

Career Services Meeting Minutes - 5/2/24

In attendance: Nathan Andaray, STCC, Brunilda Aponte, Way Finders, Iliana Caez, MassHire Springfield, Linda Candage, Veterans Affairs, Bud Delphin, MassHire Holyoke, Jeff Hayden, HCC, Anne Kandilis, Springfield Works, Drew Kott, MHA, Madeline Martinez, Way Finders, Sara Peña, Way Finders, Judy Raper, GCC, Cindy Ray, MassHire Franklin Hampshire, Hannah Reuter, Springfield Works, Pamela Schwartz, WMNEH, Mark Watkins, Gandara

Updates:

MassHire Springfield

Job Expo Mon 5/6, bball hall of fame, 4-7, as of now 48 employers attending

MassHire Holyoke

Like all Mass Hires, they are working to support newly arrived immigrants living in shelter, working to find employment for those with work authorizations. Seeing steady progress in success rate (over 200 have found employment statewide); creating more connections with ESL providers. Working with Clarion in Springfield and Quality Inn in Chicopee.

Numerous training programs are available. June 21 - "Hot dogs for Hot Jobs" job fair - Heritage State Park, early afternoon.

MassHire Franklin/Hampshire

Also working with immigrants - noted 45 recent hires in the area (employers include UMass, Yankee Candle, other new small businesses with factories, etc.). Working with residents at Days Inn in Greenfield, Quality Inn in Northampton.

Trainings are also available. Job fair happening today at Hampshire Mall with about 30 employers. Another job fair is coming up at GCC focused on health care - May 15.

Holyoke Community College

New trainings on deck - medical assistant (now part of Jump Start program, one year training); also community health worker training. Good news on new grant funding - will lead a consortium of community colleges (with STCC, GCC, BCC) for paraeducators. Also funded to start green jobs training programs focus on EV installation; to expand community college ETF - education and training fund - occupational training for 600 people, to place 170 in jobs - need FY25 budget allocation for it to continue. Also funded by the Mass Gaming Commission for Line Cook and Hotel Training - recruitment starting now.

Also: Thanks to the MassHire Boards and Career Centers and Rapid Response for the Training Fair at Coca Cola in Northampton last week.

Greenfield Community College

Later in May they will be offering a college success class for prospective students in recovery - 5 week course - co-leading with sheriff's department. At completion, will receive \$1,000 scholarship to assist with college expenses.

GCC is also offering CNA and paraeducator training programs.

Veterans Inc

Veterans Inc. (funded through DOL) is having their Stand Down event (supplies and resources for homeless or at risk vets) and job fair on 6/21. They are providing some transportation from Hampden/Hampshire County to Worcester, where the event is being held.

Recompete Grant update - this is a \$20 million/5 year workforce development grant application to EDA (federal agency) with MassHire Hampden County as lead applicant in partnership with many other Hampden partners (SpringfieldWorks, Baystate, Way Finders, etc.) to create workforce development and career pathway programs to prime age working individuals. They were selected as 1 of 22 applicants (among over 100) to go to the next stage of the application. Congrats for getting this far and best of luck!

Update on Cliff Effect Project

Thanks to Hannah Reuter of Springfield Works for providing this update.

This is a statewide pilot (with SpringfieldWorks and western MA legislators in the lead on making it happen) to address the cliff effect, that is, the loss of benefits upon receiving too much income that effectively penalizes gaining employment and income. This pilot is intended to serve 100 households in the areas of Springfield, Worcester and Boston. The goal is to "back fill" the loss of benefits with cash assistance. And after program completion of 3 years, a \$10,000 bonus is provided (to buy a car, or other larger investments are necessary for stability).

The Legislature funded this program at \$1 million. With these limited funds (need \$4.5m to provide for 100 people), the start is with a narrow cohort - recruiting directly from health care workers. The ultimate goal is to change policy statewide to address this issue and create state systems that promote employment and housing and life stability.

Go to their website for more information: <https://springfieldworks.net/>

Affordable Homes Act Update and Advocacy: The Affordable Homes Act was reported favorably out of the Housing Committee and more recently out of the Bonding Committee without changes. It is next before the House Ways and Means Committee, which will be the time to push for our changes. The Western MA Housing Coalition, with the Network's support, refined its top priorities for amendments and will be delivering them to the delegation this week. We reviewed the [WMHC document here](#).

FY25 Budget Update: Pamela reported on the completion of the FY25 House budget. See more detail at our blog post here.

Network Annual Gathering: It's happening! May 31, 9:30 am at HCC. [See the flyer here](#).

Next quarterly meeting date: Thursday, September 19, 1-2 pm