

Career Services Minutes- 9/13/23

In attendance: Brunilda Aponte, Way Finders, Iliana Caez, MassHire Springfield, Bud Delphin, MassHire Holyoke, Jenn Hoffman, BCC, Arvard Lingham, HCC, Madeline Martinez, Way Finders, Eneida Molina, Springfield WORKS, Judy Raper, GCC, Cindy Ray, MassHire Franklin/Hampshire, Jasmin Rojas, Way Finders, Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH, Elizabeth Veillette, CHD, Pamela Wojtkowski, MassHire Berkshire

Workforce updates

Way Finders: Secure Jobs received renewed funding for 5 years. Good news on expanded eligibility: all people who have *applied* for RAFT or HomeBASE are now eligible (if also meeting additional criteria - ready, willing, able). The program provides employment readiness support and soft skills training and offers flexible funds to reduce barriers to employment, eg, cost of obtaining driver's license, paying excise tax, etc.

Mass Hire Springfield: Recently held a Bilingual Job Fair - 10 employers, 107 clients; very successful; will be offering another one in November (we will get the word out here)

Berkshire Community College: joining with Masshire Berkshire, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Berkshire County Corrections, Community Legal Aid, Second Street to host a "2nd chance job resource fair" - a CORI friendly job fair, to educate both employers and employees - Nov. 8, 4-7 pm, BCC. Also a link to a CNA training is here:
<https://masshireberkshire.com/nursing-assistant-training/>

MassHire Holyoke: continues to offer its Recovery/Re-entry Program, working with people coming out of corrections system, providing job preparation. Also offers Access to Recovery (ATR) for people impacted by addiction and Recovery Ready Workforce, working with employers to help them build awareness of addiction issues, creating strategies for supporting employees (which also benefits employers)

MassHire Franklin/Hampshire: moved to Greenfield Corporate Center in Greenfield on Munson Street. Hosted first mini- job fair today - 15 businesses, over 50 job seekers attended. November hosting veterans jobs fair. All are invited to their grand opening on Friday, 9/22, 11 am - 12 pm. Promoting a series of trainings on culinary, manufacturing, automotive - some spaces available - see all at their website here: <https://www.masshirefhcareers.org/events/>

Mass Hire Berkshire County: Hosting Manufacturing training on 10/20 at Berkshire Innovation Center. Hosting Veterans Jobs Fair in November - details to come. Offering "Training Tuesdays" highlighting training vendors, e.g., a partnership with Berkshire Transit Authority for free CDL permit training with 80+ participants

Greenfield Community College: enrollment is up for the first time in years (great news!); working on implementing Mass Reconnect - free community college for people over 25 years old; noted Opioid Task Force event on how to create a recovery friendly workplace - 9/29, 10 am

Center for Human Development: working with individuals in family and individual shelter; biggest barrier is lack of work authorization for immigrant households. People want to work and are not allowed.

Holyoke Community College: please note these resources:

HCC Food Pantry: <https://www.hcc.edu/student-life/student-resources/food-pantry>

HCC Homestead Food market: <https://www.hcc.edu/student-life/student-resources/homestead-market>

HCC Thrive Center: <https://www.hcc.edu/student-life/student-resources/thrive-center>

Recent studies on homelessness services work sector:

National Alliance to End Homelessness reported on \$4.8 billion deficit for homelessness services workforce - [read more here](#). And findings from a recent survey on the homelessness services sector are here: <https://www.nhswsurvey.com/>

WMNEH updates:

The Network supported our local senators' hosting of Senator Lydia Edwards, Senate Chair of the MA Joint Committee on Housing (from Boston). This was an opportunity to bring western MA's unique (and also universal) needs to her. The Hampshire/Franklin visit included a powerpoint presentation with a lot of relevant information about the region. See the [complete slides here](#).

Pamela also shared the Network's updated legislative priorities and requested veto overrides (that were part of the presentation) - these are broken out [here](#).

Pamela urged everyone to stay connected via the Network blog to stay informed and advocate for our region's priorities. Sign up here: <https://www.westernmasshousingfirst.org/sign-up-for-the-network-blog-to-get-updates/>