



Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027

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I. Letter from the Director

I would like to thank the members of the Metro South/West Workforce Board, our Strategic Planning Committee, and the Board staff involved for all their efforts in developing this plan. In addition, special thanks go to Ann Budner of ABudner Strategy Consulting for her direction and insight as well as Jay Vogt from Peoplesworth for facilitating thought provoking discussions surrounding the needs of our region.

Workforce development can often be confusing, with layers of bureaucracy, rules, and acronyms, but its goal is simple: to help individuals by providing them with access to meaningful employment. This Board has worked tirelessly to deliver workforce development services to a massive region made of up 43 cities and towns – the largest of 16 workforce regions in the state.

Our name has changed over time. When I took on my role in 2018, our organization was called “Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce.” At the time, I underestimated the importance of that keyword, *partnerships*. Almost all of the successes the Board has enjoyed over the years have been due in large part to strong relationships we have been able to build both internally and with our stakeholders. This plan recognizes how critical our partnerships will be as we continue to carry out our mission.

In the past, the Metro South/West region has struggled with organizational challenges. Separate entities often worked in isolation or in silos, and collaboration was the exception rather than the norm. Individual or departmental goals took precedence over the benefit of the region. However, in recent years this dynamic has improved. Board members, senior leadership, and staff have all coalesced around our workforce mission resulting in a renewed sense of cooperation and optimism. The culmination of this commitment to teamwork was the July 2022 merger of the region’s two primary workforce bodies, Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce (PSW) and the Metro South/West Employment and Training Administration (MSWETA). Our newly merged and stronger organization is called the Metro South/West Workforce Board. The name is accurate but doesn’t exactly roll off the tongue. As we are the sole entity in our region using the term Metro South/West, we refer to ourselves as Metro South/West in this document.

This strategic plan represents the start of a new era of workforce development in this region and will serve as a guide as we navigate challenges ahead. We are witnessing a paradigm shift in workforce development as we continue to experience the after-effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, changing demographics, and the prospect of an economic recession. Worker shortages have impacted employers across all industries while enrollment in higher education and training programs have dwindled. Our organization’s services are needed now more than ever.

I am optimistic that we can continue to provide opportunities for all individuals and make a strong impact on the economic well-being of the Metro South/West area. I look forward to building upon the recent growth of our organization as we work shoulder to shoulder with our partners to transform this plan into action.

Sincerely,

Greg Bunn
Executive Director
Mass Hire
Metro South/West Workforce Board



II. Introduction

Metro South/West Workforce Board (Metro South/West) is one of 16 regional workforce boards in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We are dedicated to leading the development of a dynamic and thriving workforce system in the region for both workers and employers. Metro South/West provides a variety of services through collaboration with a wide network of employers, secondary school and higher ed partners, training partners, municipalities, professional associations, and many others.

Our organization serves any Metro South/West resident or employer. For job seekers of all ages, services include: job search assistance and access to online job listings, career counseling, workshops on a variety of job search strategies and access to training resources and funding. For employers, services include: access to qualified applicants, posting of jobs, labor market information, and information on training grants and tax credits. We focus especially on finding employment for the unemployed and underemployed, and for job seekers without advanced degrees who tend to be underserved by the labor market.

This five-year plan represents our commitment to moving the organization forward in a strategic way in order to serve even more Metro South/West residents and employers, more effectively. We are cognizant that we will continue to change over the next five years in response to the dynamic needs of our community. In response, we may modify or add strategies, tactics, or metrics to reflect each year's priorities, but our goals will not change.

The Strategic Planning Committee has identified four goals that are essential to Metro South/West's long-term success. These goals are interdependent and connected.

Goal 1. Develop skilled workers to build the region's present and future workforce

Goal 2. Increase employer involvement in the Metro South/West workforce system

Goal 3. Increase awareness of Metro South/West and of its value as a regional resource

Goal 4. Strengthen Metro South/West's internal capacity to function as a regional innovation hub

III. The Strategic Planning Committee and Process

In order to create this plan, Metro South/West Workforce Board (“Metro South/West”) formed a committee of staff members and board members. Due to COVID-19, the committee met virtually for seven meetings. The planning work was divided into four phases, conducted primarily virtually: 1) initial planning and development of guiding principles, 2) an online needs assessment culminating in an in-person meeting of the entire workforce board, 3) discussion of goals and strategies with the planning committee, and 4) finishing the plan with the staff. The entire process took five and a half months. Ann Budner of ABudner Strategy Consulting led the planning process and Jay Vogt of Peoplesworth led the needs assessment.

We are very grateful to the following committee members who donated their time, expertise, and insights to this process.

Henry Bryson

Deputy Director
Metro South/West Workforce Board

Mary Lou Regan

Program Manager
Beth Israel Lahey Health Workforce Development

Ann Budner

Consultant
ABudner Strategy Consulting

Kevin O’Connor

Director
Framingham Adult ESL Plus

Greg Bunn

Executive Director
Metro South/West Workforce Board

Jason Palitsch

Executive Director
495/MetroWest Partnership

Susan L. Medeiros

Framingham Area Director
Mass Rehabilitation Commission

David Podell

President
Massachusetts Bay Community College

Louise Meyer

CEO Workforce Representative
Metro South/West Workforce Board

IV. Metro South/West Workforce Board Members

Chair: Lisa Kubiak

President
Mary Ann Morse Healthcare Corp.

Jennifer Jackson
Assistant Director of HR
YOTEL

Vice Chair: Mark Fegley

Leadership Partner, Supply Chain
Gartner Consulting

Marc Koczwara
Retired
Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School

Rosemary Alexander
Director of DCS Training
Executive Office of LWFD, Department of Career Services

Shannon Laingen, Sr. Manager, Organizational Development
Senior Manager, Organizational Development
MEDITECH, Inc.

John Bogdan
Director of Employment/Employee Relations
Boston College

Rev. J. Anthony Lloyd, Pastor
Pastor
Greater Framingham Community Church

Robert Bower
Special Advisor to the President for Workforce Development
Massachusetts AFL-CIO

Susan Medeiros
Framingham Area Director
Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

Jeremy Brandon
Assistant VP Market Manager
Avidia Bank

Kevin O'Connor
Director
Framingham Adult ESL Plus

Patrick Davis
VP of Business Operations
The DAVIS Companies

Thomas O'Rourke
President and CEO
Neponset Valley Chamber of Commerce

Brandy DeBarge
Education and Training Supervisor
Patriot Ambulance, Inc.

Jason Palitsch
Executive Director
495/MetroWest Partnership

Charles Gagnon, President and CEO
President and CEO
Volunteers of America

Nick Pavone
NE Apprenticeship Coordinator
New England Laborer's Training Center

Robert Ganong
Retired, Dept. of Workforce Development
Div. of Unemployment Assistance and Career Services

David Podell, President
President
Massachusetts Bay Community College

Walter Gardner
President
Laborers Local Union 609

Dan Rediger
Head of Naval Operations
Rolls Royce Naval Marine, Inc.

Ernest F. Houle
Superintendent-Director
Assabet Valley Regional Vocational School District

Mary Lou Regan
Program Manager
Beth Israel Lahey Workforce Development

Kimberley Ingalls, Center Director
Center Director
Mass Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Chris Vericker
Senior Vice President
Middlesex Savings Bank



V. History and Purpose of Metro South/West Workforce Board

The Metro South/West Workforce Board (Metro South/West) is one of 16 sixteen workforce boards in Massachusetts. These boards are funded primarily through the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which was signed into law in 2014. Federal workforce development programs date back as far as the Great Depression, when the 1929 Works Progress Act put millions to work. Over the years, evolving legislation has funded workforce development: the Manpower Development Training Act in 1962, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act in 1973, the Jobs Training and Partnership Act of 1983 and the predecessor to WIOA, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

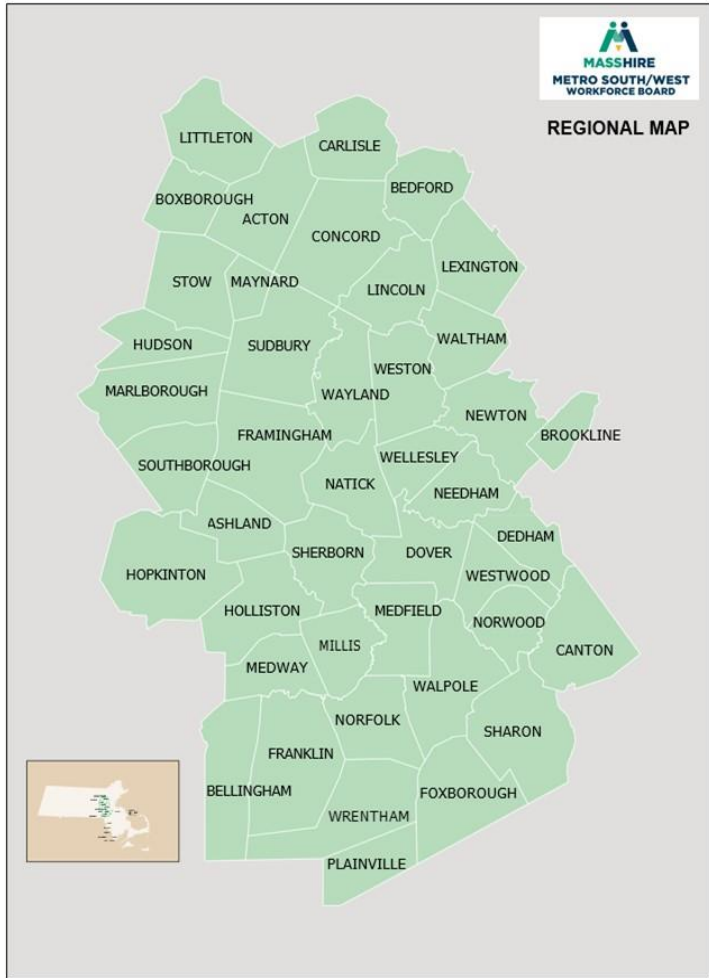
One common element of these workforce development programs is a local board, or a controlling body, whose charge is to design strategies and initiatives that best meet the needs of job seekers and employers in that region. These entities have been subject to different naming conventions over the years with the advent of each new set of funding, from Private Industry Councils (PICs) to Regional Employment Board (REBs) to Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs).

The Metro South/West Workforce Board has gone through similar name changes throughout our history. An important event occurred in August of 2000, when the Board chose to formally incorporate as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the name, Metro South/West Regional Employment Board, Inc. This tax-deductible status enables the organization to generate additional funding sources and provide expanded workforce-related services. In November of 2011, in order to reflect the mission more accurately, the nonprofit name officially changed to Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce (PSW). In October of 2018, as part of a statewide MassHire branding initiative, PSW updated its public-facing name to MassHire Metro South/West Workforce Board, while the official name of the nonprofit corporation remained Partnerships for a Skilled Workforce.

In June 2022, PSW legally merged with another non-profit workforce development organization, the Metro South/West Employment & Training Administration (MSWETA). MSWETA had served as the One-Stop Career Center Operator in the region. This merger brings us to where we are today, with yet a new nonprofit name, The Metro South/West Workforce Board, Inc. We continue to do business and are known to our partners and stakeholders as the *MassHire* Metro South/West Workforce Board. Either way, it's a long name, and that's why we refer to ourselves as "Metro South/West" in this plan. Most important, the newly merged organization combines the region's career center services, job development, business partnerships, and training program development in one nonprofit organization.

VI. The Metro South/West Region (cont.)

Metro South/West Workforce Board Map



The Metro South/West region includes the following cities and towns: Acton, Ashland, Bedford, Bellingham, Boxborough, Brookline, Canton, Carlisle, Concord, Dedham, Dover, Foxborough, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Marlborough, Maynard, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Natick, Needham, Newton, Norfolk, Norwood, Plainville, Sharon, Sherborn, Southborough, Stow, Sudbury, Walpole, Waltham, Wayland, Wellesley, Weston, Westwood, and Wrentham.

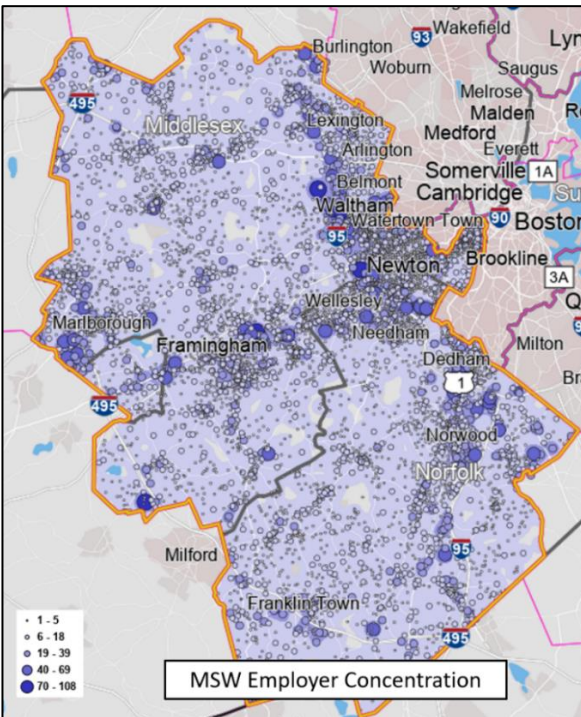
The area cuts a wide swath from Littleton in the north to Plainville in the south, from Brookline in the east to Marlborough in the west.

These communities are home to 13% of the state’s residents and 14% of its labor force. The region’s unemployment rate is lower than the state’s rate (2.3% vs. 3.4%) and weekly average wages are higher than average state wages (\$1,944 vs. \$1,826).

Source: MA Department of Economic Research, November 2022

VI. The Metro South/West Region (cont.)

Metro South/West Employer Concentration



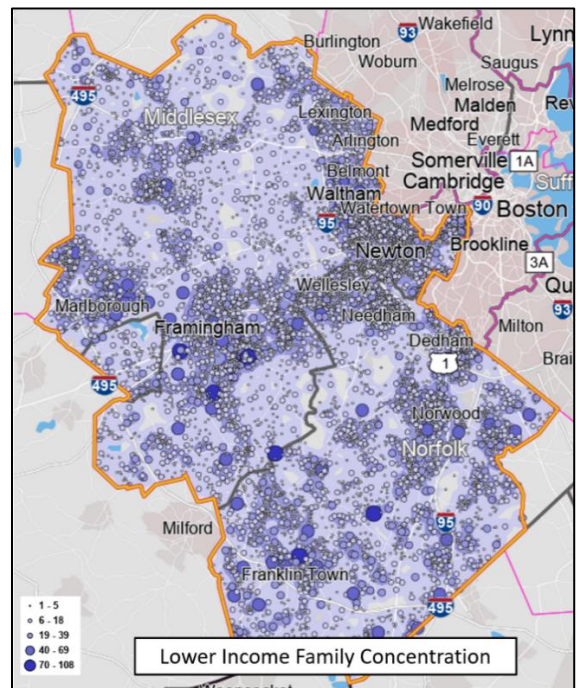
Employers concentrate along Routes 128, 495, and 95, and the Mass Turnpike.

Highest concentration municipalities in the region include Newton, Waltham, Framingham, Marlborough, Brookline, and Lexington.

Communities with a higher quantity of both employers and low-income families are Waltham, Framingham, and Marlborough.

Career centers are currently located in Framingham and Norwood. A satellite office opened in Waltham in December 2022. A second satellite office is due to open in Marlborough in early 2023.

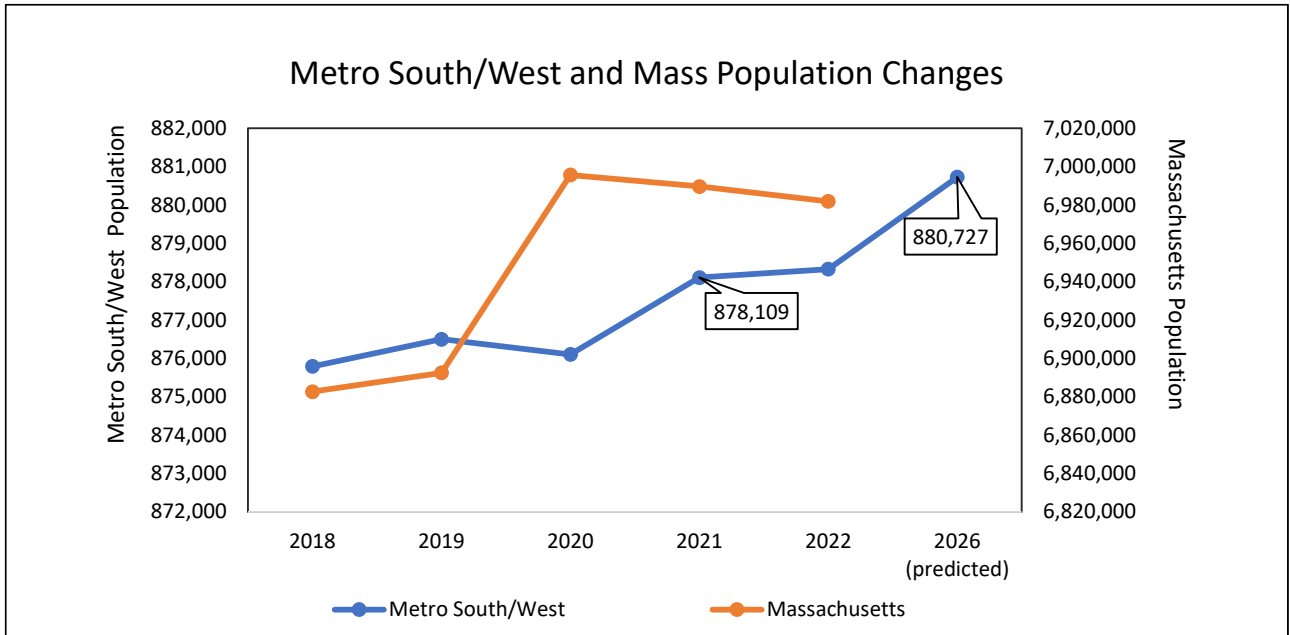
Metro South/West Lower Income Concentration



Source: U.S. Census, Longitudinal Household-Employer Dynamics (LEHD), custom report

VI. The Metro South/West Region (cont.)

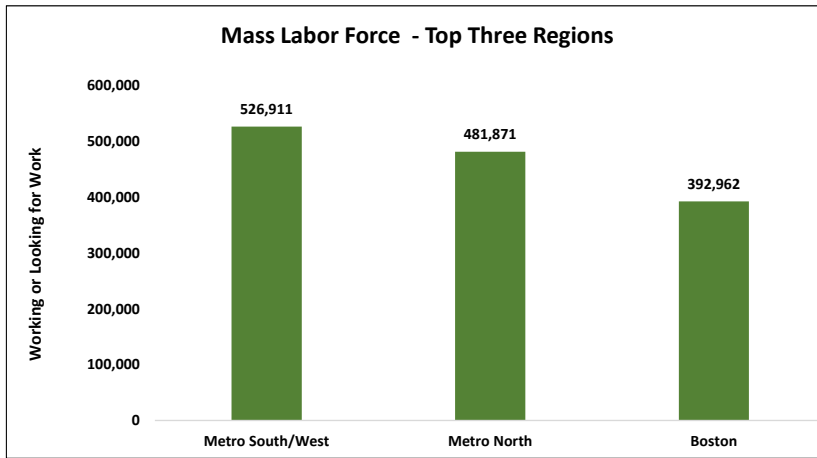
The population of the Metro South/West area is growing, albeit slowly, while the state’s population is declining. As of 2021, the region’s population stood at 878,109. The population grew by 6,509 residents from 2016 to 2021 (.7% growth). Between 2021 and 2026, it is projected to grow more slowly, by 2,618 residents (.3%). By comparison, the state’s population declined .7% from 2020 to 2022.



Sources: Lightcast Technologies Economy Overview 2022 (custom report) and UMass Donahue Institute, UMDI State Population 2019. Source Data: ST-ESTO0INT-01 and NST-EST2022-01. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division.

Note: Metro South/West graph displays a trend line between 2018 and 2022. Mass data is only available through 2022.

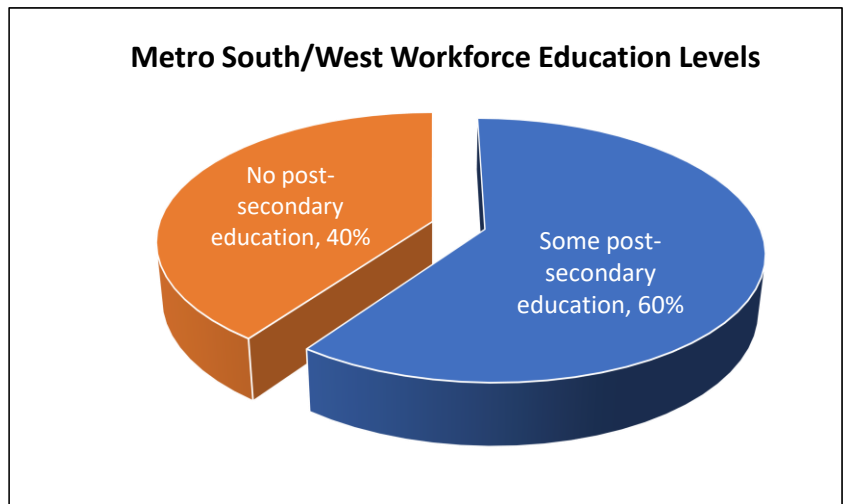
VI. The Metro South/West Region (cont.)



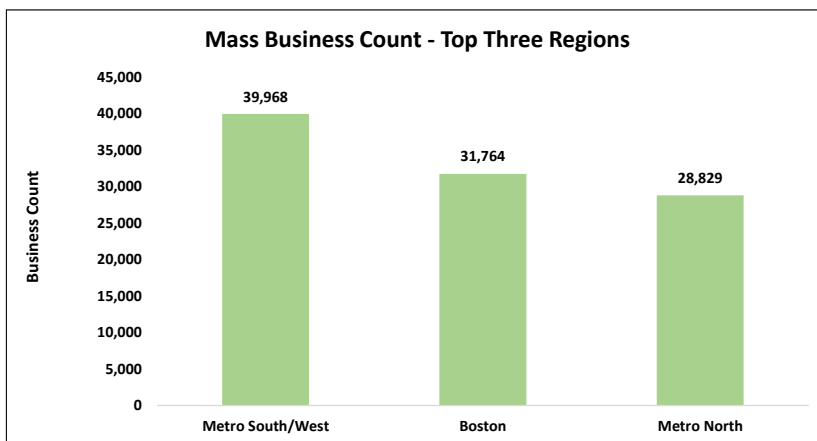
Source: MA Department of Economic Research, November 2022

The Metro South/West workforce area has the state’s largest labor force, with 526,911 individuals either working, or unemployed and looking for work. This number represents 14% of the statewide labor force of over 3.7 million. Comparatively, the next two largest areas are Metro North at 481,871 (13%) and Boston at 392,962 (11%).

The majority of the region’s workforce is educated, with 60% of individuals reporting that they have at least some college or post-secondary education. Metro South/West is a competitive labor market in which jobs requiring post-secondary education dominate.



Source: U.S. Census, Quarterly Workforce Indicators



Source: BLS Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Q1 2022

The region contains a plethora of businesses, with 39,968 business establishments located amongst the 43 cities and towns that comprise the Metro South/West area. This number represents 14% of all businesses in Massachusetts. Comparatively, the Metro North region contains 10% and Boston contains 11% of the state’s businesses.

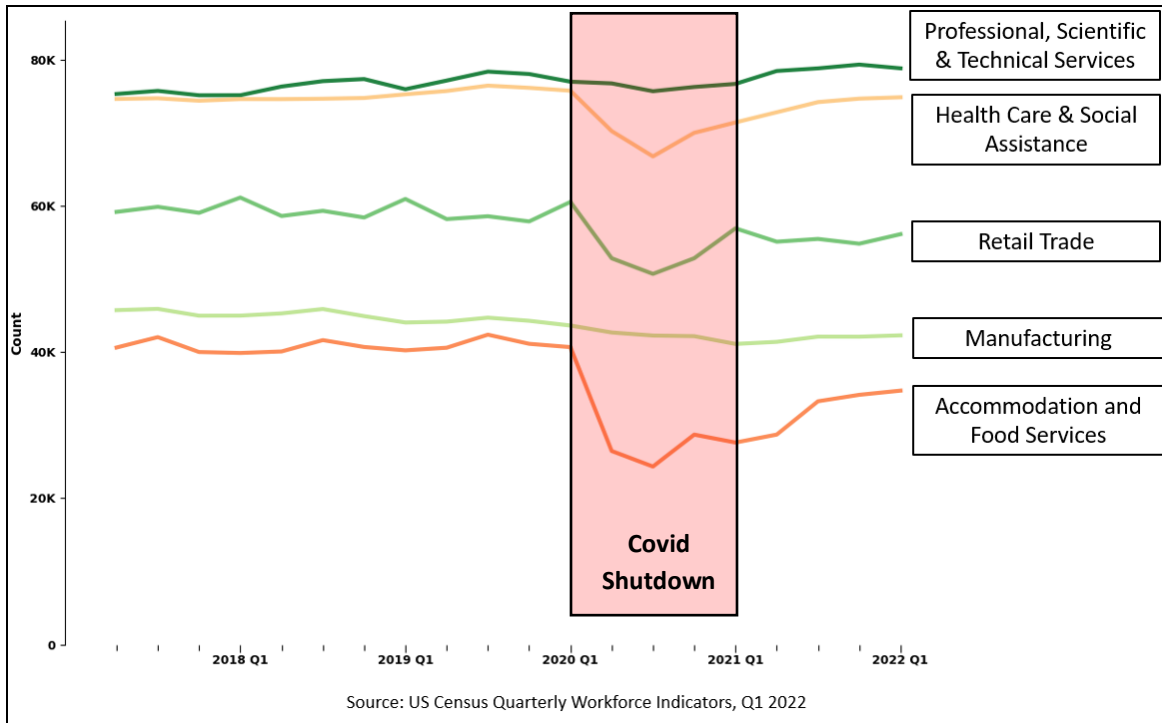
VI. The Metro South/West Region (cont.)

The top five Metro South/West industries, based on number employed, are:

1. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
2. Health Care and Social Assistance
3. Retail Trade
4. Manufacturing
5. Accommodation and Food Services

The top two industries have fully rebounded after a drop in 2020/2021 due to the Covid pandemic.

**Top Five Metro South/West Industries
By Employee Count**



Industry Sector	Sub-Sectors
Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services	Computer Systems Design & Related Services; Scientific Research & Development Services; Management, Scientific, & Technical Consulting Services
Health Care & Social Assistance	Ambulatory Health Care Services, Social Assistance, Nursing and Residential Care Facilities, Hospitals
Retail Trade	Food and Beverage Stores, General Merchandise Stores, Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores
Manufacturing	Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing, Chemical Manufacturing, Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing
Accommodation & Food Services	Accommodation, Food Services, & Drinking Places

VI. The Metro South/West Region (cont.)

For more information about the Metro South/West region, these reports are useful references:

Metro South/West Workforce Board Labor Market information Web Page

<https://www.masshiremsw.com/labor-market-intelligence/#resources>

Greater Boston Workforce Planning Blueprint

https://www.masshiremsw.com/wp-content/uploads/GreaterBostonWorkforcePlanningBlueprint_Final-053118_clean.pdf

VII. Community Needs Assessment Results

In preparing this plan, we conducted a three-part needs assessment with all 30 Metro South/West Board members. Jay Vogt, of Peoplesworth, Inc., facilitated the online collaboration process, which was both asynchronous and anonymous. In round one, we asked members six questions and invited them to comment on the ideas of others:

1. Promising opportunities:

What are the most promising areas of opportunity for serving the workforce development needs of our region over the next 5 years (especially as a nonprofit not bound by WIOA eligibility guidelines)?

2. Critical unmet needs:

What do the data suggest are the critical unmet workforce needs in our region (especially those we are required to address to satisfy WIOA guidelines)?

3. Customer centered services (job seekers):

How can we more effectively recruit and engage job seekers (particularly the underserved and those our employers need the most)?

4. Customer centered services (employers/economic development):

How could the Board add more value to employers and aid economic development?

5. Innovation hub:

How can we make the Workforce Board serve as an innovation hub for the region?

6. Effective organization:

How can we become stronger and more effective as an organization?

In round two, we asked members to rate the top five ideas in each category. The assessment culminated in a well-attended, in-person board meeting facilitated again by Jay. Members discussed the top five ideas, both in small groups and as a full group. View the detailed results in Appendix B.

Top 6 Needs Identified

1. Childcare – help needed with cost, access to quality care, teacher recruitment and training
2. Private sector/public sector relationship – improve communication, help find and train workers
3. Youth programs – help youth enter the workforce, teach them about trades and other career paths
4. Low-skill workers – need targeted outreach, coaching, training, basic skill remediation
5. Construction and manufacturing – need to fill the pipeline as workers retire
6. Better marketing – all audiences need to know more about Metro South/West services, employers need one stop point of entry and concierge support

VII. Community Needs Assessment Results (cont.)

Top 5 Priorities Identified

1. Expand youth programs – as a pipeline to jobs in the trades/industry
2. Expand Second Chance and similar programs – for job seekers in need, including those with special language or cultural needs and those who have rehabilitated from incarceration or addiction
3. Offer childcare - offer childcare vouchers, on-site care, help employers see the value
4. Motivate workforce return – support strategies for sustainable living wages, utilize retirees
5. Expand targeted marketing – reach both job seekers and employers, attract more training vendors

VIII. Guiding Principles

Mission

To lead the development of a dynamic workforce system for our region that advances both workers and businesses

We do this by:

- Communicating emerging workforce trends to our partners
- Collaborating with our partners to address workforce needs
- Developing effective programs to serve customers seeking jobs and employers seeking workers

Vision

We envision a region in which all residents and employers contribute to and benefit from a strong local economy.

Values

- **Collaboration:** We believe in the power of partnership and streamlined integration of services
- **Respect:** We are committed to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace, and to understanding the unique requirements and goals of the businesses and people we serve
- **Reliability:** We build trust by consistently delivering high quality services to workers and employers at every opportunity and in every interaction
- **Ingenuity:** We leverage flexibility, expertise, and knowledge, embracing emerging challenges and circumstances

IX. Strategic Goals

The Strategic Planning Committee has identified four goals that are essential to Metro South/West's long-term success. These goals are interdependent and connected.

Goal 1. Develop skilled workers to build the region's present and future workforce

Goal 2. Increase employer involvement in the Metro South/West workforce system

Goal 3. Increase awareness of Metro South/West and of its value as a regional resource

Goal 4. Strengthen Metro South/West's internal capacity to function as a regional innovation hub

X. Critical Strategic Issues

The four strategic goals were informed by a community needs assessment conducted with all board members, both online and in-person, as well as in lengthy discussions by the Strategic Planning Committee. The needs assessment and planning process identified the following strategic issues:

- 1. The Metro South/West region's large size is challenging.** Our 43 communities have increasingly diverse populations (across all demographic traits) and a more expensive cost of living than the state overall. Some towns have high concentrations of employers where others are mostly residential. Transportation within the region is extremely limited without a car, which makes it tough to get to and from work and to visit the two career center locations (Framingham and Norwood). Getting the attention of residents and employers in each city and town and responding to their varying needs will require more community-based solutions.
- 2. It's not clear to most job seekers or employers that we exist, what we offer, and how best to access our services.** The state's workforce development system is opaque and difficult for the lay person to navigate. In fact, the average job seeker or employer does not think about initiating contact with the Workforce Board. Most job seekers are referred to our One-Stop Career Centers by the Department of Unemployment Assistance. We are a valuable resource to all potential workers and employers in the region, but we will have to do our own marketing to reach our intended audiences.

X. Critical Strategic Issues (cont.)

3. **The tight labor market means that our organization faces new demands.** The greying of the workforce combined with Covid-era defections mean that regional employers face unprecedented and, in some cases, acute labor shortages. The pipeline is emptier than it has been in years. Our staff and board will need to work in a more coordinated fashion and be more pro-active about reaching out to unemployed and underemployed job seekers and potential employers. Our staff will also need to cultivate more partnerships with training providers, ESL programs, and educational institutions at all levels.

4. **The large and diverse Board of Directors could and should serve a more strategic function.** Federal guidelines determine multi-stakeholder board member representation, but representation does not equal participation. More can and should be done regularly to engage the members in strategic, problem-solving discussions around labor market issues and new initiatives. Members could also share industry trends and serve as community ambassadors to promote training enrollment, program pilots, and mutually beneficial partnerships.

5. **Metro South/West's identity is still emerging.** With the 2022 merger, we now combine employer, training, and career services under one roof. In addition, our nonprofit status provides flexibility to raise our own funds and pursue innovative solutions to the region's employment challenges. This plan proposes potential pilot solutions in Goal 4. Success will hinge on a clear vision, a renewed emphasis on partnership building, and an even higher level of internal coordination.

This plan responds to these issues by focusing our organization on specific strategies to meet four strategic goals. As listed on p. 14, these goals are: 1) Develop skilled workers to build the region's present and future workforce, 2) Increase employer involvement in the Metro South/West workforce system, 3) Increase awareness of Metro South/West and of its value as a regional resource, and 4) Strengthen Metro South/West's internal capacity to function as a regional innovation hub. Throughout, the intention is to help the staff work as collaboratively and creatively as possible, while leveraging the expertise and skills of Board members and other volunteers, training partners, and other stakeholders to increase the impact of our organization.

XI. Goals Language

Terminology: The Metro South/West Workforce Board is referred to as “Metro South/West” in these goals. We distinguish between Metro South/West board members and staff members.

Goal 1: Develop skilled workers to build the region’s present and future workforce

Objective 1: Engage more adults and youth in the career pipeline

Strategy 1: Promote pathways into high demand fields among job seekers at all education levels and career stages

Tactic 1: Prioritize multiple education pathways (e.g., alternatives to four-year colleges, apprenticeships, vocational and career tech schools)

Tactic 2: Coordinate with educators to help deliver more effective career education services for participants

Tactic 3: Employ technology when possible (e.g., virtual reality technology)

Strategy 2: Expand our capacity to engage with schools in our region

Tactic 1: Consolidate all our youth programs as a sub-brand

Tactic 2: Seek grant and private funding to support new, expanded, and more flexible youth outreach efforts

Tactic 3: Create a school-to-college-to-employment pathways group within the youth branch (including traditional schools, voc-tech schools, community colleges, and employers)

Objective 2: Reach the “hidden labor force” with creative and inclusive approaches

Strategy 1: Utilize data effectively to identify diverse populations

Strategy 2: Design and conduct a specific recruitment and support plan for individuals from special populations (e.g., justice-involved applicants, single parents, ESL speakers, new immigrants, persons with disabilities or medical conditions)

Strategy 3: Formulate a community organization outreach plan (e.g., prisons, DTA office, Community Outreach Programs, potentially co-locate)

XI. Goals Language (cont.)

Goal 1: Develop skilled workers to build the region's present and future workforce (cont.)

Objective 3: Collaborate with training providers to increase student enrollment and expand the pool of available training offerings

Strategy 1: Work closely with area colleges and other partners to develop new training content, curriculum, and programs

Strategy 2: Recruit more trainers for high demand programs

Strategy 3: Encourage staff to physically visit training providers and develop relationships with them

XI. Goals Language (cont.)

Goal 2: Increase employer involvement in the Metro South/West workforce system

Objective 1: Cultivate more employers as partners in workforce development

Strategy 1: Collaborate with employers to shape job openings and promote job listings

Strategy 2: Foster ongoing collaboration between employers and schools/colleges

Tactic 1: Encourage and assist employers to develop/design career exploration opportunities, including guest speakers, internships, and teacher externships

Tactic 2: Align school and college curricula with employer needs

Tactic 2: Keep employers well informed of individuals graduating from training programs

Objective 2: Serve high priority industries and companies more effectively

Strategy 1: Identify high priority industries using workforce trend data and employer input

Tactic 1: Develop a decision-making rubric to guide prioritization

Strategy 2: Identify specific companies and specific jobs in those industries to target

Tactic 1: Create industry advisory working groups for our existing Career Center Committee

Strategy 3: Approach targeted companies and apply for grants to support particular industries

Objective 3: Identify, navigate, and obtain business-related resources

Strategy 1: Present a clear path for employers to follow for particular hires

Strategy 2: Work with employers to identify the appropriate partner or agency to address their needs

Tactic 1: Help employers find workers, train their existing workforce, secure grants, and identify resources to avert or mitigate layoffs

XI. Goals Language (cont.)

Goal 3: Increase awareness of Metro South/West and of its value as a regional resource

Objective 1: Regularly assess how Metro South/West connects with all stakeholders

Strategy 1: Evaluate current methods for reaching all stakeholders (employers and job seekers, two- and four-year colleges, training providers, and other partners)

Strategy 2: Identify opportunities to improve outreach, with particular attention to reaching diverse and underserved job seekers

Strategy 3: Set annual priorities for targeted outreach

Objective 2: Promote Metro South/West as *Your Workforce Source*

Strategy 1: Distinguish Metro South/West Workforce Board within the MassHire brand, using multiple methods to identify, target, and reach selected audiences

Tactic 1: Develop clear, understandable promotional language that all staff can use on a continual basis

Tactic 2: Regularly publicize Metro South/West achievements

Tactic 3: Form an ad-hoc committee of board and staff members to consider ways to raise visibility through the nonprofit entity

Strategy 2: Identify social media and public relations tasks and the best way to implement them on a regular basis

Objective 3: Integrate Metro South/West more closely with the communities we serve

Strategy 1: Continue to reflect the racial and ethnic makeup of the Metro South/West region in our staff and board members

Strategy 2: Collaborate with diverse community partners to address their hiring, training, or recruitment issues

XI. Goals Language (cont.)

Goal 3: Increase awareness of Metro South/West and of its value as a regional resource (cont.)

Objective 3: Integrate Metro South/West more closely with the communities we serve (cont.)

Strategy 3: Organize and/or attend in-person events that highlight workforce issues and Metro South/West resources

Tactic 1: Attend community events to increase job seeker engagement at the local level

Tactic 2: Convene a summit to inform municipal and community leaders about local resources of which they can take advantage

XI. Goals Language (cont.)

Goal 4: Strengthen Metro South/West’s internal capacity to function as a regional innovation hub

Objective 1: Improve staff’s coordination both internally and externally

Strategy 1: Train and encourage staff to strengthen and build relationships with community partners, employers, and other stakeholders

Tactic 1: Cross-train staff about all other Metro South/West programs and partners

Tactic 2: Develop additional metrics for process improvement

Tactic 3: Encourage staff to serve on career advisory boards (at voc-tech schools and community colleges) and other partner committees

Strategy 2: Move to a more formal meeting and communication structure, including all the branch managers, career center staff, and executive director

Strategy 3: Utilize technology to track job seekers and employers in our system

Tactic 1: Research and purchase a new CRM system

Objective 2: Develop sector-based staff positions to actively recruit training providers

Strategy 1: Utilize staff as program sponsors to help employers develop apprenticeship training programs

Tactic 1: Develop Metro South/West’s Healthcare Works manager to be more involved in apprenticeship program development

Tactic 2: Create a Manufacturing Works position within Metro South/West to work with selected manufacturing companies as training partners

XI. Goals Language (cont.)

Goal 4: Strengthen Metro South/West's internal capacity to function as a regional innovation hub (cont.)

Objective 3: Utilize Metro South/West's nonprofit status to reduce barriers and foster innovation

Strategy 1: Fundraise independently to support flexible programming and to serve those who do not meet eligibility criteria

Tactic 1: Develop relationships with funders willing to support innovative ideas

Tactic 2: Organize an event to build publicity and raise funds, starting with youth programs

Strategy 2: Pilot a realistic project funded with non-traditional sources

Tactic 1: Monitor opportunities to offer on-site day care during training

Tactic 2: Explore the idea of forming an entrepreneur center

Tactic 3: Consider purchasing and renting space to nonprofits or small businesses

Objective 4: Leverage the Metro South/West board to drive creativity and innovation in workforce development

Strategy 1: Hold more participatory and strategic board meetings, informed by current market data and input from a range of community leaders

Tactic 1: Share staff research on other regions and states and discuss promising practices

Tactic 2: With staff, identify the most challenging barriers to regional employment

Tactic 3: Invite board members to share trends and innovative practices they see in their industries

Tactic 4: Regularly review progress in implementing strategic plan

Strategy 2: Encourage board members to serve as champions for their industries

Tactic 1: Promote Metro South/West to colleagues in similar industries, including recruiting training providers

Tactic 2: Convert the Workforce Strategies committee to a Think Tank - an ad-hoc innovation committee of board members, partners, and staff

XII. For More Information

If you need career services, either as a job seeker or an employer, please don't hesitate to contact us.

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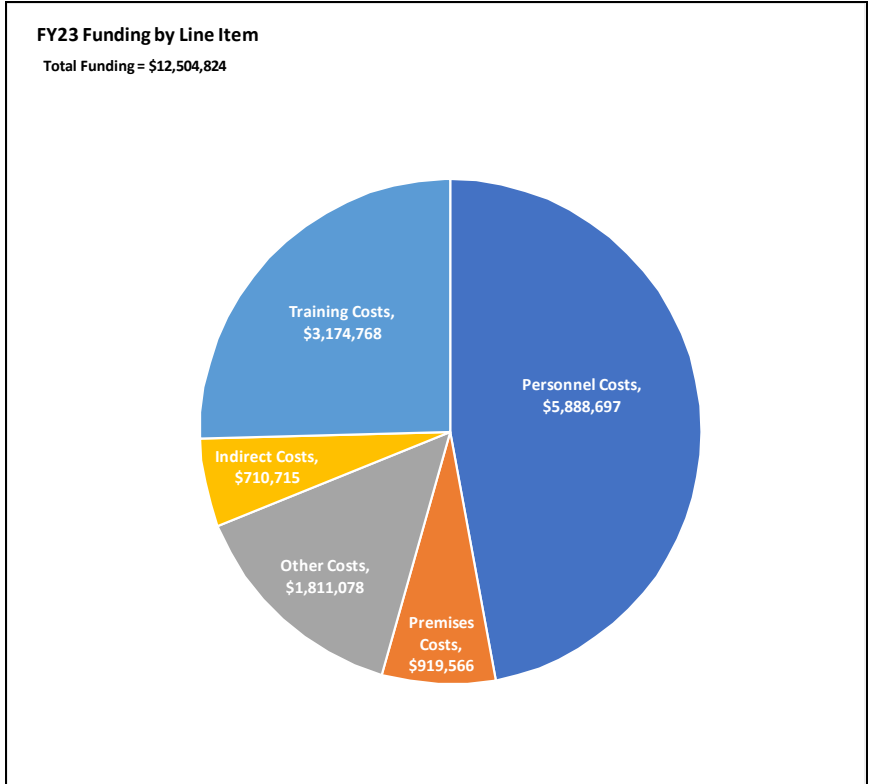
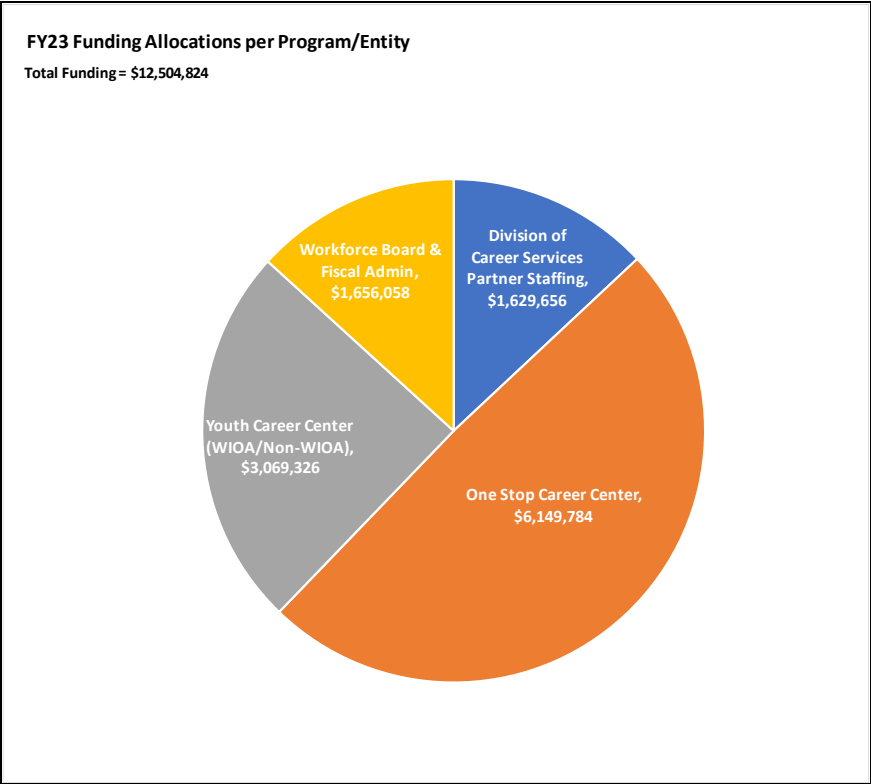
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If you would like more information about our strategic planning process, please contact:

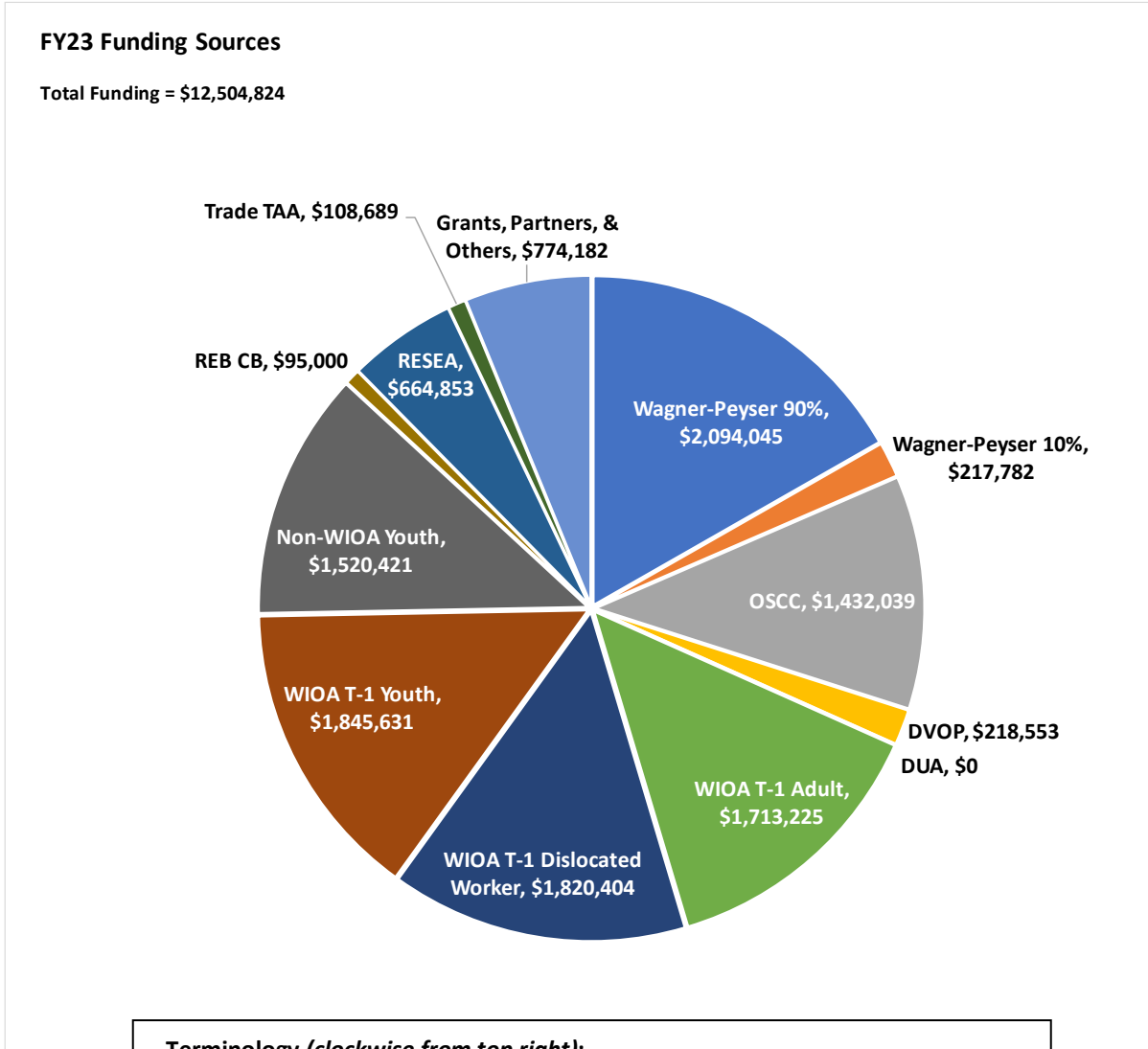
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XIII. APPENDIX

Appendix A: Metro South/West Workforce Board Financials



Appendix A: Metro South/West Workforce Board Financials (cont.)



Terminology (clockwise from top right):

Wagner-Peyser	Title Three (federal \$ for Career Center operation)
OSCC	One-Stop Career Center (state \$)
DVOP	Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (federal \$)
DUA	Department of Unemployment Assistance (state \$)
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (federal \$)
T-1	Title One (federal \$ for training)
REB CB	Regional Employment Board Capacity Building (state \$)
RESEA	Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (federal \$)
TAA	Trade Adjustment Assistance (federal \$)
Grants, Partners...	Independent, private sources of funding

Appendix B: Community Needs Assessment Results

Needs Assessment Summary

Conducted by Jay Vogt with Metro South/West Board members on October 21, 2022

I. What are the top needs of our region?

Aid associates with childcare

- Need time and money for training
- Need transportation
- Need help with cost of childcare
- Need childcare

Private sector doesn't understand public sector

- Help employers look at their needs in a different way (e.g., job carving)
- Provide alternatives to employers (job sharing, etc.)
- Help employers retain their people
- Help employers invest more in their people
- Build buy-in from employers, esp. from the top
- Support employers in allowing employees to receive paid training (earn as you learn) as they upskill. May require backfilling positions during training.

Need to expand youth programs

- Huge demand
- Help impressionable young people see career paths to diverse industries
- Help expand capacity at vocational high schools (deal with seat shortage)
- Support public schools to see the opportunity to introduce students to the trades
- Help schools create partnerships with employers

Need for investment in low skill workers

- Recognize low skill workers serve all industries
- Need funding for training
- Coach a learning mindset (“anyone can learn anything”)/courage to take risks
- Need funding for life coaches, mentors, and learning life skills
- Need stipend to pay for living expenses while training
- Need basic skill remediation
- Need to be reached directly since they may not be currently employed
- Need to be reached across language and culture
- Need Second Chance programs

Construction and Manufacturing trades aging out

- Need to invest in low skill workers to fill the pipeline
- Need to invest in young people to fill the pipeline
- Need to fill the gap of 30- to 40-year-olds

VI. Community Needs Assessment Results (cont.)

Better marketing for everything

Most people have no idea we exist

- General public, youth, parents, employers, employees, diverse audiences

Employers need one stop point of entry and concierge support

Employers need help with the steps to access resources

II. What should our top priorities be for our work on behalf of the region?

Expand youth programs as a pipeline of workers to jobs in trades/industry

Partner with public schools to meet demand through public schools

Find ways to meet huge demand

Support districts that are shut out of vocational regions

Help young people start businesses as entrepreneurs

Build a pipeline from youth programs to construction and manufacturing jobs

Talk to leaders of cities and towns about supporting their schools

Pilot programs and expand what works!

Expand Second Chance (and similar) programs to help those in need

Help individuals with rehabilitation for addiction

Help formerly incarcerated individuals

Help immigrants with special language and cultural needs

Pilot programs and expand what works!

Support associates with children to gain employment

Help employers see the benefit of supporting childcare

Expand program of childcare vouchers

Pilot programs and expand what works!

Motivate people who left the workplace to want to come back

Counter the impact of the pandemic

Use ARPA funds as a one-time opportunity to fund an attractive living wage

Support strategies for a sustainable living wage

Talk to leaders of cities and towns to help them find workers for their jobs

Utilize retirees as employees and trainers

Pilot programs and expand what works!

Expand targeted marketing to both job seekers and employers

Get the data on job seekers to target precious marketing resources

Advertise in a targeted way to targeted job seekers

Attract a bigger training vendor pool

Market ourselves as resources to employers

Help employers share best practices with each other

Pilot programs and expand what works!