Metro South/West Workforce Board, Inc.
201 Boston Post Road West, Suite 301
Marlborough, MA 01752
Phone: 508-281-6910 | Fax: 508-281-6911

WIOA Partners Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Date: Friday, September 11, 2026
Time: 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Facilitator: Tammy MacDonald, Blue Hills Adult Education

Attendance:
John Afonso – MA DOC Reentry
Greg Bunn – Metro South/West Workforce Board
Henry Bryson – Metro South/West Workforce Board
Kun Chang – Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
Christine Gauthier – Assabet Valley Community Education
Zoie Jaklitsch – MassHire Metro South/West
Sandra Maiuri – Hudson-Maynard ALC
Vinnette McKay – MassAbility
Amanda Moore-Owens – Blue Hills Adult Education
Kevin O'Connor – Framingham Adult ESL Plus
Nilaja Pettiford – MassHire Metro South/West Career Centers
Charlie Powderly – Metro West Employment Collaborative
Sheniqua Rogers – Metro South/West Workforce Board – Youth Connections
Chris Rosenberg – Blue Hills Adult Education
Jay Rufo – MA Commission for the Blind
Kerri Sandberg – HealthCareWorks
Stephen Souffrant – MassHire Metro South/West Career Center
Rute Vales – MassHire Metro South/West Career Center

Approval of Previous Minutes
The minutes from the June 12, 2026 meeting were approved as presented.

Partner Updates

- **MassHire Metro South/West Career Center** – Zoie Jaklitsch MassHire is enrolling customers in training programs, with funding of up to $10,000 for adults and $8,500 for dislocated workers. Upcoming events include the Canton Job Fair on September 24, hiring events in Devens, and an Adult Education and ESOL presentation on September 18. Zoie also offered to present information about Career Center services at partner agency staff meetings.

- **WIOA Youth Program** – Greg Bunn (for Tricia Lucier) The Skills Build program provides youth with basic labor skills and connects participants with union opportunities. The program has successfully placed participants into union positions. The Young Parents Grant Program is fully enrolled.

- **Framingham Adult ESL Plus** – Kevin O'Connor Framingham Adult ESL Plus operates five sites and serves approximately 1,400 students. The program is fully enrolled and uses a lottery system for enrollment. Attendance at a recent enrollment event was down approximately 60%. Kevin noted concerns about serving communities

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affected by changes to Temporary Protected Status (TPS), particularly students who may have limited local support. The program is also offering English for Housecleaners through a First Literacy grant.

- **Blue Hills Adult Education** – Tammy MacDonald Blue Hills Adult Education offers ABE and ESOL classes both remotely and in person. The program is fully enrolled with a waitlist, although there have been changes in student demographics and language needs. There has also been an increase in requests for online classes and a decrease in in-person enrollment. Tammy noted that many shared customers were identified during the recent student orientation. Blue Hills Adult Education is interested in participating in partner events and can also provide on-site intake opportunities. Upcoming events include the Blue Hills Adult Education Open House on December 1 and a program-wide Mock Interview Event on March 30. Partner agencies are invited to participate in the mock interviews.

- **Hudson-Maynard Adult Learning Center** – Sandra Maiuri Hudson-Maynard has completed orientation and is fully enrolled, with approximately 100 students on the waitlist. Sandra noted that fewer members of the Haitian community have returned this year and that some students are hesitant to complete enrollment paperwork due to concerns about their status. The program received earmarked funding for citizenship and entrepreneurship classes. The GED program is fully enrolled and includes many students who already hold diplomas from their home countries.

- **MassAbility** – Vinnette McKay MassAbility is transitioning to the Comprehensive Career Services (CCS) model beginning October 1. The new model includes employment and transitional service components and allows providers to offer services in flexible bundles based on participant needs. The model emphasizes community-based services, greater coordination with partners, and opportunities for participants to gain short-term work experiences to determine whether they are interested in a particular field. Transitional services may also be provided outside of school, either in person or virtually.

- **Massachusetts Commission for the Blind** – Jay Rufo The Commission for the Blind had a busy summer supporting high school and college clients. The summer internship program concluded with 44 employer partners and 60 interns, the highest participation numbers experienced by the program. The agency is preparing for a federal audit in 2027. The virtual job fair will expand from one event to two annual events, with fall and spring sessions planned. An annual employment webinar is also being planned.

- **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)** – Kun Chang SCSEP provides services to low-income, unemployed individuals age 55 and older, with a focus on the Asian community. The program is currently overenrolled and has experienced a small federal funding reduction. The program is not currently able to enroll additional participants. Changes to public benefit requirements were also discussed.

- **Department of Corrections** – John Afonso The Department of Corrections is expanding the MassHire pilot program, including virtual presentations and referrals to MassHire services. The HOPE VI grant works with key stakeholders to provide employment opportunities with hospitality agencies. The department is also offering training opportunities related to construction jobs and is working to make correctional facilities more community-based.

- **Metro West Employment Collaborative** – Charlie Powderly The Metro West Employment Collaborative reported strong FY26 results, including 197 placements for the collaborative and 867 placements statewide. Ongoing training opportunities include programs with CVS and culinary training that leads to state certification. The Walgreens training program is currently on hold. The Soft Skills training program is now offered as a stand-alone program, with the next session planned for early 2027. The Salvation Army is a strong employer for seasonal opportunities, and Whole Foods hired five individuals last year. The Regional Training Scholarship Program provides up to $2,000 to eligible individuals.

- **Metro South/West Workforce Board** –

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- Kerri Sandberg shared HealthCareWorks is focusing on short-term training opportunities in behavioral health careers. Recruitment is underway for free Behavioral Technician training for individuals interested in working with people on the autism spectrum. The program also provides employment support.

- Greg Bunn Greg reported a $2 million budget reduction, with the largest reduction affecting the YouthWorks program. There was a slight increase in federal WIOA Youth funding, which can serve individuals through age 25. Programs serving low-income adults also experienced funding reductions, which will decrease the number of participants who can be served this year. The Workforce Board is considering making the Framingham MassHire Career Center a hub location and is gathering information about the services customers need and how they access Career Centers. The goal is to better understand who is using Career Centers and to position the centers more as business and employment resource centers. Greg also provided an update on Workforce Pell funding. Workforce Pell can provide funding for training programs at community colleges and may be combined with WIOA funding. A list of approved occupations will be shared with the meeting follow-up materials.

Action Items

Greg Bunn
- Share the list of approved occupations for Workforce Pell and the related state resource with partners.
- Gather feedback from partners regarding their customers' experiences with MassHire Career Centers, including both positive experiences and challenges, for discussion at the next quarterly meeting.

Zoie Jaklitsch
- Share information and flyers for the Canton Job Fair, upcoming hiring events, and the September 18 Adult Education/ESOL presentation with Blue Hills Adult Education for distribution.
- Coordinate presentations about MassHire Career Center services with interested partner agencies.

All Partners
- Provide Greg with feedback about customer experiences with MassHire Career Centers and suggestions for services that would better meet the needs of partner populations.

FY27 Meeting Schedule

- December 11, 2026 – 10:00–11:30 AM
- March 12, 2027 – 10:00–11:30 AM
- June 11, 2027 – 10:00–11:30 AM

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