



MassHire Franklin Hampshire 4 Year WIOA DRAFT Local Plan 2026 – 2029

REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD

**MassHire Franklin Hampshire
WIOA 4-YEAR PLAN
FY 2026-2029**

1. Strategic Planning elements, including:

(1) A regional (local) analysis of:

- i. Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and**
- ii. Employment needs of businesses in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.**
- iii. As appropriate, your local area may use an existing analysis that is a timely current description of the regional economy to meet the requirements of this section.**

i. Economic Conditions Including Existing and Emerging In-Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

The Franklin Hampshire region is experiencing a mix of workforce challenges and economic opportunities. While the region's population has declined slightly over the past five years and is projected to continue declining, employment is expected to grow by 2030. The region also faces an aging workforce and labor force participation rates that consistently trail the state average.

Despite these challenges, several industry sectors are poised for significant growth and remain central to the region's workforce strategy. The three priority in-demand industries identified for the Pioneer Valley (Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden) in the Pioneer Valley Labor Market Blueprint 2024-2025 are:

Healthcare and Social Assistance (NAICS 62):

- The largest employment sector in the region, with 72,859 jobs in 2023.
- Projected job growth of 18.2% by 2030.
- Driven by major hospitals, behavioral health providers, community health centers, and long-term care facilities.

Advanced Manufacturing (NAICS 31–33, especially Fabricated Metal Products):

- A critical sector supported by original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and small-to-mid-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- 25,157 jobs in 2023, with a projected 27.9% growth by 2030.
- Regional focus on Computer Numerical Control (CNC), quality control, and industrial mechanics.

Educational Services (NAICS 61):

- Comprising K–12 districts, vocational programs, and higher education institutions including UMass Amherst and local community colleges.
- 18,750 jobs in 2023, with projected 12% job growth by 2030.

Additionally, the region is exploring several emerging sectors, including:

- Clean Energy
- Water Systems
- Quantum Computing
- Agriculture and Sustainable Food Systems
- Outdoor Recreation and Tourism (within Arts & Entertainment)

In terms of occupations, the region prioritizes roles that offer clear career pathways and are tied to employer demand. These include:

- Healthcare: Nursing assistants, medical assistants, EMTs, patient care technicians, behavioral health aides
- Manufacturing: CNC operators, machinists, inspectors, production supervisors
- Education: Teacher assistants, paraprofessionals, and childcare workers

For the Franklin Hampshire region, we have used real-time labor market intelligence to inform customer career planning, program design, and employer engagement strategies. This ensures we are being responsive to economic shifts and emerging sectors. Through regional convenings and sector strategy, FHWB and FHCC have collaboratively supported emerging industries like clean energy, behavioral health, and sustainable food systems. Two examples:

- FHCC developed a Behavioral Health Technician training program in partnership with local providers creating an accessible, earn-while-you-learn career pathway.
- FHWB convened regional Outdoor Recreation stakeholders on a quarterly basis to create space for leaders in the industry to come together to discuss challenges, opportunities, and various ways to collaborate to grow the sector.

ii. Employment Needs of Businesses in Existing and Emerging In-Demand Sectors and Occupations

Businesses across the region's priority industries have identified significant workforce needs and systemic challenges that must be addressed to close the talent gap:

Healthcare and Social Assistance:

Employers report persistent shortages of bedside nurses and direct care workers, compounded by limitations in clinical training capacity due to site and staff constraints. Retention is also impacted by wage disparities and credentialing barriers, particularly in nursing education.

Advanced Manufacturing:

The sector, made up of SME's that are primarily contract manufacturers working in competitive supply chains, is facing an aging workforce with limited knowledge transfer systems, making it difficult to replace experienced workers. Employers also note challenges attracting and retaining younger workers and the need for targeted upskilling of incumbent workers in advanced manufacturing systems and processes, and digital technologies.

Educational Services:

School districts and early childhood education providers report ongoing difficulty recruiting and retaining paraprofessionals and childcare workers due to low wages and a shrinking applicant pool.

There is a strong need for accessible credentialing pathways and workforce supports to build a sustainable talent pipeline.

In all three sectors, employers are seeking candidates who are job-ready, credentialed, and equipped with both technical and interpersonal skills. The Blueprint, updated in 2024, emphasizes the need for stronger alignment between training providers and industry, flexible training delivery models, and expanded career pathway programming to meet these employment needs.

The MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center supports employers across all priority sectors through a demand-driven approach that includes continuous engagement by Business Services Representatives (BSRs), co-design of training and placement pipelines, and ongoing analysis of labor market shifts. Through these relationships, employers have emphasized the need for shorter, flexible credential programs, improved candidate soft skills, and customized incumbent worker training—needs that have directly shaped program investments.

(2) Describe the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of businesses in your region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

To meet the employment needs of businesses across the Pioneer Valley—particularly within the region’s priority and emerging in-demand industries—workers must be equipped with a mix of industry-specific technical skills, foundational competencies, and adaptive soft skills. These needs are most urgent in the sectors of Healthcare and Social Assistance, Advanced Manufacturing, and Educational Services, where employer demand is high and workforce supply gaps persist.

1. Healthcare and Social Assistance

Healthcare employers across acute care, behavioral health, and long-term care settings require workers who possess:

- Clinical and patient care skills: including infection control, vital signs monitoring, personal care assistance, and CPR/First Aid
- Behavioral health competencies: such as trauma-informed care, de-escalation techniques, and emotional intelligence
- Credentialing/licensing: including Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Medical Assistant, EMT, and other stackable credentials
- Digital literacy: to use electronic health records (EHR) and remote patient monitoring systems
- Soft skills: reliability, empathy, communication, teamwork, and professionalism in high-stress environments

MassHire Franklin Hampshire supports stackable credentialing (e.g., CNA to LPN), collaborates with training providers, and offers career counseling tailored to roles like PCAs, medical assistants, and peer recovery specialists.

2. Advanced Manufacturing

Manufacturers—particularly in fabricated metal products and precision machining—are seeking employees with:

- Technical skills: including blueprint reading, precision measurement, machine operation, and CNC programming
- Mechanical aptitude and troubleshooting ability for operating and maintaining equipment
- Computer and software proficiency: especially with automation, CAD/CAM, and manufacturing process software
- Safety and quality control knowledge: including Lean Manufacturing, ISO standards, and inspection techniques
- Soft skills: punctuality, attention to detail, willingness to learn, and strong problem-solving skills

Employers also report a strong need for incumbent worker upskilling in process improvement, leadership, and technology adaptation.

Masshire Franklin Hampshire promotes training in CNC machining, blueprint reading, and quality control—often through ITA-funded and apprenticeship pathways.

3. Educational Services

To support early childhood education and K–12 instruction, employers are seeking:

- Child development and instructional support knowledge: aligned with early learning standards and classroom practices
- Paraprofessional and educator licensing/certification: including Child Development Associate (CDA) and DESE-aligned credentials
- Behavior management and social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies
- Basic academic support skills: including reading, writing, math assistance, and working with diverse learners
- Soft skills: patience, communication, cultural competency, adaptability, and teamwork

Programs at Masshire Franklin Hampshire (MHFH) emphasize paraprofessional credentials and connect jobseekers to DESE-aligned certification routes, often embedded within work-based learning opportunities.

Cross-Cutting Skills Across Industries

Across all sectors, employers in the Pioneer Valley consistently emphasize the need for:

- Work readiness and employability skills: punctuality, reliability, communication, and customer service
- Digital literacy: proficiency in navigating workplace technologies, software tools, and online platforms
- Career awareness and adaptability: understanding of industry expectations and a willingness to pursue ongoing learning

Masshire Franklin Hampshire directly addresses regional skill gaps through employer-informed training, credentialing pathways, and individualized career services. In partnership with Greenfield Community College, vocational schools, and other providers, the Career Center offers short-term, stackable credential programs in high-demand fields such as CNA, EMT, CNC machining, and early education.

Career services are trauma-informed and integrate soft skills development, digital literacy, and work readiness coaching to ensure participants are prepared for both technical and interpersonal demands of the workplace. Customized training and on-the-job learning opportunities are developed in collaboration with local employers to ensure alignment with evolving occupational needs.

(3) Please provide an analysis of your regional workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.

As of 2023, the Pioneer Valley region has a population of approximately 693,915, with 333,317 employed individuals. While jobs declined by 2.2% from 2017 to 2022, employment is projected to grow by 29,515 jobs by 2030. The regional LFPR improved modestly from 58.9% in January 2021 to 59.5% by September 2023.

Educational attainment varies significantly across demographics. Hispanic and Latino populations have lower rates of high school and college completion compared to white non-Hispanic groups, contributing to disparities in access to higher-wage employment. Additionally, average annual earnings in the region (\$67,900) remain below the national average (\$80,800).

In response to persistent labor force participation challenges, particularly in rural and underrepresented populations, Masshire Franklin Hampshire (MHFH) has expanded virtual and mobile access points and leveraged community-based partnerships to engage individuals who are disconnected from traditional employment systems.

Labor Market Trends

- High demand across Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, and Education
- Emerging growth in sectors such as Clean Energy, Quantum Computing, and Agriculture/Food Systems
- Significant supply gaps in key occupations, especially entry-level and mid-skill positions
- Aging workforce and projected retirements will intensify workforce shortages in the coming decade

Workforce Development Activities: Strengths and Weaknesses

a) Strengths

- Strong collaboration through the CORE Planning Team and regional workgroups (Educator Work Group, Data Team, Employer Advisory Committee)
- Active partnerships with community colleges, vocational technical schools, and employers to align training with industry needs
- Focused efforts on career pathways, stackable credentials, and registered apprenticeships
- Ongoing use of Labor Market Information (LMI) to inform referrals, training investments, and employer services

b) Weaknesses

- Limited capacity for clinical placements in healthcare training programs
- Inconsistent access to real-time graduate employment data from education providers
- Shortages in childcare, transportation, and housing impact participation in training and employment
- Some training programs have low enrollment or are under-resourced, especially in rural areas

b) Capacity to Provide Workforce Development Activities

i. Education and Skill Needs of the Workforce

The region's training ecosystem includes:

- One community college – Greenfield Community College
- Chapter 74 Career Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) programs across multiple high schools

Capacity exists to expand training in high-demand fields, especially at the certificate and associate degree levels. Flexible delivery models and stackable credentials are being promoted to support upskilling and career advancement.

ii. Individuals with Barriers to Employment

Priority populations include:

- Disconnected youth and adults
- Immigrants and refugees, who require ESOL, digital literacy, housing, and transportation support
- Low-income individuals and single parents, impacted by childcare shortages
- Individuals with limited education, prior justice involvement, or disabilities

MHfH staff are trained to deliver trauma-informed services and co-enroll participants across partner programs. Special focus is placed on priority populations, including disconnected youth, immigrants, and individuals with justice involvement, through paid work experiences, credential pathways, and individualized coaching.

iii. Employment Needs of Businesses

Businesses seek job-ready candidates with:

- Foundational work readiness and soft skills
- Industry-specific technical competencies
- Ability to obtain and retain required credentials

The workforce development system is responding by increasing employer engagement, building short-term credentialing programs, and co-developing curricula aligned with business needs.

c) Community College and Career Technical Collaboration

Franklin Hampshire has strong, ongoing collaboration with community colleges and Career Technical Initiatives, including:

- Greenfield Community College (GCC) plays a lead role in training for priority industries (healthcare, education, manufacturing)
- Partnerships with Chapter 74 CVTE schools support entry-level pipelines for CNC machining, early childhood education, and allied health
- Collaboration between MHFH and GCC to work together on job fairs, recruitment, and internship programs
- The Educator Work Group brings together K–12, higher ed, and workforce partners to align programs and address capacity and graduation-to-employment challenges
- Initiatives through the MassHire Franklin Hampshire Young Adult team connect students to training and employment pathways

MassHire Franklin Hampshire plays a central role in addressing educational disparities and skill gaps across the region. Through partnerships with Greenfield Community College, vocational schools, and Adult Education providers, the Career Center promotes short-term training programs that are stackable and accessible. Participants facing barriers—such as language access, justice involvement, or low digital literacy—receive individualized career counseling, wraparound services, and cross-enrollment in support programs. The Career Center’s trauma-informed approach and flexible service delivery ensure that jobseekers can access and persist in training that leads to high-demand employment.

MHFH and the regional technical high schools strongly support the development of Career Technical Initiatives (CTI) programs for unemployed/underemployed individuals and continue to explore opportunities to develop and implement training programs that respond to the employment needs of business and industry utilizing the CTI training model.

(4) Please describe the MassHire board’s strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. Include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth, UI claimants, and individuals with barriers to employment), and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in § 677.155(a)(1). The primary indicators of performance include:

The MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board (FHWB) envisions a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready regional workforce system that drives economic growth by connecting jobseekers—especially those facing systemic barriers—to quality jobs and career pathways. In partnership with the MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center (MHFHCC), the Board’s strategic vision is grounded in equity, regional alignment, and employer engagement.

Following the 2025 merger of the Workforce Board and Career Center into a single operational entity, FHWB is uniquely positioned to deliver an integrated and data-driven system that prepares residents for family-sustaining employment and meets evolving business needs. The vision is operationalized through the following goals and commitments:

Goals for Preparing an Educated and Skilled Workforce

Center Equity and Expand Access

- Deliver services through a trauma-informed, customer-centered approach that addresses the needs of historically underserved populations, including immigrants, disconnected youth, justice-involved individuals, older workers, and those with disabilities.
- Maintain a network of physical, virtual, and mobile service access points to reach jobseekers across the region's 50 cities and towns, including rural communities.

Strengthen Career Pathways and Credential Attainment

- Align training investments with in-demand occupations in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, education, and emerging sectors such as clean energy and behavioral health.
- Support stackable credential pathways in partnership with Greenfield Community College, vocational schools, and adult education providers.
- Scale models such as Integrated Education and Training (IET), apprenticeships, and contextualized ESOL that remove barriers and support credential attainment.

Develop the Youth and Emerging Workforce

- Invest in youth programming that includes career exploration, paid internships, credentialing, and postsecondary transitions, with a focus on equity and early intervention.
- Coordinate programs such as Connecting Activities, YouthWorks, and WIOA Youth to ensure a unified youth pipeline that reflects the needs of both young people and local employers.

Support Incumbent Workers and Employers

- Work with employers to design upskilling strategies, including customized training, incumbent worker programs, and sector partnerships.
- Promote employer-informed curriculum development, especially in behavioral health, early education, and advanced manufacturing.

a. Employment Rate Second Quarter After Exit: The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

- WIOA Adult: 70%
- WIOA Dislocated Worker: 70%
- WIOA Youth: 72%

b. Employment Rate Fourth Quarter After Exit: The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.

- WIOA Adult: 70%
- WIOA Dislocated Worker: 75%
- WIOA Youth: 72%

c. Median Earnings Second Quarter After Exit: Median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

- WIOA Adult: \$8,000

- WIOA Dislocated Worker: \$12,000
 - WIOA Youth: \$4,500
- d. *Credential Attainment: The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training) who attained a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program.***
- WIOA Adult: 68%
 - WIOA Dislocated Worker: 65%
 - WIOA Youth: 60%
- e. *Measurable Skill Gain: The percentage of participants who, during a Program Year, are in education or training, and who achieve academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress towards such a credential or employment.***
- WIOA Adult: 58%
 - WIOA Dislocated Worker: 61%
 - WIOA Youth: 45%

(5) Considering the analysis described above, please describe your strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs and workforce system partners to align available resources to achieve the strategic vision and goals described in paragraph (4) of this section.

Focus Area II of the Massachusetts Workforce State Plan (PY2024–2027) is centered on strengthening and scaling programming to develop untapped talent and meet employer hiring needs. For MassHire Franklin Hampshire (MHFH), this translates into key local implementation strategies aligned with the statewide priorities in three main areas:

1. Support Priority Populations

Massachusetts emphasizes bringing underrepresented and underserved groups into the labor market. For MHFH, this can mean:

- **Youth:** Expanding alignment between WIOA Youth services, Connecting Activities, and YouthWorks. MHFH is enhancing coordination with schools, offering employer-facing tools like the Work-Based Learning Plan (WBLP), and promoting inclusive internships.
- **Immigrants and New Arrivals:** Creating partnerships to expand contextualized ESOL and work-readiness programs; potentially connecting with the state’s proposed Re-credentialing Center for foreign-trained professionals.
- **Individuals with Disabilities:** Strengthening connections with the MassAbility and Commission for the Blind to co-design sector-aligned training pathways.
- **Older Workers, TANF/SNAP clients, Veterans, and the Formerly Incarcerated:** Scaling targeted job placement, employer engagement, and training through programs like MassHire Work Participation and collaborations with state public safety and elder affairs agencies.

2. Promote Targeted, High-Growth Industries and Employer Needs

MHFH operates within the Pioneer Valley regional workforce area. According to the regional blueprint priorities:

- Top Priority Industries:
 - Health Care & Social Assistance
 - Advanced Manufacturing
 - Educational Services
- Key Occupations:
 - Home health aides, CNAs, RNs
 - Production workers, machinists, engineers
 - Teachers and educational assistants

MHFH leverages its convening power to align training with these high-demand occupations and ensure that programs (ITA-funded, CTI, Registered Apprenticeships) reflect the needs of local employers.

3. Address AI and the Future of Work

The state plan recognizes AI's growing impact. MHFH will:

- Monitor AI-driven labor market shifts and integrate future-of-work competencies into training programs.
- Engage in statewide conversations via the AI Advisory Council to represent regional voices on worker upskilling and job displacement mitigation strategies

Opportunities for MHFH Alignment

- Partner with community colleges and vocational schools to align with free Community College and other adult credentialing programs.
- Utilize Workforce Training Fund and Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund to upskill incumbent workers and scale career pathway models.
- Work with Regional Workforce Skills Cabinet teams to co-lead regional blueprint development, ensuring employer needs continue driving programming decisions

MassHire Franklin Hampshire will carry out the core programs to achieve these goals. Strategies include implementing a customer flow process that ensures that individuals with barriers to employment, dislocated workers and youth are enrolled and receiving appropriate services and supports as quickly as possible; providing training, mentoring and professional development to staff; co-enrolling customers in other programs, including WPP, CIES, CTI, Healthcare Hub, and other grant-funded training; partnering closely with training providers, especially Greenfield Community College; working seamlessly between Career Services and Business Services staff to increase employment outcomes.

2. Under WIOA, the plan must include a description of the following requirements (WIOA secs.108(b)(2)-(21)):

(1) Identify the following elements of the workforce development system in your area:

- a. Please list all programs included in your local workforce system such as Apprenticeship and ESOL.*

FHCC provides priority of service for priority populations for individualized career services. In addition, FHCC operates a DTA CIES program to provide work readiness training, occupational training, and job placement assistance to TANF and SNAP recipients. Veterans can receive specialized services through WIOA, Ticket to Work, and DVOP services. Youth receive work readiness and work-based learning through Connecting Activities, Youthworks, and WIOA Youth programs. In addition, the region collaborates with educational institutions and employers to develop and implement career pathway training programs for occupations in high demand by employers.

b. How your Board will support the strategies identified in the State Plan/MA Workforce Agenda and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment. Please refer to the MA Workforce Agenda, Focus Area IV for details regarding Workforce System Infrastructure.

The MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board is committed to supporting the strategies identified in the Massachusetts State Workforce Plan and Workforce Agenda, particularly those outlined in Focus Area IV: Workforce System Infrastructure. In doing so, the Board works collaboratively with a broad network of partners to build an equitable, coordinated, and responsive workforce system.

1. Strengthening Cross-System Partnerships for Alignment

The Board will continue to convene and actively participate in collaborative planning structures that ensure alignment across WIOA core programs, including:

- Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs
- Title II Adult Education and Literacy
- Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Services
- Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation

Additionally, the Board maintains close partnerships with:

- Community colleges and training providers
- Vocational technical high schools and Career Technical Education (CTE) programs
- K–12 districts offering Perkins-funded programs of study
- Economic development agencies, regional planning councils, and municipal economic development departments

2. Advancing Integrated Service Delivery

In alignment with Focus Area IV, the Board is committed to fostering a “no wrong door” approach by:

- Expanding co-enrollment and braided funding models across WIOA and Perkins programs

- Promoting shared case management and referral systems, including staff cross-training and integrated intake strategies
- Using labor market data and customer feedback to inform regional career pathway development and wraparound support services

Additionally, as of July 2025, the MassHire Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board and Career Center have merged into a single organizational entity, creating a streamlined governance structure that enhances strategic planning, operational alignment, and performance oversight across all core WIOA programs and partners. The merged entity uses shared standard operating procedures and performance dashboards to promote consistency, transparency, and quality assurance across all core programs. Regular staff training and cross-functional collaboration foster a culture of continuous improvement and alignment with statewide system goals.

3. Supporting CTE and Perkins Alignment

The Board actively supports implementation of Perkins V programs of study by:

- Collaborating with regional vocational-technical schools and Chapter 74 programs to align training pathways with in-demand occupations
- Sharing labor market intelligence to inform curriculum and program planning
- Coordinating with educators to support work-based learning, internships, and dual enrollment opportunities for students
- Serving on Perkins Advisory Boards and Career/Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) Program Advisory Committees (PAC)

Masshire Franklin Hampshire collaborates with vocational schools and Perkins-funded programs to support high-quality career pathways, using tools like the Work-Based Learning Plan (WBLP) to structure internships and ensure alignment with employer expectations. These efforts connect CTE students to stackable credentials and work-based experiences in priority industries.

4. Investing in System Capacity and Continuous Improvement

To build system capacity and meet the goals of the State Workforce Agenda, the Board will:

- Invest in staff training and leadership development across partner agencies
- Support shared technology tools that enhance communication and service coordination
- Participate in state-led efforts to expand data sharing, performance tracking, and continuous improvement practices
- Advocate for sustainable funding to support innovation, particularly in rural areas and underserved communities

(2) Please describe how your Board will work with entities carrying out core programs to:

a. Expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment;

MassHire Franklin Hampshire works closely with Title I (WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth), Title II (Adult Education and Literacy), Title III (Wagner-Peyser Employment Services), and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation) partners to ensure that all eligible individuals—particularly those facing systemic barriers—can access services and supports. Strategies include:

- Universal access through MassHire Career Centers, with multilingual staff, ADA-compliant facilities, and digital access points
- Targeted outreach to disconnected youth, low-income adults, individuals with disabilities, immigrants and refugees, and reentry populations
- Co-located and coordinated services, often offered at partner or community-based sites, including adult education programs and vocational rehabilitation offices
- Integrated supportive services, including referrals for childcare, transportation, housing, digital literacy, and mental health support to increase program retention and success

MHFH Services are delivered virtually and in person at multiple locations, including co-located community sites in rural Franklin and Hampshire counties. Staff are trained in DEI and use culturally responsive approaches to engage disconnected youth, immigrants, justice-involved individuals, and individuals with disabilities.

b. Facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs; and

MassHire Franklin Hampshire plays a lead role in designing and scaling career pathways in alignment with high-demand regional industries—particularly healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and education. These pathways are co-developed with employers, education institutions, and core program partners and often include:

- Contextualized adult education and ESOL embedded within occupational training
- Dual enrollment opportunities for youth and adults in WIOA and Adult Education or Vocational Rehabilitation
- Registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships linked to long-term career pathways
- Cross-program coordination to support braided funding and co-enrollment for participants who would benefit from multiple services (e.g., training plus basic skills education plus wraparound supports)
- Post-training follow-up services and supports

Career pathways are employer-informed and include stackable credentialing and IET models, particularly in behavioral health, early education, and manufacturing. The Board and Career Center support co-enrollment and braided funding across core programs, such as Adult Education, SNAP E&T, and Vocational Rehabilitation, allowing individuals to access academic support, wraparound services, and occupational training simultaneously.

c. Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

To increase credential attainment—especially industry-recognized, portable, and stackable credentials—the Board collaborates with community colleges, vocational high schools, and adult education partners to:

- Align training programs with local labor market demand and employer input
- Promote short-term credential programs in high-growth fields (e.g., CNA, EMT, CNC Machining, Medical Assisting, Early Childhood Education)
- Develop modular, stackable pathways that allow individuals to progress from basic certificates to associate degrees and beyond
- Incorporate credit for prior learning, work-based learning, and integrated education and training (IET) models to increase flexibility and reduce barriers
- Partner with employers to support work-based training and credentialing, such as on-the-job training and customized incumbent worker training

MassHire Franklin Hampshire emphasizes short-term, stackable, and industry-recognized credentials that are portable and accessible to underrepresented populations. Programs include CNA, EMT, Mental Health First Aid, OSHA 10, and ServSafe. Credentials are often embedded within work-based learning or youth internships to increase accessibility and improve labor market outcomes.

(3) Please describe the strategies and services that will be used in your local area—

a. To facilitate engagement of businesses in workforce development programs, including small businesses and businesses in high-demand industry sectors and occupations.

MassHire Franklin Hampshire actively engages employers—particularly those in high-demand sectors such as healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and education—through multiple strategies:

- Employer Convenings aligned with priority industries, providing regular feedback on hiring needs, skills gaps, and training priorities
- Sector-based strategies that involve direct partnerships with employers to co-design training and career pathway programs
- Customized recruitment and hiring support provided by Business Services Representatives
- Special focus on small businesses, including outreach, job posting assistance, and access to incumbent worker training or subsidized hiring programs
- Participation in local and regional chambers, industry associations, and employer networks to promote workforce services
- Membership on the MHFH Board of Directors and Blueprint CORE Team

b. To serve agricultural businesses including plans to improve services.

Agriculture is a vital part of the regional economy, particularly in Franklin and Hampshire Counties. The Board recognizes the unique needs of this sector and has adopted several strategies to better support agricultural employers:

- Partnering with organizations such as the Franklin County Community Development Corporation (FCCDC), CISA, Just Roots, and others to identify workforce needs
- Developing outreach strategies tailored to seasonal, multilingual, and rural agricultural employers
- Expanding access to ESOL, transportation, and housing supports for agricultural workers
- Identifying opportunities to build career pathways in sustainable agriculture and food systems, an emerging priority sector for the region

In addition, MHFH supports agricultural businesses through multilingual outreach, flexible service delivery, and transportation coordination for seasonal and rural workers. Workforce development strategies are being expanded to include career pathways in sustainable agriculture, food systems, and clean energy, in alignment with regional economic development efforts and employer input.

c. To support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses.

MassHire Franklin Hampshire supports a responsive and demand-driven workforce system by:

- Using real-time labor market data to inform investments in training and career services
- Ensuring training programs are aligned with employer demand and offer stackable credentials
- Providing incumbent worker training, on-the-job training (OJT), and apprenticeship opportunities that allow businesses to build talent pipelines
- Maintaining a strong network of training providers, schools, and colleges to respond quickly to emerging business needs

d. To better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development.

MHFH maintains close collaboration with local and regional economic development entities, including:

- Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)
- Franklin County CDC and Valley CDC
- Franklin and Hampshire County chambers

Workforce and economic development leaders work together on:

- Business outreach and expansion efforts
- Joint planning for regional sector strategies
- Shared participation in economic recovery and growth initiatives
- Alignment of job creation, infrastructure development, and talent pipeline development

e. To strengthen linkages between reemployment assistance and unemployment insurance programs.

To support individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) and accelerate reemployment:

- MassHire Career Centers offer early intervention and targeted services to UI claimants
- UI recipients are connected to job search assistance, career counseling, and skills training
- UI staff and career center staff coordinate regularly to streamline referrals and communication
- Special programs such as RESEA (Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment) ensure claimants are actively engaged in the workforce system

f. Describe how your Board coordinates workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide Rapid Response activities.

MHFH works closely and has a successful history partnering with the state's **Rapid Response Team** to:

- Respond quickly to business closures, layoffs, or restructuring
- Deliver on-site services to affected workers, including information sessions, resume support, and connection to training
- Coordinate follow-up services through career centers to support transitions into new employment
- Leverage available Dislocated Worker and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) resources when applicable

g. Please describe procedures to offer MassHire Career Center Business Services programs to local businesses.

MassHire Career Centers offer a robust suite of Business Services, including:

- Job posting assistance and candidate referrals via the state's JobQuest platform
- Labor market information to support hiring and wage decisions
- Hiring fairs and customized recruitment events
- Screening and prescreening services for job candidates
- Connection to grant-funded hiring incentives, training subsidies, and tax credits (e.g., Work Opportunity Tax Credit)

Businesses can access services through:

- Direct contact with Business Services Representatives
- Online requests via the MassHire Franklin Hampshire website
- Outreach events and employer roundtables facilitated by MHFH

h. Describe implementation of any initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business

services and strategies designed to meet the needs of regional businesses. These initiatives must support the strategy described in paragraph (3)(b) of this section.

To meet the evolving needs of regional employers, the Board and its partners implement a range of targeted initiatives, including:

- Incumbent Worker Training Programs to support skill upgrades and retention
- On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Customized Training to meet specific employer needs while subsidizing hiring costs
- Career Pathway Initiatives that integrate education, credentialing, and employment in in-demand occupations
- Sector Strategies coordinated by employer advisory groups and the CORE Planning Team
- Use of business intermediaries, such as chambers and industry groups, to improve outreach and service coordination
- Serving as an intermediary to connect regional employers with resources at the state level to support company expansion, tax credits, and infrastructure improvements.

(4) Please provide a description of how your Board:

a. Coordinates local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities.

MassHire Franklin Hampshire works in close partnership with economic development organizations across Franklin and Hampshire Counties to ensure that workforce investments are strategically aligned with broader regional growth priorities.

Key coordination strategies include:

- Shared Planning and Governance: MHFH participates in cross-sector planning bodies such as the CORE Planning Team, which includes regional planners, chambers of commerce, educational institutions, and economic development agencies. These partnerships ensure that workforce strategies align with regional economic development plans.
- Joint Investment in Priority Sectors: Workforce and economic development leaders collaborate to identify and support high-growth industries such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare, clean energy, and sustainable agriculture. This includes joint efforts to expand training, attract employers, and retain talent.
- Business Outreach and Expansion Support: MHFH Business Services staff collaborate with local chambers, the Franklin County CDC, Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), and other economic development partners to coordinate employer outreach, support new business development, and respond to workforce needs of expanding companies.

b. Promotes entrepreneurial skills training and micro-enterprise services.

MHFH integrates entrepreneurial awareness into career counseling and youth services, helping jobseekers explore self-employment as a viable career pathway. Entrepreneurship is framed not

just as a business venture, but as a form of economic self-sufficiency—particularly relevant for rural, immigrant, and youth populations.

Efforts to promote entrepreneurial skills include:

- Referral Partnerships with local small business and organizations, including:
 - Franklin County Community Development Corporation (FCCDC)
 - LaunchSpace

These partners provide training, technical assistance, and access to capital for new and existing small business owners as well as exposing youth to entrepreneurial career pathways.

- Workshops and Training Referrals: MHFH refers jobseekers and adult learners to business planning, financial literacy, and startup development workshops, including those offered through community colleges and chambers of commerce.
- Youth Programming: MHFH's youth programs integrate entrepreneurship education into career readiness activities, especially through summer jobs and career exploration initiatives. There is also a strong referral network between the Career Center and LaunchSpace.

(5) Please describe the MassHire Career Center system in your area, including:

- a. How the Board ensures the continuous improvement of eligible providers and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local businesses, workers and jobseekers.***

MassHire Franklin Hampshire ensures the continuous improvement of eligible providers and services in the region by:

- Monitoring and evaluation: Conducting regular performance reviews of training providers and career center partners using WIOA performance indicators, participant outcomes, and employer satisfaction.
- Local oversight of the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL): Reviewing provider applications and outcomes to ensure offerings are aligned with high-demand occupations and meet quality standards.
- Employer feedback loops: Gathering direct input from businesses—especially those in priority industries—on the effectiveness of training programs and job readiness of graduates.
- Provider engagement: Hosting regular meetings with education and training providers (including community colleges, vocational schools, and CBOs) to discuss industry needs, program alignment, and opportunities for co-designing curricula.
- Data-informed decisions: Using labor market intelligence to assess the effectiveness of programs and to adjust service delivery based on emerging employer needs and skill gaps.

Additionally, the unified Board-Career Center structure allows for closer oversight and feedback loops between frontline delivery, fiscal operations, and provider performance.

- b. How the Board facilitates access to services provided through the MassHire Career Center(s), including in remote areas, using virtual services, technology and other means.***

To expand access across the region—including rural Franklin and Hampshire counties—MassHire Franklin Hampshire offers services through a combination of physical and virtual strategies:

- Multiple service locations: MHFH uses mobile services and satellite locations, including collaborations with libraries, high schools, and community-based organizations. Including the main site in Greenfield, MHFH currently has satellite sites in Northampton and Orange.
- Robust virtual service delivery: Job search workshops, career counseling, and employer information sessions are available via Zoom and online platforms.
- Digital intake and appointment scheduling: Allows jobseekers to initiate services, complete assessments, and access support from any location.
- Targeted outreach to underserved and disconnected populations to ensure they are aware of available services and how to access them.

c. How entities within the MassHire Career Center system, including Career Center Operators and Partners, ensure compliance with WIOA sec. 188 and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

MassHire Franklin Hampshire and its partners are fully committed to ensuring physical and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities:

- ADA-compliant facilities: All sites are fully accessible and regularly assessed to meet physical accessibility standards.
- Accessible technology and materials: Job search computers, website content, and digital tools meet or exceed WCAG accessibility standards.
- Assistive technology: Available at career center sites to support customers with vision, hearing, or mobility impairments.
- Staff training: Regular training on disability awareness, reasonable accommodation, and how to provide inclusive, individualized service.
- Strategic partnerships with MassAbility and MCB go beyond compliance—they support co-enrollment, assistive tech, and inclusive placement

d. The roles and resource contributions of your Partners – please describe how these relationships are sustained and kept productive.

- A culture of collaboration through shared planning teams and partner integration
 - The Literacy Project – Outstation Coordinator is stationed in the Career Center one day a week.
 - Job Corps is co-located one day a week to receive appointments of young adults interested in residential training programs
 - MassAbility occasionally stations a staff person in the Career Center
- Cross-program staffing support (e.g., staff trained across WIOA titles, Adult Ed, DTA, etc.)

- Shared use of facilities, outreach platforms, and service delivery tools

(6) Please provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in your local area.

MassHire Franklin Hampshire offers a robust array of employment and training services to support adult and dislocated workers in achieving career success. These services are designed to help jobseekers—especially those impacted by layoffs or systemic barriers—gain the skills, credentials, and support they need to re-enter the workforce in high-demand, family-sustaining occupations.

Types of Employment and Training Activities Available:

1. Employment Services

Offered virtually, in-person and at satellite or partner sites, these services include:

- Career counseling and individualized employment plans
- Resume and interview workshops
- Job matching and referrals via the JobQuest system
- Labor market information to support informed job searches
- Hiring events and employer information sessions
- Job readiness assessments and skills inventories
- Workshops and job fairs are designed around jobseeker flexibility and community needs

2. Training Services

Training is available to eligible individuals through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), On-the-Job Training (OJT), and other programs. Examples include:

- Occupational skills training in healthcare, advanced manufacturing, education, transportation, and IT
- Short-term certificate and credentialing programs, often in partnership with our local community college and vocational schools
- Pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships to support career advancement
- On-the-Job Training (OJT) opportunities that connect jobseekers with employers willing to train new hires while earning

Programs often include wraparound support and the use of co-enrollment and braided funding to support sustainability.

3. Supportive Services

To ensure success in employment and training programs, eligible individuals may also receive:

- Transportation or childcare assistance

- Work-related tools or uniforms
- Access to housing, legal, or mental health services through partner referrals
- Digital literacy support and access to technology

Supportive services are an essential component of workforce engagement and are integrated into the career planning process from intake onward. MHFH maintains strong referral pathways to community partners offering housing assistance, mental health services, digital access, and family supports.

Specialized Services for Dislocated Workers

Dislocated workers—particularly those impacted by layoffs, industry shifts, or closures—are supported through:

- Rapid Response services in partnership with the state to provide early access to resources
- Customized reemployment plans tailored to transferrable skills and market demand
- Targeted sector pathway guidance, particularly for displaced workers in declining or shifting industries
- Expanded eligibility for training grants and extended support services

Assessment of Availability and Effectiveness

Strengths:

- Diverse training options aligned with regional labor market needs and high-demand industries
- Strong provider partnerships with Greenfield Community College, Smith Vocational, and other educational institutions
- Accessible service delivery, including virtual platforms and mobile outreach to rural areas
- Co-enrollment and coordinated service models, allowing adults to access multiple support systems (e.g., WIOA, Adult Education, Vocational Rehab)

Challenges and Areas for Growth:

- Limited training capacity in certain high-demand fields (e.g., healthcare clinical placements, CDL training)
- Low digital access and comfort among some rural and older populations
- Wraparound support needs (e.g., childcare, transportation, housing) that exceed available resources
- Sustaining and scaling outreach to dislocated workers not connected to UI or traditional workforce systems

(7) Please provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in your area including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities. Please include an identification of successful models of such activities. (Please describe how local strategies align with Focus Area II – Talent Development Strategies for Youth)

MassHire Franklin Hampshire offers a wide range of youth workforce investment activities through partnerships with the schools, community-based organizations, and state agencies. Services are designed to prepare youth—particularly those with barriers to employment—for success in education, training, and the labor market.

Youth programming aligns with Focus Area II of the Massachusetts Workforce Agenda by:

- Centering equity and access to ensure all youth, especially those furthest from opportunity, have access to career exploration, skills training, and supportive services
- Providing early exposure to high-growth career pathways
- Offering work-based learning and credentialing opportunities
- Building a connected, cross-system youth talent pipeline

Types of Youth Workforce Investment Activities

Services are tailored to in-school and out-of-school youth, ages 14–24, with an emphasis on opportunity youth, youth with disabilities, and those facing systemic barriers. Activities include:

- Career exploration and job readiness training
- Paid work experiences, internships, and summer employment
- Supportive services such as transportation, childcare, and mental health referrals
- Work-based learning, including subsidized placements in high-demand industries
- Credential attainment (e.g., ServSafe, OSHA 10, CPR/First Aid, Home Health Aide, CNA)
- Alternative education and dropout recovery services
- One-on-one case management and career coaching
- Postsecondary planning and connection to training or apprenticeships

These services are delivered through a network of contracted partners and community-based organizations, ensuring localized, culturally competent support.

Youth with Disabilities

MassHire FHQB places strong emphasis on serving youth with disabilities, in partnership with:

- MassAbility
- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)
- Local school districts and special education coordinators

Services include:

- Pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS)
- Career readiness workshops adapted for accessibility
- Employer partnerships that provide inclusive work experiences
- Assistive technology and individualized support plans
- Cross-agency case coordination and co-enrollment

Assessment of Availability and Effectiveness

Strengths

- Strong partnerships with schools, community colleges, and CBOs enable broad geographic and demographic reach
- Active focus on equity and trauma-informed practices
- Access to paid, supervised work experiences through year-round and summer programs
- Programs integrate academic support, mental health services, and life skills with workforce preparation
- Coordination with local agencies ensures continuity of services for youth aging out of high school or foster care

Challenges

- Transportation remains a major barrier, especially in rural Franklin and Hampshire counties
- Demand for services exceeds available funding for both in-school and out-of-school youth
- Need for more long-term employment and postsecondary follow-up services
- Limited access to internships in high-skill, high-wage industries for youth without prior experience

As of January 2025, all WIOA Youth services are delivered in-house by MassHire Franklin Hampshire staff. As of July 2025, all youth programs are in-house and under a unified delivery system allowing for deeper integration across youth programs, consistent case management practices, and a stronger connection to Career Center resources, employer services, and regional career pathway planning.

- a. Please also provide a description of youth workforce investment activity coordination with the Department of Transitional Assistance, MassAbility and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.***

MassHire Franklin Hampshire maintains active coordination with:

- Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA): Youth served by DTA are referred to employment and training programs, with co-enrollment supported by shared case management and access to wraparound services.
- MassAbility: Collaborates on work readiness training, employer outreach, and pre-employment transition services for youth with disabilities. Co-enrollment allows youth to access assistive tech, transportation assistance, and employment supports.
- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB): Supports vision-impaired youth with specialized career services, technology support, and tailored job placements in partnership with local employers.

These partnerships are sustained through formal referral pathways, joint planning sessions, shared data agreements, and cross-training of staff.

(8) Please explain how the Board coordinates relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.

MassHire Franklin Hampshire prioritizes strong and sustained collaboration with local secondary and postsecondary education partners to create an aligned, efficient, and responsive regional workforce system. This coordination supports strategy development, enhances service delivery, and avoids duplication by ensuring that educational pathways are directly connected to labor market demand and the needs of local employers.

Key Strategies for Coordination

1. Joint Planning and Governance

- MHFH convenes and actively participates in the CORE Planning Team and Educator Work Group, which include leaders from K–12 school districts, vocational-technical high schools, community colleges, and public universities.
- These bodies ensure alignment between workforce goals and educational programming and guide strategic investments in training, career pathways, and credential attainment.

2. Career Pathways and Perkins/CTE Alignment

- MHFH collaborates with Chapter 74 vocational programs, Perkins-funded Career and Technical Education (CTE) initiatives, and community colleges to support seamless career pathways in priority industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, and early education.
- Labor Market Information (LMI) is shared regularly with education partners to inform curriculum development and capacity planning.

4. Work-Based Learning and Internship Development

- MHFH collaborates with schools and colleges to expand internships, job shadowing, and employer-based learning experiences.
- These experiences are structured to align with academic goals and expose students to real-world career opportunities in high-demand sectors.

5. Shared Case Management and Support Services

- Coordination between workforce and education partners enables co-enrollment and joint provision of wraparound supports such as transportation, childcare, and academic tutoring.
- This ensures that students transitioning into the workforce or training programs do not fall through service gaps.

Avoiding Duplication and Enhancing Services

MHFH reduces duplication of services by:

- Maintaining formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with education partners outlining roles, responsibilities, and referral protocols

- Using shared intake and tracking tools (e.g., JobQuest) to monitor progress and coordinate services
- Hosting joint events, such as regional career fairs, student-employer networking events, and career awareness weeks
- Encouraging collaborative grant applications and program design to align education and workforce funding streams

(9) How does the Board coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area? Please include a description of how other programs and services in your local area are leveraged to complement workforce investment activities.

MassHire Franklin Hampshire recognizes that supportive services such as transportation, childcare, housing, and digital access are essential to helping individuals—especially those with barriers to employment—successfully engage in training and workforce development activities. MHFH and its partners coordinate these services closely with WIOA Title I programming to ensure individuals receive the support they need to achieve sustainable employment.

Coordination of Transportation and Supportive Services

1. Transportation

- Transportation is consistently cited as a major barrier, particularly in rural Franklin and Hampshire Counties. FHFWB addresses this challenge through:
 - WIOA-funded transportation assistance, including bus passes, gas cards, and mileage reimbursement for eligible participants
 - Collaboration with Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) and Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVRTA) to improve awareness of public transportation options
 - Coordination with community-based programs offering van services or mileage stipends, especially for youth and adults in training
 - Virtual and hybrid service models to reduce travel demands for jobseekers in remote areas

2. Other Supportive Services

- Additional supports coordinated through WIOA Title I services and community partners include:
 - Childcare assistance, referrals to childcare providers, and connections to state vouchers
 - Work-related expenses, such as uniforms, tools, equipment, and testing fees
 - Digital access support, including laptop loans, Wi-Fi hotspot access, and digital literacy training
 - Emergency assistance, such as housing referrals, utility support, and food resources, offered in partnership with community agencies (CAPV, CHD, ServiceNet, CSO)

Career Counselors also work with participants to develop Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) that identify supportive service needs and connect them to the appropriate local resources.

Leveraging Other Local Programs and Resources

To maximize resources and minimize duplication, MHFH works with a wide array of local agencies and programs, including:

- Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) – Co-enrollment and shared referrals for SNAP and TAFDC recipients
- MassAbility – Joint services for individuals with disabilities, including assistive technology and transportation help
- Community Action agencies – Support for housing, energy assistance, childcare subsidies, and family stabilization
- Franklin and Hampshire housing authorities – Referrals and housing mobility support
- MassHire Partner Programs – Including Title II Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Career Technical Education programs that provide wraparound academic and support services

MassHire Franklin Hampshire staff routinely refer participants to these partner services through formalized agreements and shared case management protocols. Services are often enhanced through braided funding and co-enrollment.

(10) What plans, assurances, and strategies do you have in place for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services and other services provided through the Career Center delivery system?

MassHire Franklin Hampshire is committed to building a seamless and coordinated workforce delivery system that integrates Wagner-Peyser Act services with WIOA Title I and partner programs. The goal is to ensure efficient service delivery, avoid duplication, and maximize outcomes for jobseekers and employers. MHFH operates under an integrated model where Wagner-Peyser staff (Title III) and WIOA Title I staff work side by side to provide unified services. Key components of this model include:

Plans, Assurances, and Strategies

1. Integrated Service Delivery Model

- Shared intake and assessment: Customers complete a single intake process, reducing redundancy and streamlining access to appropriate services.
- Common case management and referral system: Staff use shared data systems (e.g., MOSES) to track customer progress and coordinate services across programs.
- Unified customer flow: Career, training, and reemployment services are delivered collaboratively, regardless of funding stream.

2. Coordinated Staffing and Cross-Training

- Cross-training of all staff (merit and non-merit) to deliver consistent services
- Participation in joint team meetings, training sessions, and strategy discussions, supporting collaboration and continuity in service delivery.

3. Avoiding Duplication of Services

- MHFH maintains formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with all partner programs, clearly outlining responsibilities and coordination protocols.
- Regular performance reviews and program audits ensure services are not duplicated and that resources are used efficiently.
- Co-enrollment practices are encouraged and supported, enabling participants to receive complementary services from multiple programs without overlap or confusion.

4. Alignment with Labor Market Demand

- Wagner-Peyser job matching services are guided by real-time labor market data and aligned with regional workforce priorities.
- Business Services Representatives coordinate employer engagement efforts across Wagner-Peyser and WIOA to ensure a consistent message and eliminate redundancies.

5. Continuous Improvement and Oversight

- FHWB conducts regular monitoring and evaluation of the career center system, including Wagner-Peyser service delivery.
- Customer satisfaction surveys and stakeholder feedback are used to identify gaps, improve services, and enhance coordination.
- The Board promotes innovation and collaboration through strategic planning and active participation in state-led initiatives focused on system integration.

(11) How are career and training services required under WIOA, provided to Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs) through the MassHire Career Center(s)?

MassHire Franklin Hampshire is committed to ensuring that Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs) have equitable access to the full range of services offered through the public workforce system, as required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and in compliance with Wagner-Peyser Act regulations.

Services Provided to MSFWs

MSFWs are considered a significant population in parts of the Franklin and Hampshire counties due to the region's strong agricultural economy. As such, MHFH ensures the following:

1. Full Access to Career Services

MSFWs receive access to the same basic and individualized career services available to all jobseekers, including:

- Job search and placement assistance
- Career counseling
- Labor market information
- Resume and interview workshops
- Referrals to supportive services (e.g., housing, legal aid, food assistance)

- Referrals to WIOA Title I training programs, when eligible

2. Access to Training Services

Eligible MSFWs may access:

- Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-demand occupations
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs
- Short-term credential programs offered in agriculture-adjacent sectors such as food processing, transportation, and equipment repair

3. Multilingual and Culturally Responsive Services

- Outreach and service provision are conducted in multiple languages, including Spanish and Haitian Creole, to accommodate the primary languages spoken by MSFWs.
- Staff are trained in cultural competency and aware of the unique needs and challenges faced by migrant and seasonal workers.
- Materials and signage are available in English, Spanish, and other languages as needed in compliance with federal LEP (Limited English Proficiency) guidance.

4. Outreach and Partnerships

MHFW partners with:

- Local farms and agricultural employers
- Community-based organizations serving farmworker communities
- Regional advocacy groups and legal services
- Adult education programs and ESOL providers

5. Reporting and Equity Assurance

In accordance with state and federal MSFW regulations:

- MHFW ensures no less favorable treatment for MSFWs than for non-MSFW customers.
- Staff report service levels to the state monitor advocate and participate in ongoing training and monitoring to remain in compliance.

(12) Please describe how the Board coordinates WIOA title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA title II. This description must include how the Board carries out the review of local applications submitted under title II consistent with WIOA secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec. 232:

MassHire Franklin Hampshire is committed to ensuring strong coordination between WIOA Title I workforce investment activities and WIOA Title II adult education and literacy services to support an integrated, customer-centered workforce system. This coordination ensures that individuals with

basic skills gaps, limited English proficiency, or lacking high school credentials can fully participate in the workforce and access in-demand training and employment.

Strategies for Coordination with Adult Education and Literacy Providers

1. Strategic Planning and Regional Alignment

- MHFH engages Title II partners in regional planning efforts and in the development of training programs to align services, avoid duplication, and strengthen career pathways. Formal partnerships exist to refer, co-enroll, and provide services.
- Labor market information and regional workforce priorities are regularly shared with adult education providers to support curriculum design and contextualized instruction.

2. Co-Enrollment and Seamless Referrals

- MHFH and Title II programs maintain referral systems that allow shared customers to access both academic and workforce services.
- Participants in ABE/ESOL programs are referred to:
 - Career exploration and job readiness services
 - Work-based learning opportunities
 - Occupational training with integrated education and training (IET) models
 - Title I customers are referred to Title II programs when literacy, numeracy, or language skills are barriers to employment or further training.

3. Integrated Education and Training (IET) and Career Pathways

- FHWB works with Title II providers and training institutions to co-design IET programs that combine basic skills instruction with occupational training in high-demand industries (e.g., healthcare, manufacturing, culinary).
- These programs are often paired with credential attainment and job placement support to ensure individuals move along clear career pathways.

MHFH maintains strong partnerships with Adult Education and Literacy providers including The Literacy Project, Greenfield Community College, and the Center for New Americans. Coordination includes joint program planning, integrated career pathways, and co-enrollment strategies that allow participants to receive academic instruction, occupational training, and support services simultaneously.

Review of Local Title II Applications (per WIOA §§ 107(d)(11)(A) and 232)

As required under WIOA, the FHWB participates in the review and recommendation process for local applications submitted for Title II funding. This process includes:

- Reviewing Title II RFP responses submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for alignment with local and regional workforce priorities.
- Evaluating how proposed Title II programs:
 - Align with the MassHire regional blueprint and priority industry sectors
 - Integrate career pathways and support co-enrollment with WIOA Title I

- Provide equitable access to underserved populations
- Providing formal written recommendations to DESE, including whether the Board believes the application aligns with the local plan and should be funded
- Ensuring that the review is transparent, fair, and based on objective alignment with WIOA goals

(13) Please provide the name and contact information of your Fiscal Agent.

Franklin Hampshire Employment Training Consortium
 101 Munson St, Ste. 2
 Greenfield, MA 01301
 Lead Contact: Davis Hawkowl, Finance Director
davishawkowl@masshirefhcareers.org; 413-774-4361 x 366

(14) Please describe the competitive process that is used to award the sub grants and contracts for WIOA title I activities.

MassHire Franklin Hampshire is responsible for administering WIOA Title I funds in accordance with federal, state, and local procurement laws and regulations in coordination with the local fiscal agent, Franklin Hampshire Employment Consortium (FHETC). All subgrants and contracts for Title I activities—including Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs—are awarded through a competitive and transparent procurement process designed to ensure high-quality service provision and cost-effectiveness.

Key Steps in the Competitive Process

1. Development of Request for Proposals (RFP)

- MHFH develops a detailed RFP based on:
 - Local and regional workforce needs
 - WIOA requirements and performance expectations
 - Equity and accessibility considerations
 - Input from community stakeholders and partner agencies
- The RFP clearly outlines eligible applicants, scope of services, expected outcomes, funding levels, evaluation criteria, and submission requirements.

2. Public Notification and Distribution

- The RFP is publicly posted on the MHFH website and distributed through regional networks, email lists, and public procurement platforms to ensure broad awareness.
- MHFH may also host a bidders' conference or information session to address questions and promote participation.

3. Proposal Review and Evaluation

- Proposals are reviewed by a designated Review Committee made up of Board members, including private sector Board members, and/or external stakeholders with relevant expertise.
- Reviewers score applications based on published evaluation criteria, which typically include:
 - Program design and alignment with local priorities
 - Demonstrated capacity and past performance
 - Staffing and partnerships
 - Fiscal responsibility and cost-effectiveness
 - Equity, accessibility, and inclusion

4. Recommendation and Award

- The Review Committee makes funding recommendations to the FHWB Executive Committee or full Board for approval.
- All decisions are documented and based on scoring outcomes and the demonstrated ability to meet WIOA goals.

5. Contracting and Monitoring

- Selected providers enter into formal agreements with MHFH that outline:
 - Scope of work
 - Deliverables and performance benchmarks
 - Reporting requirements
 - Budget and invoicing procedures
- FHETC conducts ongoing monitoring, technical assistance, and performance evaluation to ensure compliance and continuous improvement.

Youth Program-Specific Note

In accordance with WIOA Section 123, the provision of youth workforce investment activities must be competitively procured, except in specific allowable circumstances (e.g., if the Board itself chooses to directly provide services with state approval). As of January 2025, MHFH received permission from the State to bring youth services in house without a competitive procurement.

(15) Please provide the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official consistent with WIOA sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of your local area and to be used by the Local Board for measuring the performance of your local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA title I subtitle B, and the Career Center system in the local area. Local Boards may insert or provide a link to local performance goals. The link must be accessible to ACLS bidders.

WIOA - LOCAL AREA FY2025 PERFORMANCE GOALS REQUEST FORM			
CONTACT PERSON / EMAIL:			
WORKFORCE BOARD NAME:		Franklin Hampshire	
A PERFORMANCE MEASURE	FY2025 ☒ Use FY2025 Target Goals (SAM) ☐ Propose Some Other Goal		
	B FY 2025 STATE GOAL	C FY 2025 LOCAL TARGET GOAL (SAM)	
WIOA ADULT MEASURES			
Employment Q2	73.5%	66.5%	
Employment Q4	75.0%	59.9%	
Median Earnings Q2	\$7,900	\$8,270	
Credential Rate	68.0%	62.0%	
Measurable Skill Gains	41.5%	58.6%	
WIOA DISLOCATED WORKER MEASURES			
Employment Q2	78.0%	78.3%	
Employment Q4	81.0%	77.2%	
Median Earnings Q2	\$12,000	\$13,143	
Credential Rate	70.0%	70.0%	
Measurable Skill Gains	45.0%	61.8%	
WIOA YOUTH MEASURES			
Employment/Education Q2	75.0%	71.4%	
Employment/Education Q4	72.0%	71.9%	
Median Earnings Q2	\$4,500	\$4,500	
Credential Rate	60.0%	60.0%	
Measurable Skill Gains	45.0%	45.0%	

(16) What are the actions and activities that support the MassHire Board's continued status as a high-performance workforce board?

MassHire Franklin Hampshire is committed to excellence, innovation, and continuous improvement in governance, strategy, and service delivery. As a high-performance organization, MHFH ensures accountability, regional alignment, and collaboration across systems to meet the evolving needs of employers, jobseekers, and the local economy.

a. What trainings are provided to Board members?

Key training efforts include:

- New member orientation on WIOA regulations, Board responsibilities, and regional priorities
- Ongoing trainings on the workforce development system, labor market trends, and industry-specific needs (e.g., healthcare, manufacturing)
- Guest speakers from the state and national experts, including MassHire DCS, Commonwealth Corporation, and workforce associations
- Regular briefings on policy changes, funding updates, and performance metrics to inform strategic oversight

b. How do business Board members contribute to workforce development in your region?

Business Board members contribute in several key ways:

- Serve on sector advisory groups and help define skill and hiring needs in priority industries
- Provide input into the design of training and credentialing programs to ensure alignment with labor market demand
- Host and support work-based learning opportunities for youth and adult jobseekers (e.g., internships, apprenticeships, on-the-job training)
- Regularly use the Business Services team to post jobs and help facilitate job fairs
- Promote awareness and utilization of the workforce system among peers and industry groups

c. How does your Board support the business services in the career centers?

MHFFH plays an active role in enhancing business engagement efforts by:

- Providing labor market intelligence and priority sector data to guide employer outreach
- Facilitating collaboration between MHFFH and local industry leaders
- Supporting employer events, such as regional job fairs, roundtables, and hiring events
- Helping secure and align funding for customized training, incumbent worker training, and rapid response services
- Ensuring the Business Services team has access to tools and partnerships to effectively respond to employer demand

d. To what extent does inter-intra-Board collaboration result in positive outcomes for jobseekers and businesses?

MHFFH actively collaborates with:

- Other MassHire Workforce Boards on shared labor market strategies, sector initiatives (e.g., Healthcare Hub), and training partnerships
- Local education and economic development boards, aligning workforce investment with broader regional goals
- Internal committees and planning teams (e.g., Youth Committee, Educator Work Group, CORE Planning Team) to coordinate efforts across Title I, II, III, and IV partners

These collaborations lead to:

- Expanded career pathway programs across the region
- Stronger referral networks and co-enrollment strategies for jobseekers
- Increased employer engagement and job placements
- Shared best practices that improve system performance and innovation

(17) How are the training services outlined in WIOA sec. 134 provided using individual training accounts? If contracts for training services are or will be used, how is/will the use of such contracts coordinated with the use of individual training accounts?

Use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

The primary mechanism for delivering occupational skills training under WIOA in the Franklin Hampshire region is through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Eligible Adult and Dislocated Worker participants receive ITAs to enroll in training programs listed on the Massachusetts Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), which includes programs that:

- Align with in-demand industries and occupations
- Result in a recognized postsecondary credential or certificate
- Meet established performance and quality benchmarks

Participants work with career counselors at MHFH to:

- Identify career goals and in-demand pathways
- Research eligible training programs that align with their goals
- Complete a training justification and budget plan to access ITA funding

ITAs are capped at a regionally determined amount (currently set at \$7500), with exceptions considered for high-cost or high-return programs. Programs are offered by community colleges, vocational schools, CBOs, and private training providers.

Use of Training Contracts

While ITAs are the default method for delivering training, contract-based training may also be used when:

- A cohort model is needed to efficiently train multiple participants for a specific employer or sector
- The program is not available through the ETPL, but meets regional labor market and employer needs
- It supports special population needs (e.g., pre-apprenticeships, language-integrated training, or reentry programs)

Examples include:

- Customized training contracts with vocational schools or colleges
- Sector-focused cohort programs in partnership with employers and industry groups
- On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts, where employers are reimbursed a portion of wages to train new hires

a) How does the Board ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are provided?

MHFFH and MassHire Career Center system ensure informed customer choice regardless of the training delivery model by:

- Providing comprehensive labor market information to help participants understand employment trends, wage potential, and in-demand occupations
- Offering career counseling and training provider research assistance, including provider performance data such as completion rates, job placement outcomes, and wage gains
- Encouraging exploration of multiple programs across the ETPL, including format (online/in-person), location, and support services
- Maintaining neutral guidance: Career Counselors do not steer participants toward particular providers, but instead help them assess options that best align with their career goals and personal circumstances
- Using participant-centered planning, where ITAs and training contracts are tools to support the individual's pathway—not mandates

In all cases, participants are empowered to make their own decisions based on transparent information and personalized support.

(18) Please describe how training services under chapter 3 of subtitle B will be provided in accordance with section 134(c)(3)(G), including, if contracts for the training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts (ITA) under that chapter and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

Regardless of whether a training program is delivered through an ITA or a contract, customer choice is preserved and central to service delivery:

- Participants are not limited to contract training; even when group models are available, individuals may pursue ETPL-listed training with ITA funding.
- Career counselors facilitate a transparent decision-making process, including:
 - Reviewing available ITA and contract-based programs
 - Providing performance data (completion, employment, earnings)
 - Sharing program costs, duration, and format
 - Discussing alignment with the participant's career goals and personal circumstances

In cases where contract training is recommended, the participant's voluntary consent is documented, and they are provided with information about ITA alternatives.

MHFFH ensures full compliance with Section 134(c)(3)(G) by:

- Making training contracts the exception, not the rule, and using them only under allowable WIOA criteria.
- Separately tracking ITA and contract-based enrollments to monitor equity, performance, and demand.

- Requiring that contracts offer participant-level outcome reporting comparable to ETPL programs.
- Ensuring that contracts are procured competitively, reflect regional needs, and do not restrict access to other training options.

(19) Please describe the process the Board uses, consistent with WIOA sec. 108(d), to provide up to 30-days public comment period prior to submission of the plan, including an opportunity to have input into the development of your local plan particularly for representatives of businesses, education, and labor organizations.

In accordance with WIOA Section 108(d), MassHire Franklin Hampshire (MHFH) follows a transparent and inclusive process to solicit public input on its Local Plan prior to submission. This process ensures that stakeholders—particularly representatives from business, education, and labor—have the opportunity to shape the plan and influence regional workforce priorities.

Public Comment Process

1. Notification and Public Posting

- The draft Local Plan is made publicly available for review at least 30 days prior to submission.
- The plan is posted on the MHFH official website and shared through:
 - MHFH social media
 - Email lists and newsletters targeting employers, training providers, education partners, and community-based organizations
 - Press releases or public notices, as appropriate, to reach the broader public

2. Stakeholder Engagement and Outreach

Prior to and during the public comment period, MHFH engages with key stakeholder groups, including:

- Employers and business associations, through Business Services and sector roundtables
- K–12, vocational, and postsecondary education partners, through the CORE Planning Team and Educator Work Group
- Labor organizations, through standing partnerships and direct outreach to union leaders
- Community-based organizations serving individuals with barriers to employment
- Youth and adult education providers, including Title II and Perkins-funded partners

3. Public Input Opportunities

Stakeholders are invited to submit comments electronically via a dedicated email address or online form.

- MHFH may hold virtual or in-person public meetings or listening sessions to allow for verbal feedback and dialogue.

- Comments are accepted from all interested parties, with particular encouragement for feedback from organizations representing priority service populations and underrepresented communities.

4. Review and Incorporation of Feedback

- All feedback received during the public comment period is reviewed by MHFH staff and leadership.
- Where appropriate, the Local Plan is revised to reflect public input, and significant comments and responses are summarized in an appendix or section of the final plan.
- MHFH maintains records of the outreach conducted, comments received, and any resulting modifications to demonstrate compliance with federal requirements.

(20) Describe progress made implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake, referral, and case management information system for WIOA Partner Shared Customers.

Note: A response to this section is only necessary if your local area currently has a model in place for an integrated case management system for WIOA Partner Shared Customers.

(21) Please describe the local policy and processes that ensure priority for adult career and training services are given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient consistent with WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E), § 680.600 and 100 DCS 18.101.1 (Attachment C). Please ensure response aligns with MA Workforce Agenda Focus Area I.

- Veterans and eligible spouses
- Recipients of public assistance
- Other low-income individuals
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient

The Local Board may establish a process that also gives priority to other individuals eligible to receive such services outside the groups given priority under WIOA, provided that it is consistent with the [Priority of Service for Veterans](#).

MassHire Franklin Hampshire has established a Priority of Service policy that ensures WIOA-funded Adult career and training services are provided first and foremost to individuals who face the greatest barriers to employment and economic mobility, in alignment with WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E), 100 DCS 18.101.1, and Focus Area I of the Massachusetts Workforce Agenda.

Populations Given Priority of Service

In accordance with federal and state policy, priority for individualized career services and training under the WIOA Adult program is given in the following order:

1. Veterans and Eligible Spouses

- Receive highest priority of service, as required under WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E) and the Jobs for Veterans Act

- Priority applies across all categories when veterans and eligible spouses also fall into other priority groups

2. Recipients of Public Assistance

- Includes individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF/TAFDC), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

3. Other Low-Income Individuals

- Defined by federal poverty guidelines or 70% of the lower living standard income level (LLSIL)
- Includes homeless individuals, those receiving free/reduced lunch, or those lacking a fixed, regular income

4. Individuals Who Are Basic Skills Deficient

- Includes individuals who:
 - Lack a high school diploma or equivalent
 - Test below an 8th-grade level in reading, writing, or math
 - Have limited English proficiency (LEP)

Local Policy Application

In accordance with 100 DCS 18.101.1, MHFH's policy ensures that:

- Eligibility assessments conducted at MHFH includes screening for priority status during initial intake
- Documentation of priority criteria is required and maintained in the participant file
- When WIOA Adult funds are limited, priority groups are served before other eligible individuals
- When funds are not limited, priority individuals are still proactively recruited and offered enhanced support

MHFH may also extend priority—after the federally required groups—to other populations with documented barriers, such as:

- Justice-involved individuals
- Single parents
- Youth aging out of foster care
- Long-term unemployed
- (as long as this does not infringe on veterans' priority or contradict federal/state policy)

Procedures to Ensure Compliance

- MHFH uses an intake and triage process to flag priority populations
- Career Counselors are trained on priority of service policy and application at least annually
- FHETC monitors program enrollments and expenditures by priority status to ensure compliance
- Priority customers are informed of available services and training options, and are fast-tracked where appropriate

- Co-enrollment with partner programs (e.g., DTA, Title II, Voc Rehab) is encouraged to ensure access to wraparound supports

Alignment with MA Workforce Agenda – Focus Area I: Equity

This policy supports the Commonwealth’s goal to center equity, accessibility, and opportunity by:

- Removing barriers for historically underserved populations
- Advancing economic self-sufficiency through intentional investment in those furthest from opportunity
- Promoting inclusive access to career pathways, training, and credentials

(22) Please add any additional information or elements, as it pertains to your area and overall strategy, to align with the four Focus Areas outlined in the MA Workforce Agenda that may not have been addressed and responded to via the WIOA Sec 108 4-Year Plan requirements.

MassHire Franklin Hampshire is deeply committed to advancing the Commonwealth’s strategic goals as outlined in the Massachusetts Workforce Agenda, and we have developed several complementary initiatives and practices that go beyond the core WIOA requirements. These efforts strengthen equity, expand opportunity, and enhance system effectiveness across the region.

Focus Area I: Equity, Accessibility & Opportunity

- Embedded Equity Practices: MHFH Co-Executive Directors serve on the Welcoming and Belonging Committee for Franklin County.
- Community-Based Partnerships: MHFH works closely with rural libraries, adult education hubs, and culturally specific organizations to improve outreach and access for jobseekers in underrepresented and geographically isolated areas.
- Digital Access Investments: MHFH supports initiatives that provide jobseekers with laptops, mobile Wi-Fi hotspots, and digital literacy training—particularly in rural communities where broadband access is limited.

Focus Area II: Talent Development Strategies for Youth

- Out-of-School Youth Coordination: MHFH is piloting an integrated youth service model that combines WIOA, Youthworks, and Connecting Activities to identify disconnected youth and reengage them in education and training.
- Work-Based Learning Expansion: Through strong partnerships with vocational high schools and community colleges, MHFH has expanded internship, job shadowing, and pre-apprenticeship opportunities, with a focus on early education, manufacturing, and healthcare.
- Youth Leadership Development: MHFH supports paid opportunities for youth to serve on advisory boards and participate in peer-to-peer career exploration programming, helping young people develop workplace voice and agency.

Focus Area III: Education & Training Pathways to Quality Jobs

- Micro-Credentials and Modular Pathways: MHFH works closely with Greenfield Community College in the development and recognition of short-term, stackable credentials that align

with industry demand and create accessible entry points into high-wage careers. This includes healthcare, clean energy, and early education.

- Integrated Education & Training (IET): MHFH works closely with Title II partners to scale contextualized adult education that connects ESOL and ABE learners with in-demand occupational training.
- Reentry Workforce Pilot: In partnership with local county jails, MHFH is building career pathways for returning citizens that begin pre-release and extend through training and placement post-release.

Focus Area IV: Workforce System Infrastructure & Performance

- Transition to Integrated System: As of July 2025, the Franklin Hampshire Workforce Board and the MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center have officially merged, creating a unified governance and service delivery structure. This positions the region to streamline access and improve accountability.
- Regional Innovation Projects: MHFH has secured and leveraged funding for innovation pilots, including sector-based training, behavioral health workforce pipelines, and rural access initiatives.
- Inter-Board Collaboration: MHFH actively engages with neighboring boards to align regional sector strategies, leverage shared training resources, and streamline employer engagement across workforce boundaries.