

MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board WIOA Partners Meeting

March 20, 2025 Minutes

In Attendance on Zoom: Rosemary Alexander, Department of Career Services; Henry Bryson, Masshire MSW Workforce Board; Greg Bunn, Masshire MSW Workforce Board; Cindy Cedrone, MassHire MSW Workforce Board; Kun Chang, SCSEP/Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center; Kathy Innis, Middlesex Community College; Zoie Jaklitsch, Masshire MSW Career Centers- Framingham and Norwood; Tricia Lucier, Youth Connections, Masshire MSW Workforce Board; Louise Lynch, Dept. of Transitional Assistance; Tammy McDonald, Blue Hills Adult Education; Louise Meyer, Masshire MSW Workforce Board; Kevin O'Connor, Framingham Adult ESL+, Kerri Sandberg, Masshire MSW Workforce Board

Welcome

Partner Updates

Kathy Innis, Middlesex Community College-Seeing a higher number of ABE students due possibly for more students to be able to take advantage of free community college by seeking a GED. Qualifications for free community college include no previous degree and taking six credits each semester.

Kevin O'Connor, Framingham Adult ESL+ -Also a higher number of students, turning away 700 of 1,000 applicants. Facing attendance challenges due to students' personal safety concerns. Offering more support for basic needs, working with lawyers on immigration issues, and responding to possible upcoming changes.

Louise Lynch, DTA -Struggling to find providers for the Competitive Integrated Employment Services (CIES) program which will be re-procured next year and providers for the Young Parents Program (YPP) that will issue an RFP for re-procurement in March. Ideal providers offer in-house training and flexibility, support and guidance for participants.

Kun Chang, SCSEP, -Fully enrolled with a waiting list. Uncertain about the future because of possible Federal cuts so preparing in advance. Operation ABLE will no longer be the vendor of SCSEP.

Rosemary Alexander, DCS -Beth Goguen appointed new director of DCS. The new UI system, Employment Modernization & Transformation (EMT) is expected to be launched in May. New staff have been hired. Working on ways to assist migrants in shelters with immigration issues. Starting now to post 22 open positions. Want to coordinate DTA Works across the system to offer work experience through internships.

Zoie Jaklitsch, MassHire MSW Career Centers, -Running smoothly with training funds being spent, holding job fairs, conducting ESL training in Framingham and Norwood. Seeing an increase in walk-ins. Staff are being trained on the new UI system, EMT. Waiting for a State-mandated UI staff person to assist walk-in staff seeking UI support.

Tricia Lucier, MassHire MSW Workforce Board-Youth Connections, -Experiencing a surge in HiSET referrals, possibly due to free community college interest. Offering support with paperwork. Tools for the Trade, for 20 HS seniors during April school vacation, with hands-on activities in the trades. Trade & Construction Expo on April 1 with over 550 students expected to attend, representing 20 high schools.

Kerri Sandberg, HealthcareWorks, MassHire MSW Workforce Board, -In year two of a three-year grant with CommCorp, to increase the workforce in behavioral health. Two behavioral technician certificate courses at MassBay, one ending and one beginning, both filled to capacity, working with MassBay to integrate job readiness and employment search, will hold job fair for employers in May. Have an ongoing relationship with Framingham State University to put 20 incumbent individuals who have bachelor's degrees into master's degree in counseling program to become licensed mental health counselors, first time helping with advanced degrees. Possible new initiative for a registered behavioral therapist (RBT) certificate program at the entry level working with people with autism or cognitive disabilities.

Tammy McDonald, Blue Hills Adult Education, -213 students in ABE and ESL classes, offer online and in person. Added a volunteer program to help with the 180 students waiting for placements. Winding down on the school year, looking ahead to enrollment in September.

Greg Bunn, MassHire MSW Workforce Board, -Procuring for One-Stop Operator, RFP issued in February, closes March 21, review team in place, contract for July 1. The scope of work expanded to coordinate quarterly Partners meetings, meet with Career Center management staff to ensure quality services and workshops, and evaluate the Career Center Director. Potential changes to WIOA Authorization but plan to refresh mandated partners, create a website to share information and continue partners group meetings even if not required. Thanks to Kevin O'Connor and the team for successful ESL cohorts at the Career Center. Plans to duplicate the Trade & Construction Expo with a Healthcare Expo that would also include animal science and childcare, at the Solomon Pond Mall in the fall.

Next meeting planned for early July.

The meeting ended at 2:00 p.m.