

**MA WIOA Combined State Plan Comments**  
**Submitted by the Western MA Network to End Homelessness**  
**Secure Jobs Advisory Committee**

I am writing on behalf of the Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness' Secure Jobs Advisory Committee. Secure Jobs is a statewide workforce development program for homeless families supported jointly by the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development and the Paul and Phyllis Fireman Charitable Foundation. Over the three years since it was created, more than 900 families statewide and over 250 families in Western Massachusetts alone have successfully obtained jobs and increased their housing stability.

We appreciate the opportunity that this WIOA Combined State Plan offers to build upon the success of Secure Jobs and prioritize employment for homeless jobseekers. We thank the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development for its leadership on this Plan and we are pleased to support the process with the following recommendations:

Emphasize federal priority of service requirement for homeless individuals and families

The U.S. Department of Labor recently provided the expectation that each state plan must describe how it will prioritize services for high-need adults, in particular "public benefits recipients, other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient." **We see this as a critical directive to serve the homeless population.** Including this description in the State Plan will not only clarify and emphasize the intention of the federal law, but will enhance the state's guidance in explicitly directing regions to focus on their most vulnerable residents. We look forward to learning more about how the State will prioritize and better serve these target populations in general and the homeless population in particular.

Promote Collaboration and Integration between WIOA local boards and Secure Jobs/CoCs

Our Secure Jobs Initiative has seen great success in the collaboration among workforce development programs, one stop career centers, regional employment boards and other systems impacting homelessness (e.g., housing, education, child care). In view of its critical importance in meeting the needs of the homeless population, we would ask that the State Plan provide specific guidance on building this integration statewide, including such directives as:

- *WIOA local boards shall collaborate with local Secure Jobs programs and Continua of Care to share information, cross-train front line staff and ensure that employment strategies meet the needs of homeless jobseekers in the community.*

We would be happy to talk further with you about how these recommendations will further our shared goal of creating employment opportunity for our most vulnerable residents. We thank you once again for your leadership and for your consideration.