

Career Services Meeting Minutes - 3/23/26

In attendance: Brunilda Aponte, Way Finders, Shannon Doran, GCC, Jeff Hayden, HCC, Gerry McCafferty, Hampden CoC, Ben Ostiguy, HCC, Judy Raper, GCC, Pamela Schwartz, Network, Kate Smith, Mass Hire Holyoke, Pamela Wojtkowski, Berkshire Mass Hire

Coordinated Entry discussion: Gerry McCafferty updated the group about the work of the Hampden Continuum of Care to revamp the coordinated entry model for people seeking homelessness services. Part of the work includes strengthening linkages for people who are looking for a job. There was good discussion around the best pathways to workforce support, e.g., MassHires are the best "first spot" but community colleges are also key front doors.

We discussed the potential value of using 413Cares.org as a resource, adding to it instead of creating an entirely new referral resource. Gerry will follow-up on that and will also report back at our next quarterly meeting.

Workforce Development Updates

- MassHire Holyoke: many lay-offs and furloughs happening in the area (e.g., CRCC 180 ees furloughed for 2 months; Smith Field Foods laying off 190 ees starting in April; Coca Cola final shutdown in April, 150 ees laid off)
- HCC: <https://www.hcc.edu/courses-and-programs/workforce-development/free-job-training-programs>
- GCC: <https://train.gcc.mass.edu/>
- MassHire Berkshire: Multi-industry job fair on 3/26
- MassHire Franklin/Hampshire (via email): Multi-industry job fair in Hadley on 4/2; recruitment underway for following grant funded training programs - [Go here for more](#).
- Way Finders: serving 465 families in workforce development efforts - making placements

Network News: Be sure to register for the 10th Annual Gathering, May 29: <https://www.westernmasshousingfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/2026-annual-event-save-the-date-web.pdf>

Next meeting date: June 15, 11 am