Total is \$160,136

NECC expenses are accrued through September 2021.
DCS Expenses are through October 2021.

Fiscal Year 2022 Highlights As of October 31, 2021

Received additional funds for FY22 DTA Work Program in the amount of \$ 25,139.44, NECC portion is \$ 23,882.44 and MMVWB portion is \$ 1,257.00.

Received new funds for FY21 Trade Case Management in the amount of \$ 235,746.85. NECC Portion is \$ 156,772.00, MMVWB portion is \$ 8,251.00, and DCS portion is \$ 70,723.85

Expenditures are reported for the 501 for the City of Lawrence and MassHire WB. Expenditures for

Northern Essex Community College for the first quarter through September, and the Department of Career Services expenses through October.

- The MMVWB is facilitating procurements for some Youth and Adult training dollars that hopefully will be reflected as we move forward to the next quarter so we can start to obligate some of these fundings and figure out what our resources are.
- There's also a procurement out for space for a new location for the Workforce Board. We have a bidder's conference scheduled for tomorrow. We hope to have feedback and questions and then we'll determine how we'll move forward once the responses come in.
- MMVWB received a couple of new resources for the month of October: We received an increase in our DTA Work Program allocation of an additional \$25k and we received new funding for FY 2021 Trade Case Management in the amount of \$235K.
- MMVWB submitted an ESOL program grant application about a month ago. We received word that they will be sending the contract for \$335K and we are looking forward to getting that program up and running. This is not in the integrated budget. We are waiting for the contract start date.

IV. Updates

Brian informed the group that in addition to the updates discussed, the big task ahead of us now is acquiring space. We started the process through the city. Varsha informed the group that as of last week, there were 3 downloads of the RFP. Varsha will request an update of the revised bidder's list.

Brian mentioned that the MMVWB has three new staff members: Lynda Buote, Office Manager, Joe Eid, IT Director, and Valerie Luque, Grants Accountant. We look forward to turning our attention to our youth group and changing some job descriptions within the organization.

V. Career Center Report

Linda Rohrer introduced Dawn Beati, Operations Manager, MassHire Department of Career Services at MHMVCC and presented the Career Center report.

Comparison of Performance - Northeast Region MassHire Career Centers

* = comparison to FY 2020

| Through 10-31-2021 | Merrimack Valley | * | | Lowell | * | | North Shore | * |
|-------------------------------|------------------|------|--|--------|------|--|-------------|------|
| Job Seekers Served | 2328 | 87% | | 2215 | 119% | | 1607 | 92% |
| Placements | 339 | 211% | | 302 | 144% | | 201 | 134% |
| Employers Served | 746 | 185% | | 610 | 321% | | 366 | 101% |
| Employers Repeat | 356 | 110% | | 452 | 340% | | 246 | 109% |
| Employers New | 390 | 609% | | 158 | 277% | | 120 | 88% |
| Employers Listing Job orders | 103 | 98% | | 125 | 124% | | 133 | 76% |
| Job Orders | 246 | 111% | | 282 | 109% | | 176 | 76% |
| Employers Receiving Referrals | 84 | 89% | | 87 | 97% | | 96 | 128% |
| Job Seekers Referred | 163 | 52% | | 207 | 111% | | 127 | 115% |
| Employers Hiring Referrals | 22 | 157% | | 30 | 429% | | 71 | 178% |
| Referrals Hired | 83 | 244% | | 30 | 429% | | 95 | 167% |
| Through 10-31-2020 | Merrimack Valley | | | Lowell | | | North Shore | |
| Job Seekers Served | 2669 | | | 1863 | | | 1748 | |
| Placements | 161 | | | 210 | | | 150 | |
| Employers Served | 404 | | | 190 | | | 363 | |
| Employers Repeat | 324 | | | 133 | | | 226 | |
| Employers New | 64 | | | 57 | | | 137 | |
| Employers Listing Job orders | 105 | | | 101 | | | 176 | |
| Job Orders | 222 | | | 258 | | | 233 | |
| Employers Receiving Referrals | 94 | | | 90 | | | 75 | |
| Job Seekers Referred | 313 | | | 187 | | | 110 | |
| Employers Hiring Referrals | 14 | | | 7 | | | 40 | |
| Referrals Hired | 34 | | | 7 | | | 57 | |

Career Technical Initiative (CTI) Training Programs

- Greater Lawrence Technical School (33 participants in training)
 - Plumbing – started 9/27 with 12 students
 - Welding – started 11/1 with 13 students
 - Automotive – started 11/16 with 8 students

Other Training Initiatives

- Virtual Manufacturing – 7 students; 2 pending
- Healthcare Hub – 4 students; 2 pending

Southwick National Dislocated Worker Grant

- 38 enrollments (goal – 203)
- Most of current enrollees are in ESOL
- Outreach to date has been primarily to workers from the 3 companies that have attended CCS
- Have a list from DUA of all workers from the 3 companies that collected UI
- Calling each of them individually
- Have a contact from the Vietnamese community to help with outreach to Vietnamese Southwick workers

Staffing

Hires

- Assistant Director – Mariah Germosen (internal candidate)
- Southwick Program Manager – Esther Albuquerque (internal candidate)

- Business Services Representative, Professional Services – Leta McDonald (internal candidate)
- Program Specialist - Mary Rodriguez (internal candidate)
- IT Director – Larry Hinkle (internal candidate – still finalizing)
- Contractors – Resource Room Support-Rosa Viteri, Training Program Assistance-Lisa Remington

Departures

- Chief Information Officer
- Administration Coordinator
- Outreach Specialist
- Training Specialist
- Employment Counselor -Professional Services

Postings (14 open positions)

- Counselors
 - Returning Citizens
 - Southwick
 - 2 Youth
 - Industry Sector Team (Healthcare, 2 Trades, Professional Services, Manufacturing)
- Administration Coordinator
- Business Services Representative – Healthcare
- Office Support Specialist
- Clerk (support for Resource Room)
- Workshop Specialist (soon to be posted)

Job Seeker Customer Flow

- Centers are open for walk-ins Monday through Friday, closed Wednesday afternoon for staff meetings and training
- Job seeker meetings with counselors are scheduled appointments (both in-person and virtual)
- Math and reading assessments are in-person and virtual
- Resource Room is open for walk-ins
- Workshops are virtual
- Recruitments and job fairs are virtual

New Space

- 420 Common Street, NECC Building
- Designed a floor plan – now need to see what is feasible
- May have to extend time at 255 Essex a month or so to get build-out done

Bob Wescott asked if clients will be able to use NECC parking and Linda said no, parking is for staff. Linda said she's not sure about customers using NECC parking due to NECC student volume, but there is a city parking lot next door and there is more on-street parking in that area.

Dawn presented the BSR activities below. She added that it was a challenge getting job seekers to attend these events.

Employer Info Sessions

Event/Employer: P&G Gillette
 Location: Andover
 When: Thursday, October 7th
 How: virtual via Zoom
 Types of position(s): Manufacturing Associate & Senior Manufacturing Associated

Salary: \$21+ start
Registered to attend: 17
Actual attended: 15
Notes: RSI Initiative, Merrimack Valley is lead. Collaborated with DT Boston CC to fill positions in Boston & Andover

Event/Employer: Pfizer
Location: Andover
When: Thursday, October 28th
How: virtual via Zoom

Types of position(s):

Salary:
Registered to attend: 18
Actual attended: 16
Notes: Recruiters are following up with jobseekers and BSR's are following up with employer contact for hiring information

Recruitment Events

Event/Employer: DCS – MassHire Merrimack Valley CC
Location: Lawrence & Haverhill
When: Friday, October 29th
How: virtual via Premier
Types of position(s): Clerk, Office Support Specialist, 3 Employment Counselors
Salary: \$38,500 - \$47,800
Registered to attend: 29
Actual attended: 18
Notes: Recommendations for Clerk and Office Support Specialist in the works. EC positions to be reposted

Future Events

Event/Employer: MassHire Regional Job Fair (Merrimack Valley, Lowell, North Shore CC's)
When: Wednesday, November 17th
How: virtual via Premier
Employers registered: 103
Jobseekers registered: 116

Event/Employer: Statewide Regional Veterans Job Fair
When: Thursday, November 18th
How: virtual via Premier
Employers registered: 29
Jobseekers registered: 37
Notes: Veterans only, Federal Contractor employers

Recruitment Solutions Initiative Projects

P&G; Valvoline; Automotive Tech (positions, statewide recruitment in planning stages, 4 locations in our area); Amazon (several recruitment events for Amazon and subcontractors, pending outcome on hires); Millipore (supporting RSI project in Danvers (Assembly positions) and move with Millipore initiative in Jaffrey, NH); MBTA (PT Bus Operators, \$22 to start, in process of building pipeline and planning recruitment event).

The MMVCC participated in a Statewide job fair in August where 19K job seekers attended virtually.

Dawn said employers want our help, but we're having a tough time getting the job seekers. She feels that we need to do a better job of marketing and engaging the job seekers. It's more expensive, but for the August Statewide Job Fair, we started with 1k job seekers and after a significant marketing campaign, 19K registered.

Bob asked what are the specific requirements for the positions the Career Center is trying to fill. Dawn said they need interviewing, assessment, and recruitment skills. We are receiving and reviewing a lot of resumes that have come through from DCF, teachers, etc.

Linda said she would be very interested in someone who just graduated from college and mission driven who wants to help people with their career. We can train them for the positions once onboard.

Brian asked if there are efforts happening to reach out to the 19K people who registered for the August Statewide Job Fair or is it captured in MOSES. Dawn said they've all been logged into MOSES and each Career Center has received the list of job seekers from their areas for follow-up.

Brian asked what kind of person can fill the new position of Upscaling Navigator and Linda said someone who knows the region and is motivating.

Ann Marie asked what percent of your workforce does the 14 openings represent, and Linda said almost one third.

Linda added that she is considering hiring a couple of people as community organizers who would go out into the community, door to door, working with community leaders. Carol agreed that this would be a good idea.

Ann Marie added that healthcare has a lot of people who have the people skills for our job openings. "The Great Resignation" has a lot of people leaving healthcare.

Andrew asked if we collecting data based on gender and Linda said yes. He asked if we are seeing a shift where we are losing women in the workforce in vast numbers as we are hearing, and Linda said she doesn't think we're seeing that shift of losing women yet.

Andrew discussed the MBTA hiring initiative. He recently met with MVRTA, who is under new leadership, and they will be looking to hire bus drivers and other employees. He suggested that we may want to ask the new head of the MVRTA to speak at a full board meeting. They are making some interesting changes. Brian added that we've had some discussion at NRT and they are desperate for bus and van drivers.

Andrew added that Mayor Fiorentini has asked if the Southwick grant is up and running and Linda said yes.

Bob asked if there is a meeting scheduled to meet with the new City of Lawrence Mayor, Brian De Peña and Brian said he has reached out to Mayor De Peña and is waiting to hear back. Corina added that Mayor De Peña was a previous member of the board.

VI. Other Business

Linda shared the following success story: We have been working with a 19-year-old young man in our LEAD (previously BOG) program for a couple of years, who was in the custody of DYS. Through the LEAD program and in collaboration with DYS, we got him enrolled in the Bio Tech Lab program at GLTS. He completed the training - it was a little bumpy. Our staff and his DYS Counselor stayed with him, and he completed the program and was just recently hired at Charm Sciences as a Jr. Lateral Flow Analyst at \$19/hr with full benefits. This was a combination of work with our Business Service Rep, and our Counselor and the LEAD Counselor who continues to work with him to help him maintain that attention in the job. For a young person who had some run ins with the law, hopefully this is helping him to turn the corner. It's a stable, good job with career advancement opportunities.

Brian shared good news. At the last board meeting we talked about a huge increase in funding. There is more funding coming. Brian informed the group that the State has hired Boston Consulting Group to research the entire MassHire system to determine how to deploy millions of dollars of ARPA funding, one of the recent funding bills coming from the federal government. There is \$30 million on the table to increase CTI programs, to increase funding in the workforce competitive trust fund and for specific ARPA programs and we at the Workforce Board and Linda and Dawn are working to determine how to spend it.

VII. Adjourn (vote required)

Having no further business, Chairwomen Borgesi called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Bob Wescott, seconded by Carol Riemer to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda Buote

Recorder