



Shannon Norton
Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Thomas A. Golden, Jr., City Manager 

FROM: Shannon Norton, Executive Director, Career Center

CC: Kevin Coughlin, Executive Director, MassHire Greater Lowell Workforce Board

DATE: 2/27/24

SUBJECT: **MOTION RESPONSE: 1/30/24– C. Nuon** – Req. City Mgr. Provide a report regarding MassHire and the status of Employment and any Grant Availability

The public workforce system in Massachusetts has 16 workforce areas. Greater Lowell consists of the City of Lowell and the surrounding towns: Tewksbury, Chelmsford, Billerica, Dracut, Tyngsboro, Westford and Dunstable. Each workforce area has a Workforce Board consisting of local businesses, education partners and community organizations. The Board charters the Career Center through the City Manager's office. Each workforce area must have at least one comprehensive Career Center. In our area we have the Adult Career Center on the second floor of 107 Merrimack Street and a Young Adult Career Center located on the first floor at 115 Merrimack Street. Career Centers serve two customers: Job Seekers and Businesses. Although all Career Centers have MassHire in their name not all offer the same exact services.

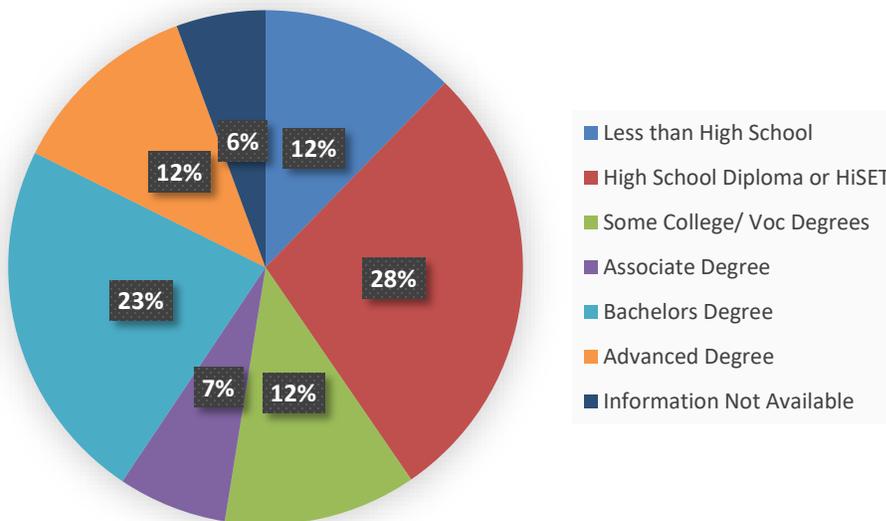
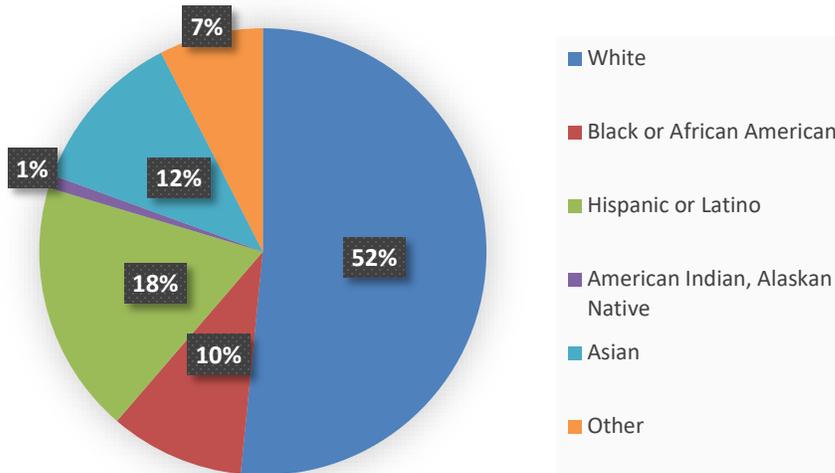
The Workforce Board and Career Center have a combined total of 56 full time city employees. There are eight State of Massachusetts employees that work at the Career Center that I have functional supervision over. These totals do not include the partner staff that are co-located part time at our Career Center. Those partner organizations are Mass Rehab, Department of Transitional Assistance, Operation Able, Abisi Adult Education, and Shriver Job Corps. The budget for Fiscal Year 2024 was approximately \$7 million, made up of over 50 different sources of Federal, State and private grants. We do not receive any funding from the City of Lowell's general fund/property taxes. Our budget fluctuates, as we receive increases in existing funding, or when we receive new funding, or a decrease when a grant closes.

During FY23 we served 7,465 job seekers and 892 businesses. We serve a diverse population that spans all demographics from those with less than a High School Diploma to those with PhDs. We have a dedicated Veteran's rep and we served 210 veterans in FY23. Veterans receive priority of service at all MassHire Career Centers. Our staff speak Spanish, Khmer and Portuguese. Several of our staff are Certified Professional Résumé Writers.



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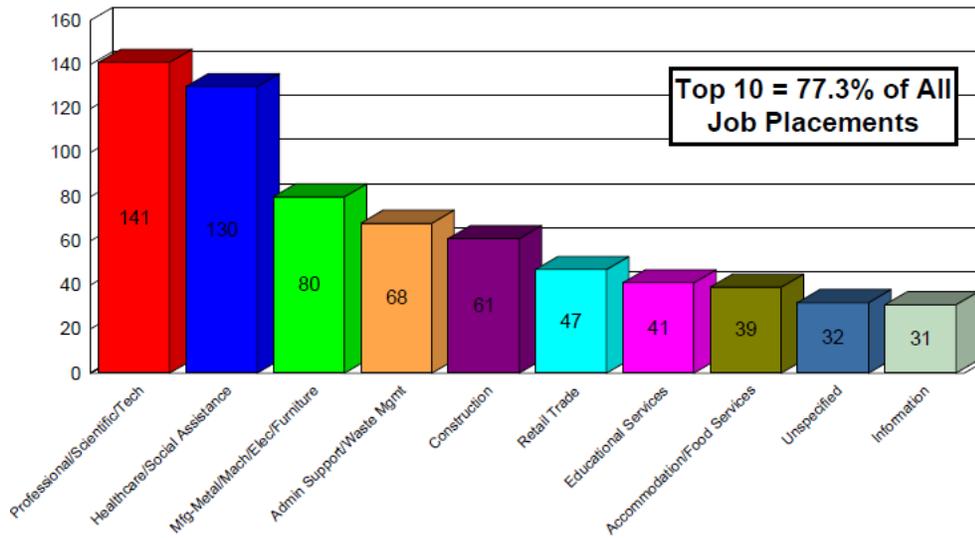
Customer Demographics



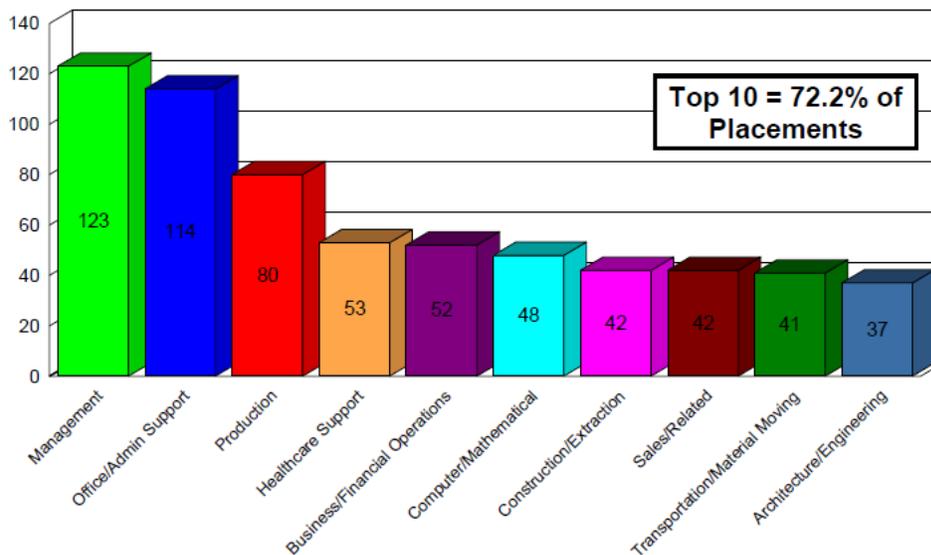


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Job Placements: Top 10 Industry Sectors July 01, 2022 to June 30, 2023



Job Placements: Top 10 Occupational Categories July 01, 2022 to June 30, 2023





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The Career Center receives core federal funding from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This funding provides services to the general public, workers permanently separated from their employment (Dislocated Workers) and low-income Adults (Adult) and services to both in-school and out of school youth. In addition, we receive state funding through the One Stop Career Center line item in the state budget which funds basic infrastructure and services to employers. Other funding/programs are:

Services to individuals with barriers to employment:

- Pathways to Employment program- Job readiness, training and placement for individuals receiving TANF (cash benefits) and SNAP (food assistance) as well as Section 8 voucher holders from Community Teamwork.
- Ticket to Work- The Career Center is an employment network. We can have “tickets” assigned to us from individuals on Social Security Disability (SSDI). We get reimbursed from Social Security once the individual is working (up to four years per individual). Since 2015 we have earned \$1 million in funding for this program
- Access to Recovery- 10-12 individuals per month attend a three-week workshop course on job readiness with a focus on individuals recovering from addiction. Referrals are made through ATR from providers such as Lowell House. Individuals receive job placement and support services through this program.
- Retention Program-Funded through private foundations we provide follow up after employment placement up to two years. Counseling for any issues that come up in the workplace or at home. Support services like electric and gas payments are offered. Ongoing on-site group meetings with services provided to the children of the individuals enrolled in the program. This is targeted to low-income adults who are placed in jobs.
- Job placement services to inmates over the age of 25 coming out of the Billerica House of Correction in connection with Thrive (a nonprofit in Lowell)
- ARPA Skills Center- Providing on-site and virtual instruction and certification for Quickbooks, Microsoft Office suite, and Digital Literacy to Lowell residents.

Services to employers:

- Job postings on our website, and through our bi-weekly job seeker newsletter, social media, and the state job bank, Mass JobQuest.
- Onsite recruitments and job fairs- Hosted job fairs at Middlesex Community College, the Senior Center in Lowell, Chelmsford Town Hall and the Lowell Memorial Auditorium.
- Information sharing about programs that the State offers to businesses such as the Workforce Competitive Trust Fund, Work Opportunity Credit, and referrals to the Small Business Association.



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- Labor Market Information-Businesses may need information on what skills are required in the marketplace to recruit the most qualified for their positions and what competitive wages look like in our area.

Services to Young Adults:

- Youthworks Summer and Yearround Work Program- Provides paid work experience and soft skills training to young adults ages 14-24. Skills Trainings offered in the past are: Certified Nursing Assistant, Lash Tech training, CPR, and social media for businesses training.
- During 2023, our Summer Works program enrolled 266 young people and paid out \$568,138 in wages, a \$51k increase over 2022. These wages were spent by the youth in our community supporting local businesses. 13 participants enrolled in a Digital Office skill certification program. 18 participants took OSHA10 Certification. 58 participants took CPR/First Aid training. There were overall 65 worksites throughout the city.
- Paid work experience at various locations around the city include:
 - City Hall-Mayor's Office, Elections and DPW
 - Greater Lowell Technical High School
 - Boys and Girls Club
 - Lowell Youth Leadership Program
 - CMAA
 - Lowell Parks and Rec Department (Summer Counselors)
 - Van Crew-now year-round with our new van; cleans up locations around the city at the direction of the Parks Department
- Work Readiness services to high school students with disabilities. School locations include:
 - Greater Lowell Technical High School
 - Billerica High School
 - Tewksbury High School
 - Wilmington High School
 - Shawsheen Valley Technical High School
 - Dracut High School
 - Burlington High School
- Young Parent Program- GED/Hi-Set instruction (through Abisi Adult Education) and job readiness services to young parents or pregnant young women who are receiving TANF (cash benefits) through Department of Transitional Assistance.
- Department of Youth Services (DYS)- Job readiness services to individuals in the care of DHS at local group homes
- Career Pathways funded by WIOA Youth through the Workforce Board- Services to out of school at risk young adults. GED/Hi-Set instruction and paid work experience.



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- Connecting Activities (Workforce Board Staffed & Funded)- job placement and soft skills instruction to high school students in area high schools. After school job opportunities through on-site job fairs. Locations include:
 - Lowell High School
 - Greater Lowell Technical High School
 - Dracut High School
 - Tewksbury High School
 - Chelmsford High School
 - Collegiate Charter School of Lowell

Occupational Trainings Offered (not limited to):

- Medical Assistant
- CNC Machinist
- Welding
- Electronics
- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Plumbing
- Auto Tech
- CDL
- HVAC
- Network Administration
- Project Management Certification
- Robotics
- Programming with Cloud Computing
- Quickbooks Certification
- Microsoft Office Certification
- Addiction Counselor

Training providers include: Middlesex Community College, Greater Lowell Technical High School, Nashoba Valley Technical High School, Center for Manufacturing, Production Line Support and many other local training providers.

\$2 Ryde Workforce Board pilot program:

- Over 900 rides to date
- Community Teamwork has used this service for their participants in their Secure Jobs program
- Looking to expand services to shelter residents



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Services provided to immigrants in the Lowell and Tewksbury shelter:

- Over 131 individuals have been registered in MassHire's database
- Predominately Haitian Creole speaking with very limited English
- On site staff at the Lowell site from 10-4pm Monday through Thursday; twice weekly at the Tewksbury site
- The state is providing funding for the costs for staff and equipment however funding runs out June 30th
- Hired two part time interns who are bi-lingual in Creole/French and English
- Registered over 20 people with Aramark via the online application process
- A local roofing company is willing to pick up residents at the shelter site and transport them to work
- Working with Blair house in Tewksbury to hire shelter residents located at the shelter site on Rt. 133

Our hours of operations mirror City Hall. Walk-ins are welcome. You must register to become a member to access the services and meet with staff. Registering on Mass JobQuest and attending a virtual orientation is the easiest way to becoming a member. All of our services are offered at no cost to our job seekers and businesses.

The most effective way of keeping up with our offerings is through our website: www.masshirelowellcc.com The website has the listing of what trainings we are currently recruiting for. Our event page lists our webinars on various topics like Résumé writing, job search strategies, interview techniques and guest speakers. We have on-demand webinars as well and our webinars are free and open to all. The website also has a list of Résumé examples for different occupations. And of course, our current list of job postings which includes the City of Lowell job openings. Our staff pictures and titles for both Career Centers personnel are available. We are active on social media including Facebook, LinkedIn, X, Instagram and Tik Tok. Following us on social media is another great way to find out about our offerings.