



**GREATER LOWELL
WORKFORCE BOARD**

Greater Lowell Workforce Area

Executive Summary: Fiscal Year 2022 Workforce Development Operational Plan

City of Lowell, Towns of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable,
Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, and Westford

GREATER LOWELL WORKFORCE AREA

Executive Summary of the Fiscal Year 2022 Workforce Development Operational Plan

I. INTRODUCTION

The MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board (MHGLWB), in partnership with the Chief Elected Official (CEO), Eileen Donoghue, Manager, City of Lowell, is responsible for developing an Annual Plan for Fiscal Year 2022 and submitting the plan to the MassHire Department of Career Services. Local Workforce Development Boards, through the annual planning process, must assure that effective service and positive outcomes remain the overarching goal for all local providers and that quality is not compromised in the wake of challenges posed to the workforce system.

In late FY'20, the COVID-19 pandemic greatly increased the unemployment rate and despite of the exponential increase in unemployment funding continued to decrease. In late FY'21 the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed, and we are seeing a recovery in the economy with unemployment rates reducing getting closer to pre-pandemic unemployment rates. As of June 2021, the unemployment rate for Greater Lowell was 5.3% compared to 14.5% in June 2020.

After several years of declining federal Department of Labor funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), FY'22 WIOA funding has increased 23.9% from FY'21. This increase in funding is vital to support the region's business needs and workforce as it continues to need assistance to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. MHGLWB also continues to focus on developing and strengthening partnerships, leveraging resources, and obtaining grants outside of core funding.

The MHGLWB will continue strong collaboration and integration with its partners to maximize regional resources and sharing of best practices for effective service delivery in support of our goals through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). In addition, Greater Lowell will continue partnering with the Merrimack Valley and North Shore workforce regions to implement the goals and strategies outlined in the Northeast Labor Market Blueprint.

In collaboration with our industry and educational partners, the region looks forward to continuing the regional success of the Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC) and the Northeast Healthcare HUB (HUB). Since 2012, the NAMC has responded to the advanced manufacturing industry's demands through apprenticeships and occupational skills training programs. The Northeast Healthcare HUB was newly created in October of 2020 and continues to implement programs with partnership to address healthcare industry demands.

Copies of the plan may be obtained by contacting the MHGLWB, 107 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA 08152; 978-937-9814.

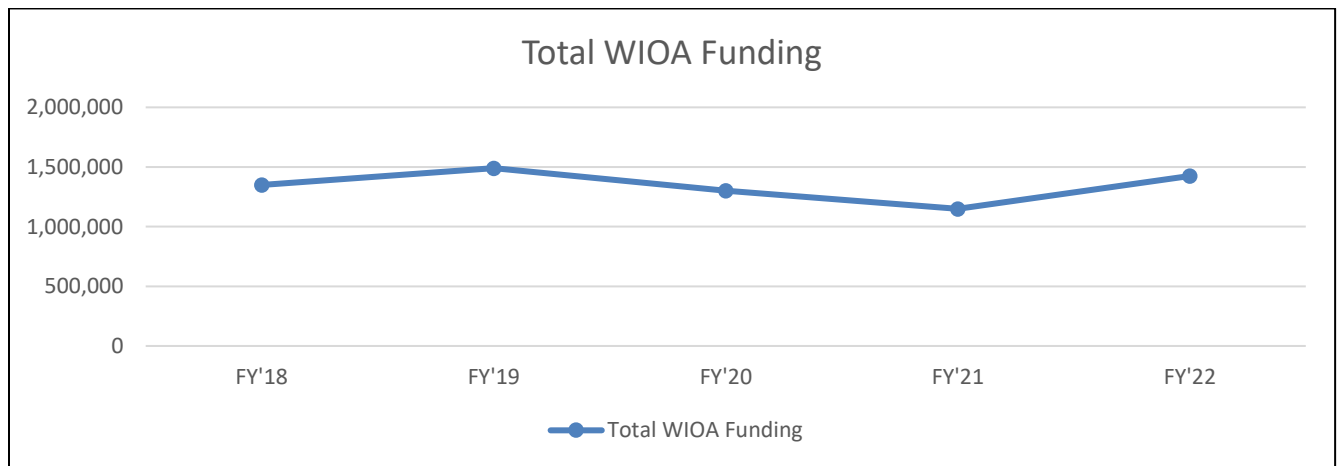
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II. Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Allocations

For FY'22, Massachusetts experienced an overall increase in federal WIOA funding. Considering only new FY'22 funding, the Greater Lowell region experienced an increase in federal WIOA funding by 23.9% or \$275,274 compared to the decrease seen from FY'20 to FY'21. The chart below compares WIOA funding over the last three years for Greater Lowell.

	FY'20	FY'21	FY'22	Diff FY'22 Less FY'21	Percent Difference
Adult	390,781	337,478	408,816	+71,338	+21.1%
Dislocated Worker	472,651	432,799	558,720	+125,921	+29.1%
Youth	438,161	379,313	457,328	+78,015	+20.6%
Total	1,301,593	1,149,590	1,424,864	+275,274	+23.9%

The chart below breakdowns the combined funding over the last five fiscal years.



III. WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

Through the MassHire Lowell Career Center, adult and dislocated worker job seekers will have access to a broad array of services from a comprehensive assortment of employment programs. WIOA provides for basic career services, which are available to all job seekers, and additional individualized career training and follow-up services are available to persons predicated on meeting certain eligibility criteria. Examples of these services include:

- Career Center Seminar (CCS)
- Career Action Plan (CAP)
- Job Search/Job Readiness Workshops
- Individual Career Counseling/Career Planning
- Comprehensive Assessments
- Labor Market Information
- Remedial Education/Occupational Skills Training
- Job Development and Placement Assistance

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Training opportunities for eligible adults and dislocated worker job seekers are obtained through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) from a wide network of qualified training providers. Based on funding availability eligible individuals may receive up to \$7,000 in funding assistance for Adult Basic Education (ABE) and/or HiSET (High School Equivalency Test), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and/or Occupational Skills Training.

The workforce board partners with several agencies which provide additional services to adults and dislocated workers including the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, the Department of Transitional Assistance, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program. Veterans have Priority of Service at the MassHire Lowell Career Center.

Adults:

In FY'22, approximately 38 adult job seekers will receive additional intensive and training services that are available to persons predicated on meeting certain eligibility criteria.

Estimated FY'22 WIOA Adult Performance Goals	
• Entered Employment Rate (2 nd quarter after exit)	86.5%
• Entered Employment Rate (4 th quarter after exit)	78%
• Median Earnings (second quarter)	\$5,800
• Credential Attainment Rate	73%
• Measurable Skills Gain	40%

Dislocated Workers:

In FY'22, approximately 203 dislocated worker job seekers will receive additional individualized and training services available to persons predicated on meeting certain eligibility criteria.

Estimated FY'22 WIOA Dislocated Worker Performance Goals	
• Entered Employment Rate (2 nd quarter after exit)	86%
• Entered Employment Rate (4 th quarter after exit)	85%
• Median Earnings (second quarter)	\$8,300
• Credential Attainment Rate	65%
• Measurable Skills Gain	40%

In addition, other WIOA and non-WIOA funding sources assisting dislocated workers will include:

- Apprenticeships
- MassHire Department of Career Center Services “Rapid Response”

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- National Health Emergency Dislocated Worker Grant to Combat Opioid Crisis
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Career Technical Initiative
- Rapid Reemployment Program
- Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (NAMC) training grants

IV. Wagner – Peyser

Wagner-Peyser funded employment services provide universal access to basic career services delivered through the MassHire Lowell Career Center. The Career Center will focus on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers. In FY'22, the region received \$496,515 for Wagner-Peyser services. Compared to FY'21, this is an 8.2% increase in funding or \$37,506.

During FY'22, approximately 5,800 job seekers will receive labor exchange services. Of those receiving services, 5,450 will be unemployed, 500 will be persons with disabilities and 300 will be veterans.

V. Business Services

The Business Services Representatives will assist employers in recruiting and hiring qualified and talented job seekers. During FY'22, approximately 625 employers will be provided services through the Career Center. Services will consist of job postings, applicant screening and referrals; Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC); on site recruitments; job fairs; labor market information; and Business Workshops.

VI. WIOA Youth Programs

The MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board provides funds to organizations in Greater Lowell to support and maintain a framework of education, training, and employment services for youth 14-24 years of age. Our goal is to re-connect these youth with education and employment strategies, which will lead to a life-long attachment with the workforce and ultimately economic self-sufficiency.

The MHGLWB funded one in-school youth program for \$55,644 and four out-of-school programs totaling \$284,046. Greater Lowell will serve 23 in-school youth and approximately 47 out-of-school youth through its WIOA youth programs.