



MERRIMACK VALLEY WORKFORCE BOARD

Planning/Career Center Committee

Remote Meeting via ZOOM

Meeting ID: 804 3012 8807

Passcode: 871717

Tuesday, December 21, 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, Lynda Buote

GUESTS IN PARTICIPATION:

Linda Rohrer, Dawn Beati

I. Approval of Minutes of the November 17, 2021, meeting (vote required)

A quorum being present, Chairwoman Ann Marie Borgesi called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. and then called for a motion on the minutes of the November 17, 2021, meeting.

Motion by Bob Wescott, seconded by Carol Riemer, to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2021, 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 November 20, 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 11.30.2021	PERCENTAGE OF PLAN
Job Seekers Served			
1. Total Job Seekers Served	6,300	2,675	42%
a. Job Seekers Unemployed	5,800	2,414	42%
b. Persons with Disabilities	250	120	48%
c. UI Claimants Served	4,900	1,522	31%
d. Veterans Served	230	92	40%
2. Total Entered Employments	1,400	413	30%
Employer Services			
1. Total Employers Served	1,100	846	77%
a. New to Career Center	450	434	96%
b. Repeat	650	412	63%
2. Employers Receiving Job Seeker Referrals	250	127	51%
3. Employers Hiring from Referrals	60	26	43%
4. Employers Receiving Enhanced Services		255	
WIOA Adults			
1. Total Participants	94	32	34%
a. Carry-in Participants	20	21	105%
b. New Participants	74	11	15%
2. Total Participants in Training (single count)	85	21	25%
a. Carry-in Participants	11		
a. New Participants	74	10	14%
3. Program Exiters	47	4	9%
a. Enter Employment	36	2	6%
i. Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$16.00	\$21.00	131%
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	12	17%
a. Enter Employment	57	3	5%
i. Average Hourly Wage at Placement	\$18.00	\$18.88	105%
b. Negative Exits	13	9	69%
WIOA Youth (Younger & Older)			
1. Total Participants	75	12	16%
a. Carry-in Participants	10	9	90%
b. New Participants	65	3	5%
2. Enrollments by Program Element			
a. Occupational Skills Training (ITA's)	65	4	6%
b. Work Experience	22	1	5%
3. Program Exiters	33	4	12%
a. Enter Employment	21	1	5%
b. Average Hourly Wage at Placement		\$17.50	
c. Entered Post Secondary/Advanced Trng (double count possible)	2	0	0%
d. Negative Exits	10	1	10%

References: FY22 MMVWB annual plan; MOSES & Crystal reports

MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board
FY 2022 Performance Dashboard Ending November 30, 2021

FY'22 Annual Budget: \$10,756,996 (as of 11/30/21)		LMVWDA Unemployment: 5.9% Oct. '21
Job Seekers Served <p align="center">2,675</p> % Of Plan: 42	Employers Served <p align="center">846</p> % Of Plan: 77	Employers Who Hired a Job Seeker Referrals <p align="center">26</p> % Of Plan: 43
WIOA Youth New participants: 3 Carry-in: 9 Total Youth Served: 12 % Of Plan: 16	Customer Demographics White 1,356 Hispanic 1,145 Other 174 <hr/> Age: 18 and under 17 19-21 121 22-45 1182 46-54 472 55 and over 883 Less than HS 206 HS Diploma/GED 965 Some College 390 Associate Degree 267 Bachelor's Degree 546 Advanced Degree 244 Unknown 57	WIOA Participants Dislocated Worker: 75 % Of Plan: 63 Adult: 32 % Of Plan: 34
Labor Exchange Jobs <p align="center">413</p> % Of Plan: 30 Average Hourly Wage: \$27.30	FY22 WIOA Funds Invested in Training <p align="center">\$102,067</p>	FY22 Non-WIOA Funds Invested in Training <p align="center">\$158,656</p>

Brian noted that we're on target with Job Seeker Served and Employers Services reporting. Like last month, we're behind in our numbers for WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Workers and WIOA Youth. We're struggling to find and serve new customers. Brian asked if there were any questions and there were no questions.

III. Budget Update

Tracy Myszkowski presented the Budget update as of November 30, 2021:

MassHire Merrimack Valley Workforce Board Budget Report for FY 2022

As of **11/30/2021**

	Budget	Expenditure	Accrual	Balance	% Used
MVWB Total	\$2,230,961	\$553,686	\$0.00	\$1,677,275	24.82%
MVWIB 501c3 Total (Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium)	\$142,847	\$55,282		\$87,564	38.70%
NECC Total	\$3,793,089	\$0	\$587,546	\$3,793,089	15.49%
DCS Total	\$1,595,112	\$309,844		\$1,285,268	19.42%
Customer Training Total	\$2,994,988	\$575,276	\$138,072	\$2,419,712	23.82%
Youth Wages & Stipends		\$431,171			
Non-Youth Wages & Stipends		\$3,787			
Individual Training Account		\$60,234	\$41,833		
Group Training On the Job Training		\$62,417	\$96,239		
Needs Related Payments					
Support Services		\$17,667			
Total	\$10,756,996	\$1,494,088	\$725,618	\$9,262,908	20.64%
		\$1,494,088		\$9,262,908	

\$0

WIOA Training Total is \$102,067
 NON WIOA Training Total is \$158,656

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

The expenditures for the MassHire WB are current through November. The Northern Essex Community College accrued expenses are reported through September and Department of Career Services expenses are reported through October.

- In November, we received an additional \$122k in our Connecting Activities Program. Approximately half of this money will be designated to support the Youth enrolled in this program, the providers that are going to be serving the youth, etc. The other half will be designated to staff and relocation costs.
- We have requested a one-month extension on our license agreement at our current location. It ends at the end of January, and we are hopeful that we will have a one-month extension signed this week that will bring us through the end of February.
- We have a procurement out for a new space. We submitted an addendum last week to extend the due date to the beginning of January, with site visits also occurring in the beginning of January and the selection process thereafter. We're hoping to be in our new space by the end of February or early March.
- We released a procurement last week for \$320k for youth programing. We're hoping to fund four programs.

- We're also going to work on a WIOA Youth procurement for approximately \$240k for up to three programs. This procurement will be brought to this committee and the Board in January for review and approval.

Tracy asked if there were any questions and there were no questions.

IV. Updates

Brian informed the group that we submitted a one-month extension to our RFP for new space for approval. We've extended the due date for the bids to January 4, 2022. We are extending the RFP in response to questions received at the Bidder's Conference about the lack of time between awarding the contract and the ability to build out the space. Three of the Planning Committee members are participating on the Evaluation Committee, and we will be scheduling site visits on January 5th and 6th.

Brian has not yet met with Mayor De Peña. He has had multiple interactions with the mayor's staff and will be working to schedule time to meet.

Program Updates:

- ESOL/Advanced Manufacturing program with Greater Lawrence Technical School starts in February. There will be paraprofessionals in class to provide translation assistance to students. The target audience is Spanish speaking people primarily from Lawrence, Methuen and Haverhill who meet at minimum, a 5th grade English level. Students will receive contextualized instruction in precision machining. We are in process of hiring paraprofessionals and looking for bilingual teachers for this program.
- We continue to work on the Health Care Hub program, a grant we received from Comm Corps to fill training slots for five Medical Assistants (MAs) and ten Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs). We have filled all five Medical Assistant slots and four CNA slots. Customers are expressing interest in MA training, and we asked Comm Corps if we can swap some of the CNA slots for MA slots. This request was denied. We'll continue to enroll MAs through WIOA training and continue to look for CNAs for the grant. The second part of the program is to place incumbent workers in continued training along a nursing path. The Career Center will be responsible for placing three of the MA and CNA trainees who gain employment into continued training. The grant program manager will work with our healthcare partners to find ten additional incumbent workers for the program. Additional funds will be available to support the Career Center for case management for the additional incumbent workers.
- The MMVWB is reviewing all our agency policies and procedures and are close to finishing up a work schedule policy that includes rules regarding remote and hybrid work schedules.

Bob Westcott asked if 203 is the total number of Southwick Dislocated Workers laid off and Linda Rohrer said no, there were over 600 workers laid off from Southwick. The Career Center goal is to enroll 200 for the grant. We have contacted all the workers several times and are working to get them enrolled in programs. Bob asked if we think they have found other jobs and Linda said no. Bob added maybe they are collecting unemployment benefits and maybe the pressure is not there. Brian added that we are still waiting for the big influx of people seeking services. Maybe it will happen after the holidays.

Andrew Herlihy asked if there is a youth RFP currently posted because there are a couple of groups in Haverhill looking to get involved. Brian said yes, an RFP went out late last week. We're looking for agencies who will provide cohort-type training. Andrew asked if the information is on the MMVWB website and Corina said yes, interested agencies can request a copy of the RFP via email to Varsha Gandhi. Brian added that he is hoping that Make It Haverhill or HP3 might show interest. Andrew added that Leaving the Streets Ministry is working with youth coming out of the criminal justice system and they are always looking for funding. Brian met with Tom O'Donnell from UMass IHub in Haverhill, and they want to get involved with agencies in Haverhill. Tom envisions training at the IHub for various programs.

V. Career Center Report

Linda Rohrer presented the Career Center report.

**MassHire Merrimack Valley Career Center
Planning and Career Center Committee Meeting**

**Career Center Highlights
December 21, 2021**

Career Technical Initiative (CTI) Training Programs - Recruiting

- Greater Lawrence Technical School
 - HVAC – 12 students – targeted to begin 1/10
 - Carpentry – 12 students – targeted to begin 2/7

ESOL Enhanced Advanced Manufacturing Training – Recruiting

- Greater Lawrence Technical School
 - 15 students – targeted to begin 2/7

Other Training Initiatives

- Virtual Manufacturing – 14 participants
- Healthcare Hub
 - Medical Assistants Plan = 5; Currently enrolled = 5
 - CNAs Plan = 10; Currently enrolled = 4

Southwick National Dislocated Worker Grant

- 57 enrollments – increased by 19 over past month (goal – 203)
- Continuing outreach

Staffing

Hires

- Contractor – Workshop Designer and Presenter

Departures

- Contractor – Workshop Designer and Presenter – retiring end of December
- Recruiter – family health emergency (will stay on as a PT contractor and work remotely)
- Employment Counselor? – medical leave

Postings

- Counselors (multiple positions)
- Administration Coordinator
- Business Services Representative – Healthcare
- Office Support Specialist
- Clerk (support for Resource Room)
- Workshop Specialist (soon to be posted)

New Space – 420 Common Street, 2nd Floor

- Meeting with cubicle designer and sales
- Implementation plan with timeline for move tasks – purging and packing
- Plan is to be out of 255 Essex Street by end of February 2022

Linda informed the group that the Career Center is providing information sessions and reaching out through all channels to identify people for training programs. They are reaching out to Southwick unenrolled customers by mail and connecting with organizations that serve the Vietnamese population as there was a group of Vietnamese people affected at Southwick. Phillips, North Andover, and 3M Touch Systems are also involved in this grant.

Linda discussed challenges with marketing and recruitment. She would like to bring in a marketing consultant. They are looking at advertising on buses, at train stations, etc. All Career Centers are facing these same problems and she doesn't know if investing the resources will make a difference. There will be more training money coming and Linda wants to make sure marketing is done in a methodical way that yields results. The Career Center sends weekly emails to a distribution of 40,000 individuals throughout the region and provides information to customers who attend Career Center Seminars and workshops. They are active on their website and social media, but Linda is not satisfied with what the yields are.

Bob suggested sending a work-related item that goes right into their hands with a personalized message. Linda said that a marketing consultant may help with the most effective way of doing this. She has started to pursue hiring and training outreach people to go out into the community, door-to-door, with Career Center materials, targeting specific neighborhoods, knowing the demographic, and matching that with training opportunities. Bob added that that Mayor De Peña knows the community very well and may be able to provide Linda with some advice.

Ann Marie told Linda that Greater Lawrence Family Health Care (GLFHC) met with AgeSpan, rebranded and formerly Elder Services, to discuss a partnership where their community health staff work with GLFHC patients and all people, including younger families throughout the Merrimack Valley to help with life challenges including jobs, job security, housing, and income. Ann Marie offered to introduce Linda and the Career Center to AgeSpan and this program. Linda accepted Anne Marie's offer of introduction.

There are 14 job openings at the Career Center. The LEAD Counselor has resigned. They are also interviewing for Counselors and have open positions for an Administration Coordinator and Office Support Specialist. The Resource Room Clerk position is filled.

The Career Center is moving to 420 Common Street. They are coordinating a meeting with the cubicle designer, cleaning up and identifying items they don't want to take with them, and they are in process of purchasing laptops and new equipment for the new space.

Dawn presented the Career Center BSR activities below.

Employer Info Sessions

Event/Employer: MBTA
Location: Lawrence & Haverhill
When: December 9th & 14th
How: virtual Zoom
Types of position(s): Bus Operators
Salary: \$22/hr
Actual attended: 274 (26 from Merrimack Valley)
Notes: Regional Event (NE & Boston), interviewing to begin in mid-January

Recruitment Events

Event/Employer: MassHire Regional Job Fair (Merrimack Valley, Lowell, North Shore CC's)
When: Wednesday, November 17th
How: virtual via Premier
Employers attended: 92 (46 from Merrimack Valley)
Jobseekers registered: 79 (45 from Merrimack Valley)

Event/Employer: Statewide Regional Veterans Job Fair
When: Thursday, November 18th
How: virtual via Premier
Employers registered: 34
Jobseekers registered: 52
Notes: Veterans only, Federal Contractor employers

Event/Employer: NRT
Location: Methuen
When: Thursday, December 9th
How: virtual Premier
Types of position(s): Bus & Van Drivers
Salary: \$16/hr
Registered to attend: 7
Actual attended: 2
Notes: In process of scheduling an Info Session

Event/Employer: DCS #2 – MassHire Merrimack Valley CC
Location: Lawrence & Haverhill
When: Friday, December 10th
How: virtual via Premier
Types of position(s): Office Support Specialist, 3 Employment Counselors, Veteran Employment Rep
Salary: \$45,500 - \$49,800
Registered to attend: 20
Actual attended: 17
Notes: Round 2 interviews in process

Future Events

Event/Employer: MassHire Merrimack Valley Industry Sector Job Fairs
When:

- 2/10 Healthcare
- 2/15 Manufacturing
- 2/17 Professional Services
- 3/10 Construction & Trades

How: virtual via Premier

Chairwoman Borgesi ask if there were any questions for Linda or Dawn and there were no questions.

VI. Other Business

Andrew asked if the MMVWB is part of the move with the Career Center. Brian said yes, the MMVWB is moving as well. The Career Center was not required to go out for procurement and Northern Essex has encouraged them to move to space at 420 Common Street. The MMVWB must follow the procurement process and bids are due January 4, 2022.

Andrew added that the U.S. Economic Development Administration as part of the Department of Commerce has a program called The Good Jobs Challenge, that connects Americans with training opportunities for in-demand skills. It's due January 26, 2022. He asked if we were looking at this. Brian said no, however, we are working with MIT who is working on a statewide bid for manufacturing technologist training. There are two or three other agencies in the state who are doing statewide or regional bids. We've signed letters of support including Massachusetts Technology Collaborative for robotics. Brian welcomes ideas for grants we should apply for.

Bob asked how much of the ESOL/Advanced Manufacturing training is teaching English. Or is it essentially moving forward in manufacturing at that level? Brian said yes, it's moving forward in manufacturing at that level with some enhancements including translating concepts, learning feeds and speeds, mathematical, measurement and safety terms. It's built as a contextualized English training for manufacturing terms and concepts. We expect that through the process and as participants become employed, their English skills will develop. Bob asked if we have a connection for participants if they are interested in learning more English. Brian said that there are various adult English education programs available, and it would be great if workplace partners are willing to provide English training on-site. More progressive companies are bringing in outside vendors to do on-site English training. The big problem we're working to solve is that too many people who sign up for training are rejected because they don't reach the 8th grade level in English. If this program is successful with a 6th grade English level, we may be able to go lower. Comm Corps is funding this and looking at us to learn what the best method is. Linda is hoping that we can find participants.

VII. Adjourn (vote required)

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

Motion by Andrew Herlihy, seconded by Bob Wescott to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda Buote

Recorder