



Greater Lowell Workforce Area

Executive Summary of the Fiscal Year 2018 Workforce Development Operational Plan

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

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board (GLWDB), in partnership with the Chief Elected Official (CEO), Kevin Murphy, Manager, City of Lowell, is responsible for developing an Annual Plan for Fiscal Year 2018 (FY'18) and submitting the plan to the Massachusetts Department of Career Services, after making it available for public comment. Local Workforce Development Boards, through the annual planning process, must assure that effective service and positive outcomes remain the overarching goal for all local providers and that quality is not compromised in the wake of challenges posed to the workforce system.

In FY'18, the GLWDB will develop a new strategic plan covering FY'19-21. The development of the new strategic plan will formulate the workforce development priorities for the eight community Greater Lowell region. The plan will outline the goals, objectives, and action steps required to ensure that the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board is the leader of local workforce solutions.

In addition, the organization will work to identify creative new approaches, consider diverse sources of funding, and streamline existing systems to optimize efficiency. During FY'18, the GLWDB will also continue to engage in cross-regional initiatives to extend its reach and enhance its resources.

The GLWDB will continue strong collaboration and integration with its partners to maximize regional resources and sharing of best practices for effective service delivery in support of our goals through the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Due to a low unemployment rate in Massachusetts, federal Department of Labor funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has been diminished over the last several fiscal years. To address the federal budget cuts, the GLWDB will seek focus on developing and strengthening partnerships to obtain resources and grants outside of core funding.

Interested parties are encouraged to submit written comments on the Executive Summary to the Greater Lowell Workforce Development Board, no later than August 17, 2017 to:

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Copies of the plan may be obtained by contacting the GLWDB, 107 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA 08152; 978-937-9816.

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II. Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Allocations

For FY'18, Massachusetts experienced an overall decrease in federal WIOA funding. The chart below compares WIOA funding over the last three years for Greater Lowell.

	FY'16	FY'17	FY'18	Diff FY'18 Less FY'17	Diff FY'18 Less FY'16
WIOA Adult	533,780	455,676	381,201	(74,475)	(152,579)
WIOA Dislocated Worker	689,737	642,457	560,217	(82,240)	(129,520)
WIOA Youth	566,669	486,494	400,036	(86,458)	(166,633)
Total	1,790,186	1,584,627	1,341,454	(243,173)	(448,732)

Considering only new FY'18 funding, the Greater Lowell region experienced a cut of 15.4% or \$243,173 compared to FY'17. When compared to FY'16, the region has seen a decrease in funding of \$448,732 or 25.1%. The decrease in funding is the result of an improving economy and low unemployment rate in Massachusetts.

III. WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

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

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

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

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The One-Stop Career Center partners with several agencies which provide additional services to adults and dislocated workers including the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, the Department of Transitional Assistance, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program. The Center also collaborates with the Lowell Police Department in providing assistance to ex-offenders. Veterans have Priority of Service at the Career Center of Lowell.

Adults:

In FY'18, approximately 72 adult job seekers will receive additional intensive and training services that are available to persons predicated on meeting certain eligibility criteria.

WIOA Adult Performance Goals (estimated):	
• Entered Employment Rate (2 nd quarter after exit)	86%
• Entered Employment Rate (4 th quarter after exit)	77%
• Median Earnings (second quarter)	\$5,200
• Credential Attainment Rate	69%

Dislocated Workers:

In FY'18, approximately 214 dislocated worker job seekers will receive additional individualized and training services available to persons predicated on meeting certain eligibility criteria.

WIOA Dislocated Worker Performance Goals (estimated):	
• Entered Employment Rate (2 nd quarter after exit)	86%
• Entered Employment Rate (4 th quarter after exit)	85%
• Median Earnings (second quarter)	\$7,600
• Credential Attainment Rate	55%

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

- Apprenticeships
- Department of Career Center Services “Rapid Response”
- National Dislocated Worker Grants
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)

IV. Wagner – Peyser

Wagner-Peyser funded employment services provide universal access to basic career services delivered through the Career Center of Lowell. The Career Center will focus on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers. In FY'18, the region received

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\$450,170 for Wagner-Peyser services. Compared to FY'17, this is a 2.3% decrease in funding or \$10,628.

During FY'18, approximately 6,000 job seekers will receive labor exchange services. Of those receiving services, 5,550 will be unemployed, 350 will be persons with disabilities and 350 will be veterans.

V. Business Services

The Business Team will assist employers in recruiting and hiring qualified and talented job seekers. During FY'18, approximately 550 employers will be provided services through the Career Center. Services will consist of job postings, applicant screening and referrals; Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC); on site recruitments; job fairs; labor market information; On the Job Training (OJT), Business Workshops.

VI. Youth WIOA Youth Programs

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

In the spring 2016, the GLWDB procured youth training providers for a two-year funding cycle starting in FY'17. The region will fund one in-school youth program for \$35,118 and two out-of-school programs totaling \$295,324. There is an additional \$20,000 available for youth to enter occupational skills training through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) or enter employment through on-the-job training (OJT). Greater Lowell will serve 30 in-school youth and approximately 59 out-of-school youth through its WIOA youth programs.

Additional Youth Programs

- The GLWDB Connecting Activities (CA) program, funded through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, will provide on-site services for students at Lowell High School, Greater Lowell Technical High School, Tewksbury Memorial High School and Dracut High School, and will be expanding outreach to include more Greater Lowell schools. The Connecting Activities program provides Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plans and anticipates placing 350 area high school students in part-time jobs or internships. This includes summer, school year and year round; paid, unpaid and subsidized. The CA program also anticipates 110 employers in the database sponsoring Work and Learning Placements and 90 employers in the database sponsoring career awareness and exploration activities.

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- The FY'18 Young Adult Summer Jobs Program (July 6-August 18, 2017) will provide work readiness training and subsidized employment opportunities for 254 youth (ages 14-21) in Lowell, MA.